**Can You Forgive Like God**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 11:24-33**

**Wednesday Evening**

**July 3, 2019**

**24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.**

Saints, this verse was not a guarantee that the disciples could get anything they wanted simply by asking Jesus and believing. God does not grant requests that violate his own nature or will. Jesus’ statement was not a blank check. To be fulfilled, requests made to God in prayer must be in harmony with the principles of God’s Kingdom. They must be made in Jesus’ name.

**John 14:13-14**

13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

Saints, this must be always taken in context with the rest of Scripture. First John 5:14 says, “If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” We are told to submit to God’s will in our prayers.

We are never given the power to speak things into existence. Elsewhere, Jesus taught,

**Matthew 6:33**

“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”

When we seek God first and align our thoughts and desires with His thoughts and desires, then we are showing true faith.

**Luke 22:39-43**

39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

That, in turn, leads to us asking for the things that God wants, not the things that we want. Our desires become His desires, and our prayers become requests to fulfill His desires rather than our own. The purpose of prayer is not to speak things into existence but to conform our will to God’s

The stronger our faith, the more likely our prayers will be in union with Christ and in line with God’s will; then God would be happy to grant them. God can accomplish anything, even if it seems humanly impossible.

**25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."**

Saints, Jesus gave another condition for answered prayer—this one referring to believers’ relationships with others.

He told the disciples that when they stood praying, if one of them held a grudge against someone, he ought to first forgive that person before praying. Why would this matter?

Because all people are sinners before God. Those who have access to him have it only because of his mercy in forgiving their sins. Believers should not come to God asking for forgiveness or making requests, all the while refusing to forgive others.

To do so would reveal that they have no appreciation for the mercy they have received. God will not listen to a person with such an attitude. God wants those who are forgiven to forgive others.

**Psalm 66:18**

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.”

Saints, another biblically plausible interpretation of Mark 11:26 is that it is saying anyone who refuses to forgive others is demonstrating that he has not truly received Christ's forgiveness himself.

Any sin committed against us, no matter how terrible, is trivial in comparison to our sins against God. If God has forgiven us of so much, how could we refuse to forgive others of so "little"? Mark 11:26, according to this view, proclaims that anyone who harbors unforgiveness against others has not truly experienced God's forgiveness.

Both interpretations strongly deny that salvation is dependent on our forgiving others. Whether Mark 11:26 is speaking of "relational forgiveness," or whether it is a declaration that unforgiveness is the mark of an unbeliever, the core truth is the same.

We should forgive others because God, through Christ, has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32).

**Ephesians 4:32**

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

It is wrong for someone who has truly experienced God's forgiveness to refuse to grant forgiveness to others.

**27 Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. 28 And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"**

Saints, the teaching recorded in Mark 11:22-26 transpired on Tuesday morning, as Jesus and the disciples were on their way back into Jerusalem. They returned to the Temple, where Jesus had thrown out the merchants and money changers the day before.

The religious leaders were afraid to act on their plot to kill Jesus in the public surroundings of the Temple. He was safe in the Temple courts among the people with whom he was so popular.

But a delegation of religious leaders stopped Jesus to question him regarding his actions the day before. This group of leaders was already plotting to kill Jesus, but they couldn’t figure out how to do it. His popularity was far too widespread and his miracle-working powers too well known.

So they continued to try to trap him. They asked for his credentials and demanded that he tell them who gave him the authority to drive out the merchants from the Temple. If Jesus were to answer that his authority came from God, which would be tantamount to saying he was the Messiah and the Son of God, they would accuse him of blasphemy (blasphemy carried the death penalty; see Leviticus 24:10-23).

**Leviticus 24:13-16**

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 14 "Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. 15 Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.

16 And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death.

If Jesus were to say that his authority was his own, they could dismiss him as a fanatic and could trust that the crowds would soon return to those with true authority (themselves). But Jesus would not let himself be caught. Turning the question on them, he exposed their motives and avoided their trap.

**29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: 30 The baptism of John--was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."**

Saints, to expose the leaders’ real motives, Jesus countered their question with a question.

Jesus’ question seems totally unrelated to the situation at hand, but Jesus knew that the leaders’ attitude about John the Baptist would reveal their true attitude toward him.

In this question, Jesus implied that his authority came from the same source as John the Baptist’s. So Jesus asked these religious leaders what they thought: Did John’s authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human authority?

**31 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 32 "But if we say, 'From men' "--they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. 33 So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."**

The interchange recorded among these factions of the religious leaders revealed their true motives. They weren’t interested in the truth; they didn’t want an answer to their question so they could finally understand Jesus—they simply hoped to trap him.

But they found themselves in a position of looking foolish in front of the crowd. If they answered that John’s baptism had come from heaven, then they would incriminate themselves for not listening to John and believing his words.

If they rejected John as having any divine authority, then they also were rejecting Jesus’ authority and would be in danger of the crowd, since everyone thought that John was a prophet. If they accepted John’s authority, they would then have to admit that Jesus also had divine authority.

The leaders couldn’t win, so they hoped to save face by refusing to take either alternative. Thus, Jesus was not obligated to answer their question. The religious leaders had already decided against Jesus, carrying on a long tradition of the leaders of Israel rejecting God’s prophets.

Saints, the Jews rejected Jesus because He failed, in their eyes, to do what they expected their Messiah to do—destroy evil and all their enemies and establish an eternal kingdom with Israel as the preeminent nation in the world. The prophecies in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 describe a suffering Messiah who would be persecuted and killed, but the Jews chose to focus instead on those prophecies that discuss His glorious victories, not His crucifixion.

**Isaiah 53:1-9**

1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, everyone, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

9 And they made His grave with the wicked--But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

**Psalm 22:1-21**

1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? 2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent. 3 But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. 5 They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed. 6 But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7 All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

8 "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" 9 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. 10 I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God.

11 Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. 13 They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.

18 They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. 19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! 20 Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. 21 Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen!

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**