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## Faith in Prayer I, Mark 11:20-24

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### Introduction

- E. M. Bounds wrote, “What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men -- men of prayer.”<sup>1</sup>
  - We desire to be a church that *knows God* and declares the *Lordship of Christ over every square inch of Acadiana*. Therefore, we must be a praying church.
- What passages of Scripture have most challenged you? This is one of my top ones.
  - Moreover, in over a decade of preaching/teaching, I don’t think I have ever been as intimidated by a passage.
    - We will be spending two weeks looking at it.

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### What Faith in Prayer Is Not

- Douglas Groothuis was here in October and he reminded us to “test the spirits” ([1 John 4:1](#)).
- First, faith in prayer is not positive affirmations (law of attractions).
- Second, faith in prayer is not “claiming” what we desire (Word of Faith).
- Third, faith in prayer is not a morality exercise (prosperity gospel).
- Lastly, faith in prayer is not sheepish, dull, half-hearted requests.

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## What Faith in Prayer Is

- How often do your prayers lack power and confidence? How frequently do our prayers feel forced?
  - Many of us go to God out of obligation and do not leave feeling refreshed. We do not approach with the assurance that he will supply our every need.
- **Point:** Faith in prayer is confidence that God really hears us and will answer us.
  - Do you actually believe in the power of prayer?
    - Many Christians pray because they believe it is the right thing to do, but not because they believe that it has power. Or perhaps they think that the effects of their prayers depend on many other facts but not that prayer has any essential qualities or power in itself.
  - Two reasons to believe in the power of prayer and increase your faith:
    - First, the size of your faith in prayer will depend on the size of your God.
      - Many of us believe in a small God who is incapable of accomplishing much.
      - Similarly, some of us *don't know* the true God; therefore, they...
        - Pray to a smaller god made in their own image.
        - Are insecure in their prayers because they don't know God's will.
    - Second, the size of your faith in prayer will be dependent on the degree that you believe God's Word.
      - Are you willing to take the risk of *acting on* Jesus' words in Mark 11?
      - Do you believe that God is still active in our world? Do you believe that he desires to save the lost? Do you believe that he can deliver from addictions and afflictions? Do you believe that he still heals?
      - Do you believe that God has ordained that prayer be the means by which he enacts his decrees in the world?
        - "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

- Spurgeon: “Our prayers are God’s decrees in another shape. The prayers of God’s people are but God’s promises breathed out of living hearts, and those promises are the decrees, only put into another form and fashion.”<sup>2</sup>
- You might say, “If God is sovereign and foreknows all he will do, why does he ordain that we carry out his decrees in prayer?”
  - Parents, do you know how much joy it brings to grant your child’s request? This Friday I had some great father-son time with Gideon. I wanted to take him to Sky Zone, but I wanted him to ask for it! “What do you want? We will do whatever you want.”
    - There is greater joy to be shared when the father graciously grants our requests.
- But how can I really trust that he hears and will answer me? *ME?*
  - Because his Son requested that the cup would pass from him and the Father denied his prayer...
    - 1) we now have salvation through the Son available to us.
    - 2) we can make our prayers in faith knowing that he will supply our every need.
- Therefore, we have confidence in our God, and that faith is expressed in great prayer.

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## Prayer Points

1. Confess our unbelief, morality exercises, and dull prayers.
2. Praise God for his faithfulness, his salvation, and ongoing mercies.
3. Request greater faith in his Word and expectations in the power of prayer.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> E. M. Bounds, *Power in Prayer*.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Spurgeon, “True Prayer—True Power!” Sermon #328, Volume 6, [spurgeongems.org](http://spurgeongems.org), 4.