

Mark 11:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Analysis

Jesus teaches the relationship between faith and answered prayer with a striking present-tense affirmation. The Greek *pisteusate hoti elabete* (πιστεύσατε ὅτι ἐλάβετε, "believe that you received") uses the aorist tense, indicating completed action—believers should have such confidence in God's promise that they count the answer as already given before seeing results. This isn't presumption or positive thinking but faith in God's character and promises. The phrase *hosa an proseuchomenoi aiteisthe* (ὅσα ἂν προσευχόμενοι αἰτεῖσθε, "whatsoever you desire when you pray") must be understood within biblical limits: prayers according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15), offered in faith, for God's glory, not selfish desires (James 4:3). Reformed theology emphasizes that God sovereignly determines outcomes, yet commands us to pray with bold confidence, knowing He hears and will answer according to His perfect wisdom—sometimes granting requests, sometimes denying for greater good, but always responding to His children's prayers.

Historical Context

This teaching followed Jesus' cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14, 20-21), which withered overnight—a prophetic sign of God's judgment on fruitless Israel (specifically the Temple establishment Jesus had just cleansed). The disciples marveled at the fig tree's withering, and Jesus used the occasion to teach about faith's power in prayer. This occurred during Passion Week in Jerusalem, days before Jesus' crucifixion. The early church faced severe testing—persecution,

imprisonment, martyrdom—requiring extraordinary faith to continue praying when circumstances seemed hopeless. This promise sustained believers who prayed for deliverance, boldness, healing, and gospel advance, trusting God to answer according to His sovereign purposes. The book of Acts records numerous dramatic answers to prayer (Peter's release from prison, Paul's protection, spread of the gospel), demonstrating that the early church took this promise seriously and experienced its reality.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What prevents you from praying with the bold confidence Jesus describes—doubt about God's power, His willingness, or His wisdom in answering?
2. How does the command to believe you've received before seeing results challenge the way you currently approach prayer?

Interlinear Text

διὰ	τοῦτο	λέγω	ὑμῖν	πάντα	ὅσα	ἂν
Therefore	G5124	I say	unto you	things	What	soever
G1223		G3004	G5213	G3956	G3745	G302
προσεύχόμενοι	αἰτεῖσθε	πιστεύετε	ὅτι	λαμβάνετε	καὶ	
when ye pray	ye desire	believe	that	ye receive	them and	
G4336	G154	G4100	G3754	G2983	G2532	
ἔσται	ὑμῖν					
shall have	unto you					
G2071	G5213					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 21:22 (Faith): And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

1 John 3:22 (Parallel theme): And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

Matthew 18:19 (Parallel theme): Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

John 15:7 (Parallel theme): If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 14:13 (Parallel theme): And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

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