

## 2: What does it mean to pray “in Jesus’ Name”?



There are three occasions in John’s Gospel when Jesus promises that God will answer any prayer made in His name – Jn.14v13-14; 15v16; 16v23-24,26. The close proximity of these assurances, all within three chapters and all contained in Jesus’ final words to His disciples at the Last Supper, alert us to the fact that this is important. And yet we all have experiences of asking for things “in Jesus’ name,” and apparently getting no answer at all.

So are these words:-

True? Simply a bit of poetic licence? Only for a select few? A magic formula that just needs to be said in the right way? Not true at all?

### The Name

Biblically a name is often more than simply a label and especially so in the case of God (and therefore of Jesus). The “Name” is synonymous with all that the name implies e.g. majesty, glory, power, compassion, etc. and at times is synonymous with God Himself i.e. the name is the person (Ex.3v13-15; 20v24; 33v18-19; 34v5-7; Num.6v22-27), and the person actually present. And so in the New Testament salvation is only in the name of Jesus (Acts 4v12); the Gospel is proclaimed in His name (Lk.24v47); healing and other miracles occur in His name (Acts 3v16; 4v30; Mk.16v17-18).

### So to pray “in the name of Jesus”

- Is to pray out of all that the name “Jesus” represents.
- Is to pray as if Jesus Himself was praying – He is present.

So how then did Jesus pray? What does praying as if Jesus was praying look like? Let’s look at Jesus’ relationship with His Father and how they kept company together.

**Jn.5v19:** I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because *whatever the Father does the Son also does.*

**John 5v30:** By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, *for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.*

**John 6v38:** For I have come...not to do my will but *to do the will of him who sent me..*

**John 8v29:** *I always do what pleases him.*

**John 12v49-50:** For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me *commanded me what to say and how to say it. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.*

### And look at what Jesus says in the context of praying “in His name” in John 14-16.

**Jn.14v13:** And I will do whatever you ask in my name, *so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.*

**Jn.14v15:** If you love me *you will obey what I command..*

**Jn.15v7,9,12 :** *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.. Remain in my love..My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

**Jn.16v13-14,27:** *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. .He will bring glory to me ... .because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.*

### Therefore to pray “in Jesus’ name”

- Is a true and certain promise for every believer.
- It is about allowing our lives to become more and more filled with Jesus through His Holy Spirit so that His life and our lives become one and the same (Eph.5v18-19). It is praying the prayers that Jesus would pray in the way that Jesus would pray them, (the “*what*” and “*how*” of Jn.12v49), to the glory and honour of God.
- It is about releasing the love and the power and the presence of God into His world (Phil.2v9-11).

Praying “in Jesus’ name” is *not* a blank cheque for us to use at will (cf Lk.15v11-13) nor some sort of magical phrase. It *is* the fruit of an ever closer and ever maturing walk with God. It is the Prodigal returned and in the heart of the father (Lk.15v22-23). A deep love of God leads to a deep dependency on God, and a deep understanding of what He is like. From such a deep relationship with our heavenly Father flows great authority and power and we find that we are praying “in Jesus’ name.”

**PRAYER:** Father, fill be ever more deeply with the Holy Spirit of Jesus that I may truly pray His prayers in His way, and so pray in His Name. Amen.

## STUDY 2: BIBLE READING: John 14v12-21

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- 1: Think for a moment about the things for which you are praying on the national and international stage. How might Jesus pray for them and is that any different to how you have been praying for them at the moment?

Then think for a moment about the people and situations which you hold on your heart. Once again, how might Jesus pray for them and is that any different to how you have been praying for them at the moment?

- 2: These are the actual words of Jesus in which He gives the promise of prayers answered “in My name.” What discoveries do you make from these verses?

*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

(Jn.14v13-14).

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.*

(Jn.15v16-17).

*In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

(Jn.16v23-24).

- 3: In the first study we reflected that the father and the returning prodigal meeting and embracing together was a description of what happens in worship. In reflecting upon praying “in Jesus’ name”, we see why this promise is not simply a blank cheque. In the beginning the younger son received everything and simply couldn’t cope with what he had been given. Only on his return – with the attitude of a servant (cf Mt.20v20-28), could he be treated as a son, with the full authority and power of all that was his father’s.

Why do you think the Prodigal Son had to be willing to become a servant before he could truly learn to be and to become a son and heir?

Do you think that we need a similar journey in order fully to be able to pray in Jesus’ name?

What link, if any, do you find between dependency on God and authority and power from God?

*"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate!"*

