

Ask in My Name.

Colo 12 May 1955

(John 16 vs 23b-28)

John 16 vs 23b: I am telling you the truth: the Father will give you whatever you ask him for in my name.

Of all the promises given by Christ to his followers this one is perhaps the most difficult to understand and to believe because our own experience about it has many times been so different: "the Father will give you whatever you ask him for in my name." Is this really true? For if this is true how then do we explain so many requests, so many urgent pleading pleas which Christians throughout the centuries, have made to God which it seems He has not heard or answered? e.g. "Please God:

■ ~~Take away~~ Take away or prevent the suffering of the innocent: the suffering caused by hunger & want, by natural disasters, by senseless warfare, by seemingly incurable diseases like terminal cancer?

■ Take away the evil and inhuman policy of apartheid under which millions have to suffer needlessly?

■ Take away the senseless arms race and the threat of nuclear warfare?

On the face of it, it seems as if God does not hear and answer. Is this in fact so? Let us again look at the text and note how serious Christ is: He says: "I'm telling you the truth" It's like Christ saying: "On my sacred word - on my oath" Is He then deliberate by lying, deceiving <sup>or misleading</sup> his disciples & us ~~not~~ because He wishes to give them a spiritual injection to dull the pain of his departure & death?

The answer lies, to my mind, in the 2 crucial phrases of the text: ① in my name ② ask.

① In my name: In accordance with my being, my <sup>true</sup> nature, my purpose for you + for your life. And that being, that purpose is one of love, justice, renewal of life, liberation <sup>from evil</sup>, forgiveness, victory over selfishness and arrogance + pride + power hunger for power

Whatever we ask in accordance with this name, this being, this purpose the answer of the Father will be: YES!  
 Whatever we ask in contradiction or in conflict with this name, this being, this purpose the answer of the Father will be: NO!  
 It has to be: NO

② "Ask": True prayer always consists of 4 essential elements: Adoration, confession, supplication, action. Every one is necessary to fulfil the meaning of ASK. We normally accept the first 3 - and include them in our prayers; we conveniently tend to expect or exclude the last (4) in our prayers: Action. True prayer always includes action. God says so many times: You ask - I'll answer - through your own action: Answer your own prayer in the name of my Son! I give you the secret, the insight, the power! &c

① World poverty: the world has enough food to ~~satisfy~~ meet for every one's need but not for every one's greed. The problem is not production but distribution!

② Apartheid: the world has enough power + potential of ending this evil system without violence - if it really wants to. If Christians around the world would say: No longer are we going to allow this to continue do you really believe God will not answer?

③ Nuclear warfare: God is telling us all: the development of nuclear ~~warfare~~ is a reflection of the fear of nations for one another and their consequent struggle for power. The answer to your prayer lies in your hands: Answer your own prayer!

And so we can continue with many requests, many of our pleadings to God which we include in our prayers + when God responds by saying to us: Don't reflect on the problem, reflect on the cause, reflect on your own ability and infirmity as Christians to solve your problems through His grace, through His Son, in His Name - and then trust me for all those prayers + pleas which remain unanswered. That does not imply that God will not keep his word; it does not imply that Christ's promise is invalid or untrustworthy; it only implies that there are hidden sources of God's power to conquer + overcome sin and suffering which we have not yet discovered - and known which will be revealed to us and given to us since we are ready to receive this power. Therefore never get weary of addressing your pleas to God. "I am talking you the truth" Christ says. "the Father will give you whatever you ask him for in my name".

Amen.

Text.

→ The puzzle, the pain, the unanswered question of disease + death - will we ever conquer it? Will there ever be life without death?