



How Best to Lobby Jesus

Mark 2:1-12

TO: **LEGISLATORS**FROM: **RALPH DROLLINGER**DATE: **FEBRUARY 23, 2010**

As I prepared this Bible study this week I was extremely blessed by it; I trust you will be as well as you ponder these principles. Please know that it is my desire to serve you. Feel free to call me on my mobile phone (661-803-7970) in order to set something up. Danielle and I are here to minister to you.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered if Jesus continued teaching while the four friends of the paralytic dug through the roof? That would be worse interference to one's concentration than legislators coming late or leaving early or having their cell-phones go off while somebody was trying to teach a Bible study! ☺ And what about the owner of the home—what did he think (most likely this was Peter's home) while these four guys destroyed his roof? In spite of those pertinent issues, Mark, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit pens what is essential for the reader to gain from this passage: *Jesus, seeing their faith* (v. 5). Jesus responded to the prayers of these guys! They put action to their prayers and He granted them what they so desperately wanted! Is this not Matthew 7:7 enacted? "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." Is this not a parallel to the parable of Luke 18:3-8 regarding the widow and the Judge? Remember that story? The widow so bothers the judge with her petitions that the Judge grants her desire. The point being that God responds to the prayers of those who love Him. And that is what I would like to emphasize from this week's passage: four insights on how to best make requests of Jesus.

But before going there, notice that this week's passage has much to say about authenticating Jesus' claims to be able to forgive sin. Jesus goes so far as to provoke the scribes, teachers and Pharisees who witnessed the miracle of the lame man in that He uses interchangeable language to make his point: Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up and pick up your pallet and walk'? (v. 9). This passage is yet another affirmation of His efficacy.

THE PASSAGE: MARK 2:1-12

And when He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, even near the door; and He was speaking the word

to them. 3 And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. 4 And being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. 5 And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." 6 But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 And immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? 9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet and walk '? 10 "But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- He said to the paralytic-- 11 "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." 12 And he rose and immediately took up the pallet and went out in the sight of all; so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

Here are four insights into Jesus answering your prayers:

I. MAKE SURE YOUR PRAYERS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY FAITH IN ACTION

"Most of [the houses] in ancient Palestine were single storey structures with flat roofs accessible by an outside staircase. The roof was used for working and sometimes for sleeping, and so it was not flimsy in construction; wooden beams or branches were thatched with rush and daubed with mud."¹ How the four men literally "unroofed the roof" (v. 4) represents a major demolition job—all while the Master was teaching! The Greek goes onto say "they were digging it out" in order to let him down on a pallet.² These four guys had undoubtedly prayed for their paralytic friend's healing and they took actions of faith long before they knew Jesus' answer to their prayers. The same principle of acting by faith on your prayers before they are answered is illustrated in Matthew 9:22, by the Hemorrhaging Woman; Luke 17:1 by the Ten Lepers and in Luke 18:42 by Bartimaeus. All their prayers were accompanied by faith in action! This underscores what Hebrews teaches about the same: "Without faith it is



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impossible to please Him” (11:6).³ And if “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1)⁴ then it follows that our biblically-based prayers should be accompanied by manifest actions. Such pleases God: “Jesus seeing their faith...”

In my life, I have acted on this principle. At Capitol Ministries we have started nearly 50 ministries in as many capitols worldwide. Never have we had the time, talent or treasure prior to beginning. It has always come afterwards. Remember, “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” “Jesus, seeing their faith...” What grows your faith? “Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

Here are three additional governing principles...

II. MAKE SURE YOUR PRAYERS ARE BASED IN BIBLICAL PRECEPTS

1 John 5:14 states, “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything *according to His will*, He hears us.” His will is that which is expressed in Scripture. Are your prayers founded on Biblical precepts—His expressed will? Do not expect favorable answers if they are not. God is not some kind of spiritual vending machine who delivers up whatever you order. John 14:13-14 adds insight into this, “And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, *that the Father may be glorified in the Son*. If you ask Me anything *in My name*, I will do it.” In context, this promise of Jesus is given right before His crucifixion. He is comforting His disciples relative to His soon absence. I.e. The disciples do not need His physical presence to achieve their God-centered purposes. Accordingly this is not a mere formula to manipulate God, tagging selfish requests with “in Jesus’ name...” Rather, this passage indicates that prayer needs to be unselfish; prayer should be to achieve His purposes and to advance of His Kingdom and His glory. John 15:7 states, “If you abide in Me, *and My words abide in you*, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.” Make sure your prayers are based in biblical precepts if you expect “Yes” answers.

III. MAKE SURE YOUR PERSONAL LIFE IS PLEASING TO GOD

John 3:21-22 state, “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” Psalm 66:18 adds,

“If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear.” And another additional caveat to successful praying relates to how we men treat our wives. 1 Peter 3:7 states, “You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” Said in a positive way, “The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the LORD is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. *The* righteous cry and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles” (Psalm 34:15-17). These passages are self-explanatory. Don’t short your own circuit. Make sure your personal life is pleasing to God if you expect Him to answer.

IV. MAKE SURE YOUR PRAYERS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY DEFERENCE

Deference is a wonderful English word. It means, “A yielding of judgment or preference out of respect for the position, wish, or known opinion of another: courteous, complacent, or ingratiating regard for another's wishes.”⁵ Such should be the attitude that accompanies our prayers. Matthew 26:39-42 illustrates this beautiful attitude in the life of Jesus. “And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’ And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, ‘So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done.’ Such was the deferential attitude of Jesus to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to His crucifixion. May we always have an attitude of ultimate submission to the sovereign will of God in our prayer life. Such deference honors Him and acknowledges His ultimate Lordship over all our affairs. Amen.

¹ France, R.T. *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 2002) p 123. For more on ancient Palestinian home construction see C.C. McCown, *JBL* 58 (1939) 213-16.

² The synoptic parallel (Luke 5:19) states the roof was tile. My personal synthesis is that the roof was both thick mud covered with tiles.

³ Ultimately faith is a gift from God, not self-generated (cf. Ephesians 2:8, 9).

⁴ “Faith is the God-given present assurance of a future reality.”

⁵ M&W