

John 16:23-28

Jesus just got done speaking about the coming events that would cause great sorrow followed by great joy in the hearts of His disciples. He was talking about His crucifixion and resurrection. They were going to experience emotions similar to a woman in labor - intense sorrow and pain that would give way to great relief and joy. Now we pick up where He left off.

These few verses have to do with our relationship to God and the way we ask Him for things. All throughout the Old Testament God's people prayed. They called on Him as their Maker, King, Commander, Deliverer, and Redeemer. Up until this point nobody prayed "in Jesus' name". That's about to change.

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:23-24)

Notice how this change will take place "in that day." Jesus is talking about the time after His death and resurrection. So many awesome events are about to unfold that will fulfill centuries old prophecies. Once Jesus rises again from the dead, the disciples will understand at a much deeper level. In particular, they're going to understand the way Jesus grants them (and us) ACCESS to God's throne of grace.

1. The disciples will be able to ask the Father "in Jesus' name."

This doesn't mean that every prayer has to end with the phrase, "in Jesus' name, amen." Jesus is talking about the way His disciples can approach God and make requests because of their relationship to Him. In other words, Jesus is the WAY to the Father. (See Ephesians 2:14-18 regarding Jew and Gentiles having this access, also see Hebrews 4:16 for how we can approach God's throne of grace to get help.)

Jesus says the Father Himself loves the disciples. They can pray to God as their Father - not just Christ's Father. The staggering truth is that the Father loves Christ's people as much as He loves Christ! This sounds too good to be true! It's a reminder of the unbelievable benefits we enjoy in our union with Christ.

2. Their asking will be answered.

Jesus assures them that as they ask in His name, they will receive.

Discussion Question: How does praying in Christ's name affect the things we ask for?

Thoughts: *He has taught His disciples to love God and to desire the things of God. This will define the kinds of things we ask for! We are taught to love the things that God loves and to desire the things that God desires. **"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."** (Psalm 37:4). When God is our greatest love and joy - our desires will change. God Himself will give us new and right desires.*

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As Christ's disciples approach the Father and ask for good, godly, scriptural things - they will receive what they ask for. Of course there are things that God does not give us even when we ask. But we can rest assured that God always acts with love, wisdom, and grace as He answers our prayers.

Perhaps the best way to sum up this passage is to remember the word Abba. It's a term that denotes fatherly affection and care. It's like a child calling out to their "daddy". Jesus is essentially telling the disciples that they are loved by God - so they can ask Him for what they need and trust in His fatherly care. Take a moment to read Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. See how these verses use this term "Abba" to describe an important aspect of our prayer life. The Holy Spirit causes us to cry out to God just like a child reaching out his arms in desire and dependency on his father. Wow!