

Remnant Life Church
January 12, 2020
Changing How I View Answers to Prayer
Pt 2
John 14:13-14

- That last question leads us to what we talked about last week
 - A “yes” answer is the only true indication of God’s favor, and that you have enough faith.
 - Why is neither of these right or biblical?
 - Answer this in two parts...

- 1. An indication of God’s favor
 - a. God’s favor or love is for everyone!
 - b. **Matt 5:44-46** - *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you only love those who love you, what reward will you get?*
 - c. God’s favor is not indicated by your prayers being answered in the affirmative
 - i. Because God does not love us in the way we understand love
 - ii. God IS love (**I John 4:8**)
 - 1. It is the nature of His character (stating it in a way that makes sense to us)
 - 2. His love is impenetrable; in other words, it has no factors or elements that impact it one way or the other (more or less love)
 - a. We talk about love as unconditional
 - b. But what that means to us is not the same as what it means to God
 - iii. A “yes” answer to our prayers is not only not an indication of God’s favor it is also not...

- 2. An indication or measure of our faith
 - a. That would make His blessings in our lives and by association His love, dependent solely on our actions
 - b. This is not to eliminate the truth of obedience and blessing
 - i. God presents this principle early on in the Scripture
 - 1. The new nation of Israel is at Mt. Sinai receiving the law
 - 2. **Ex 19:5-6** - *Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations, you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*
 - 3. God repeats this over and over to Joshua, Samuel, David, and Solomon
 - 4. While blessing follows obedience, it is not dependent or determined solely on your actions
 - c. The same is true regarding the hardships or difficulties of our lives

- i. Those struggles are not always associated with sin
- ii. **John 9:1-3** - *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Neither this man nor his parents sinned, said Jesus, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*
- iii. The blessings and struggles of our lives can be impacted by how we choose to live, but they are not totally responsible for them – only God and His will is.
- iv. i.e. - Good things happening to bad people and bad things happening to good people

This brings us then to a critical point of how we view the answers to our prayers:

We believe that the answer to the prayers we pray regarding our lives is about us alone – that is not true. Why?

- Because when God answers our prayers, He answers them against the backdrop of seeing every moment of time from the beginning to the end
 - Not only does He see it, but He is there. (Omnipresent)
- He also sees every life, of every person in existence and how that life will be lived to the very end of their time
- He sees how our lives impact the ones around us, and how the lives we influence will then impact others...till the end of time (Omniscient)
- What does all of that have to do your life when you pray?
 - To put it very simply, when God answers your prayer, it is not only about you
 - God knows that the result or process of whatever is going on in your life and how it is going to affect others – others that He loves and also has a plan for
 - And see, for you to walk through a difficult time, one that you have asked God to remove, but He does not, could be having or will have a very powerful impact on someone else's life
 - That job or life situation that you are in, but have been praying to be removed from, may very well be what changes another person's life forever
 - You do not know that – but God does!

Recognizing this truth of our lives, as a Christian, is why we must understand and embrace the fact that the answers to our prayers are not only about our life!

- When you have a prayer answered, you must first and only give glory and credit to God
 - Even when the situation has required tremendous effort on your part – the Glory goes to God
 - Even when you have been faithful through the years – the Glory goes to God
 - Even when everyone else is telling you how wonderful, steadfast, and strong you have been – the Glory goes to God and God alone!
- The fact that your prayers are not only about you is also why you must be aware of how you respond to the “no” answers

- How do you respond when things are not going the way you have been praying for them to go?
- What is your demeanor like when time continues to tick along with no answer in sight?
- How quickly do you begin blaming God or become difficult for others to be around?
- Can your countenance still be one that is pleasing to God and to others?
- Again, you do not know the impact your life is having on someone else – for the good and the bad according to how your life is being lived

- How great of an impact can one life have?
 - Consider a man named Mordecai Ham
 - He was a Southern Baptist evangelist of the late 1800s into the early and mid-1900s
 - He was controversial even then and, if he were preaching today, would be labeled a bigot about multiple ethnic groups
 - But in spite of failings and shortcomings, God still worked in and through him
 - In November 1934 at one of his crusades in Charlotte, NC a 16-year-old farm boy, who wanted more than anything else in his life to be a professional baseball player, came forward to receive Jesus Christ
 - That boy by the name of Billy Graham would go on to preach with more people hearing him in person than any other preacher in all of recorded history and become the face of evangelical Christianity for the next 83 years
 - It all began through the life of a very imperfect but dedicated man who followed God's will for his life

- When Jesus prayed the prayer in the Garden asking for the cup (meaning the crucifixion) to be taken from Him, could God have answered that prayer with a "yes?"
 - Well certainly, but if He had, all of humanity would have been lost.
 - But once again, the most important words of Jesus' prayer were not "take this cup from me."
 - They were "not my will, but your will be done"

How you live that sentence, spoken by Jesus, is what will determine how you view the answers to your prayers

- If you want God's will done in your life, then the answers to your prayers will be accepted in a way that honors God and blesses the people in your sphere of influence
 - When the prayer is answered with "yes" all the glory is God's, and you do not allow pride to enter your heart
 - When the answer is "no" you will not allow disappointment, resentment, depression, and anger to take root