

Prayer's Focal Point: Calling On the Name of the Lord

1 Introduction

A. This morning, we are going to have a slightly different sermon than we usually have here at Gloria Deo

1. Instead of continuing in Micah 4 this morning, I'm going to take a detour and take a week to meditate on prayer
2. And, unlike most weeks, I don't have a central passage that I'm going to expound on this morning, instead this is going to be more of a topical or, I'd rather call, Biblical Theological sermon - examining the trajectory of prayer across the entire Bible to help us understand what prayer is, why we should devote ourselves to prayer and how to do it

B. Why are we not in Micah this morning?

1. Back in April, Barry Park, the pastor at UCC, sent an e-mail around to multiple pastors/churches in the Manhattan area suggesting that as a show of unity and community in the greater body of Christ, every church would come together to teach on prayer during the month of October
2. In Barry's initial invitation, he outlined three main goals for October that he hoped the body of Christ would do together:
 - 1 a. *That we would pick 4 weeks [in October] to preach a short sermon on prayer and God falling on our community to move hearts toward Him... that the lost would be found... that the saved would be "sold out followers"... and that God would be glorified and honored through the local church bodies.*
 - 1 b. *That each church involved would pray for another church by name in their services as the Lord leads. ... If everyone does that - it'll raise the awareness / heart for the local Body of Christ among our church families. Often there is reshuffling of the deck because the other local churches aren't necessarily seen as connected - but we all have one Lord Jesus, one Holy Spirit, one awesome Father! So I want to lift up other churches in our services to pray that there would be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in each church family; that the Kingdom would advance through all of those who preach the Gospel of Jesus!*
 - 1 c. *That we'd encourage our small groups / Sunday schools / Bible studies, etc to join in prayer as well. And that we'd end these four weeks with a night of prayer. DIFFERENT than what you may expect though, NOT all in one place. But we each have circles of influence. So each church would be responsible to have a prayer evening with their OWN church family & in a manner that fits their ministry. This would encourage each church to come together as a family while recognizing that there is a greater church family & lost community to pray for*
3. Dan and I both thought that these were worthy goals, so we have set aside this last Sunday in October to join the broader church in Manhattan and focus on prayer with two complementary aims in mind:
 - a. First, to encourage ourselves in the theology, practice and necessity of prayer
 - b. And second, to visibly align ourselves and remind ourselves of our connection with the greater body of Christ
4. And then, this Wednesday, as we come to reflect on the message, we'd like to set aside extra time during our prayer time to specifically pray for our community - to pray for other churches in our community, to pray for the lost in our communities that they would come to know the salvation that is in Christ, to pray for the leaders of our community and anything else that God would lead us to pray for

C. Proposition, Inspiration, and Outline

1. **Proposition:** The main focus or the main thrust of prayer in Scripture is calling on the name of the Lord, that is, calling on God to fulfill His promise and provide salvation, and this should be the focal point and driving force of our prayers as well.
2. This sermon has a couple of inspirations standing behind it, one being Barry Park's encouragement to the churches in Manhattan, but another has been a book that I've been working through recently by J. Gary Miller called "Calling on the Name of the Lord: a Biblical Theology of Prayer"
 - a. In fact, enough of the thoughts that I'm going to present in the message this morning were inspired and informed by reading this book that to avoid plagiarism I really need to acknowledge and cite this book
 - b. And I would encourage anyone who was interested in meditating on this topic more and understanding the prayers in Scripture to get a copy and read this book
 - c. This morning, I'm going to try to boil down his argument to a few simple points and use that to help us understand what prayer is about and how we ought to pray
3. And we'll have six, hopefully short, points this morning as we look at prayer across the Scriptures
 - 1 a. The First prayer
 - 1 b. Old Testament prayers
 - 1 c. Jesus' prayers
 - 1 d. Paul's prayers
 - 1 e. Prayer and Promise
 - 1 f. Application

1 I. The First Prayers: Calling on God to Keep His Promise

1 A. At the dawn of creation in the Garden of Eden, there was no need for prayer as we know it now, because God Himself walked in the garden and Adam and Eve spoke to Him face to face - there was perfect communion with God

1. But the events of Genesis 3 destroyed this communion and resulted in Adam and Eve being cut off from God's presence
- 1 2. But in the midst of destruction, God had made a promise, Genesis 3:15 - *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*
3. And this promise becomes the focus of Genesis and the entire Old Testament - mankind would not always be cut off from the presence of God, man would be welcomed into God's place - and this promise would come through the birth of a son
- 1 4. So there is a sense of great rejoicing at the beginning of Genesis 4 when not just one, but two sons are born to Eve, Genesis 4:1-2 - *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." And again, she bore his brother Abel.*
- 1 5. God's promise was coming true and the promise was soon to be fulfilled, or at least it looked that way until disaster overtook them again, Genesis 4:8-12 - *And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ... And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."*
- 1 6. In that moment, it must have seemed that God's promise was going to fail - a son had been born but had again been cast out - but the end of the chapter brings another moment of rejoicing, because God's promise is renewed with the birth of another son, Genesis 4:25 - *And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."*
- 1 7. It must have seemed that the promise was soon to be fulfilled, but time went on and nothing happens - the only thing recorded about Seth is that he also had a son, Genesis 4:26 - *To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh.*
- 1 8. When another generation started to grow up without the promise being fulfilled, it must have occurred to them that God's promise was not going to be fulfilled immediately - there must have been the temptation to wonder if it would ever be fulfilled - the first son was cast out, the second son killed, and the third son does nothing - would God's promise fail?

2 B. But then we come to a very interesting phrase in the book of Genesis

- 1 1. Genesis 4:26 - *At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.*
 - a. This verse indicates that to this point people had not been calling on the name of the Lord - the concept of prayer had not emerged until this point - but now some are calling out to God, calling on His name
 - b. So why do people begin to call on the name of the Lord when Enosh is born? Why does Scripture record the existence but not the content or the motivation of these first prayers?
2. I think that the content and the motivation of these first prayers are indicated by the stories leading up to them
 - a. With the birth of Enosh, people began to realize that the promise was not going to come soon
 - b. And so, with the birth of Enosh, those waiting for the promise begin to call out to God to keep His promise
 - c. They saw their own inadequacy and their desperate need for God to act on their behalf so they turn to God and cry out to Him: God keep your promise to Adam! God send a savior and deliverer for us!
3. And Scripture records these first prayers to show us the purpose and the meaning of prayer
 - a. The driving force of prayer is understanding of our need for God's promise and a desire for God to keep His promise
 - 1 b. And this desire becomes the central focus or the main thrust of prayer, this desire is cried out before God: God we need you to keep your promise! God keep your promise!

2 C. And a pattern emerges as we go through Genesis: God makes promises and God's people cry out for that promise to be kept

- 1 1. Abraham: Genesis 12:7-8 - *Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.*
 - a. God makes great and glorious promises to Abraham in Genesis 12, and in response Abraham comes to the land of Canaan and travels through it, and as he reaches the land, he builds an altar and calls upon the name of the Lord
 - b. Abraham is looking for God's promise, so he pleads for God to keep His promise and be faithful to His word
- 1 2. Isaac: Genesis 26:24-25 - *And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake." So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.*
 - a. In Genesis 26, God appears to Isaac and promises that He will continue to keep His covenant with Abraham and in response Isaac again builds an altar and calls upon the name of the Lord
 - b. Isaac was looking for God's promise, so he pleads for God to keep His promise and be faithful to His word
3. The pattern of prayer is hearing God's promise and responding with desire: God keep your promise to me!

1 II. Prayers in the Old Testament: Calling on God to Remember and Fulfill His Covenant

A. As we continue this morning, I want to look at some prayers in the Old Testament and see what their goal was in prayer

1. Clearly, looking at all of the prayers of the Old Testament is far beyond my reach this morning - you could teach entire seminary classes on the prayers of the Old Testament, so I'm just going to look at a couple of important prayers
2. I want to look at the prayers of Israel in Egypt, of Moses on the mountain, of Solomon at the temple and the prayer of Jeremiah before the destruction of the temple and see what their heart was in prayer

1 B. Israel in Bondage in Egypt

1. At the end of the patriarchs, Israel ends up in Egypt where they start out as an honored people but quickly descend to the lowest of slaves - the promise of God to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob seems to be failing, and God's people cry out
- 1 2. Exodus 2:23-25 - *During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel--and God knew.*
3. In the midst of disaster when it seemed that God's promise was failing, God's people cried out to God to keep His promise and honor His covenant - and it says that God heard and God remembered and God acted to send Moses the deliverer

2 C. Moses on the Mountain Before God

1. Exodus 32 is the infamous chapter where the Israelites abandon Moses and YHWH Himself and instead turn to embrace a carved image, a golden calf and God declares that He is going to destroy His people and start over again
2. But at this disastrous junction, Moses stands and pleads with God:
- 1 3. Exodus 32:10-13 - *But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'"*
4. Notice the main call or the main request of Moses' plea - Moses calls on God to remember His covenant and to keep His promise - if God destroys His people then His promise fails and God's people need God to be faithful to His promise
5. So Moses calls on the name of the Lord - He calls on God to honor His name by keeping His promise

2 D. Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple

1. Some 400 years pass between Moses and Solomon and many prayers are prayed, and I can't examine all of those this morning, but we come to another incredibly important juncture: the dedication of the temple of God
- 2 2. II Chronicles 6:12-17, 42 - *Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, 'You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me.' Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David... O LORD God, do not turn away the face of your anointed one! Remember your steadfast love for David your servant."*
3. Like Moses, Solomon's prayer is focused on the promise of God coming true - He praises God because God's promise has been kept with the dedication of the temple, and he calls out to God to keep keeping His promise
4. Solomon called on the name of the Lord - He calls on God to honor His name by keeping His promise
- 1 5. And this is exactly the same thing his father had done when God had made the promise to Him - God made His covenant with David in II Samuel 7, and David responds in II Samuel 7:25-27 - *And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you.*

2 E. Jeremiah before the Destruction of Jerusalem

- 1 1. Jeremiah 14:17-22 - *"We acknowledge our wickedness, O LORD, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against you. Do not spurn us, for your name's sake; do not dishonor your glorious throne; remember and do not break your covenant with us. Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are you not he, O LORD our God? We set our hope on you, for you do all these things.*

1 III. Jesus' Prayers: Calling on His Father to Accomplish Salvation

1 A. The one I'm going to spend the most time on is Jesus' longest recorded prayer in John 17

1. Again, this prayer could be the subject of one or multiple sermons on its own, so we'll barely scratch the surface, but listen to the petitions that Jesus makes during His High Priestly Prayer
2. John 17 - *When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. ... Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ... I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ... Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ... I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ... Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world..."*
3. In Jesus' glorious prayer before the cross, He calls on His Father to glorify His name by keeping His promise to provide salvation for His people - Jesus calls on the name of the Lord, but not for His own salvation, instead for His people
 - a. And each request is calling on God to keep His promise and enact salvation: to make His people one, because God had promised to gather one people; to keep them from the evil one, because God had promised to deliver His people; to sanctify them, because God had promised to wash His people from sin and put His law within them; and to let them see His glory, because God had promised to display all of His glory to His people
4. Jesus prayer is focused on salvation - He is calling on God to keep His promise and save His people

2 B. And the other recorded prayers of Jesus match this pattern

1. In John 12, Jesus is walking through the crowd in Jerusalem the day before Passover and He prays in John 12:27-28 - *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."*
 - a. Jesus calls on His Father to glorify His name by providing salvation - He is calling on the name of the Lord
1. And the night of His crucifixion, Jesus prays for Peter in Luke 22:31-32 - *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail."*
 - a. Again, Jesus prays that His Father's promise would not fail for Peter, even as Satan sifts Him like wheat
1. We might be tempted to think that Jesus' prayer in the Garden didn't follow this pattern, but listen Matthew 26:39,42 - *And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." ... Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."*
 - a. Jesus' primary prayer was that God's will would be done - that God would keep His promise and provide salvation
4. The heart of all of Jesus' prayers were to call out to God to keep His promise and provide salvation - God's promises motivated and filled Jesus' prayers, a desire for God's promises to be fulfilled informed all of Jesus' prayers

2 C. We can't look at Jesus' prayers without looking at how Jesus taught His disciples to pray

1. Matthew 5:9-13 - *Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*
2. What I want to see this morning, is that Jesus taught His disciples to pray with the same heart, a heart that called on God to glorify His name by keeping His promise of salvation
3. So Jesus teaches us to start by calling on God to glorify His name: *our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name!*
4. And then the prayer calls on God to keep four promises of salvation:
 - a. First, *your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* - a call to God to end the curse and establish a new people who are righteous before God - a call to God to keep His promise of salvation, the promise of Genesis 3
 - b. Then, *give us this day our daily bread* - a call to God to provide what is necessary for our lives to seek after Him - a call to God to provide for His promise
 - c. Third, *forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors* - a call to God for justification, to forgive the sins of His people - a call to God to fulfill the promise at the heart of His covenant
 - d. Fourth, *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* - a call to God for sanctification, to be cleansing us daily from sin - a call to God to full the promise at the heart of the New Covenant
5. Jesus' prayers were focused on God's promises being fulfilled to the glory of God's name, and Jesus teaches His disciples to pray for the fulfillment of God's promises to the glory of God's name - to call upon the name of the Lord!

1 IV. Paul's Prayers: Calling on God to Complete Salvation

A. As we continue through the New Testament, there are many examples of prayer

1. For example, we could look at the prayers of Acts, which would be an excellent study, or the prayers of Revelation
2. But as we finish our examination of the New Testament, I want to finish by looking at Paul's prayers
3. Paul prayed often in His letters and recorded His prayers at length so we can see the heart and the focus of them clearly

1 B. So let's look at a few of Paul's prayers

1. In Ephesians 1, Paul prays that the Ephesians would know and live God's promises - Ephesians 1:16-19 - *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*
2. In Ephesians 3, Paul prays that the Ephesians would know the fullness of salvation - Ephesians 3:14-19 - *For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*
3. In Philippians 1, Paul prays that God's promise to sanctify the Philippians would be fulfilled - Philippians 1:9-11 - *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*
4. In Colossians 1, Paul prays that God's promise would bear fruit in the Colossians lives - Colossians 1:9-12 - *And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.*
5. And in I Thessalonians 5, Paul prays that God would be faithful to sanctify and preserve the Thessalonians according to His promise, and he rejoices because He knows God will be faithful to His promise - I Thessalonians 5:23-24 - *Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*
6. Just by looking at a sampling of Paul's prayers, we can see that behind all of Paul's prayers was a desire for God to keep His promise of salvation and to work that promise out in the lives of those that Paul ministered to
7. Paul was calling on the name of the Lord - calling on God to glorify His name by keeping His promise

2 C. And Paul often asked others to pray as well

1. One of Paul's most common commands is to pray always or pray without ceasing, which would fit into this very well - we all should desire the promises of God to be fulfilled, that ought to be our life and our breath - God keep your promises!
2. But Paul also asked others to pray for specific things; things always associated with God's promise of salvation
3. Paul ask the Ephesians to pray that the gospel would go forward in the midst of persecution - Ephesians 6:19-20 - *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*
4. Paul asked the Colossians to pray that the gospel would go forward clearly - Colossians 4:3-4 - *At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison---4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.*
5. Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for his deliverance so he could keep preaching the gospel - II Thessalonians 3:1-2 - *Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith.*
6. Paul wasn't just praying for personal desires and he didn't ask others to pray for personal desires - he wanted people to pray toward the promise of God - that God's salvation would go forward to the world

D. Paul prayed for many things throughout his letters, but always with one thing in mind

1. Paul's letters help us see the point clearly - whenever Paul brought a request to God, behind that request was a desire for God's promise of salvation to go forward
2. All of Paul's prayers dripped with this desire and Paul wouldn't pray except that God's promise would be fully kept and His salvation fully known - Paul called on the name of the Lord and asked others to call on the name of the Lord as well

1 V. Prayer and Promise - Always Joined

A. So far this morning, I've made a proposition that prayer is primarily calling out to God to keep His promises

1. And prayer can have many subjects, but behind them all is a desire and a cry for God to keep His promise
2. And we've run through both the Old Testament and New Testament at a full sprint to try to see that this morning
3. So prayer and promise are always joined - prayer is a response to God's promise, when we hear God's promise we cry out to God with desire for that promise to be fulfilled - prayer and promise are inseparable
4. But there's another dimension to the inseparability of prayer and promise

1 B. If the heart of prayer is calling on the name of the Lord, then we can't finish without finding the climax of that flow in Acts 2

1. In Acts 2, Peter is preaching on the Day of Pentecost, and he starts his message by quoting from Joel, Acts 2:17-21 - *"And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*
2. Peter says that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved - but what does this mean?
3. If calling on the name of the Lord means crying out to God to keep His promise - then the promise is that everyone who earnestly desires God's promises and cries out to God to keep His promises will receive His promises
4. Those who hear God's promise, desire God's promise, cry out to God for His promise - they are those who will receive the promise - those who desire God's promise of salvation will receive God's promise of salvation

3 C. And this glorious truth - when we pray for God's promises to be fulfilled they will be fulfilled - is found throughout the NT

1. Paul repeats the same truth in Romans 10:11-13 - *For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*
2. And then John often records something similar:
 - 1a. John 14:13-14 - *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*
 - 1b. John 15:16 - *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.*
 - 1c. John 16:23-24 - *In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*
 - 1d. I John 5:14-15 - *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*
3. John repeatedly tells us that when we pray in the name of Christ then our prayers will be answered
 - a. He doesn't mean that we have a magic wand which can make God do anything - the words here have deep meaning and are tied to calling on the name of the Lord
 - b. When we pray in Christ's name we are calling on Him to glorify His name by keeping His promises - we are calling on the name of the Lord - and when we call on the name of the Lord, God will answer and keep His promises
 - c. It's the same truth - when we pray for God's promises to be fulfilled, they will be fulfilled - prayer and promise are inseparable

2 D. And this brings us to the center of the gospel: prayer and promise are inseparable because Christ won the promise for us

1. It is no accident that "Jesus Christ is Lord" is at the center of the Gospel - Jesus is YHWH Himself come to save His people and our confession is that "He is Lord" and we cry out to Him for salvation - we cry in the name of Jesus
2. And Jesus has fulfilled everyone of God's promises, so we can have confidence when we pray - when we ask God to keep His promises in Jesus, we know that He will because He already has
- 1 3. Paul rejoices in this truth in II Corinthians 1:20 - *For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.*
4. When we say 'Amen' at the end of our prayer we are expressing confidence in God's promises in Christ - we have cried out to God to fulfill His promise for us and we finish by rejoicing that He will - "Amen! So be it!"
5. Jesus life, death and resurrection won every promise of salvation for us, so now we can confidently pray that God would keep His promises to us: promises of forgiveness and justification, washing and sanctification, preservation and perseverance - every one of these promises will be fulfilled in Jesus as we call out to God for Him to keep His promise!

1 VI. Application: Call on the Name of the Lord

A. As we finish this morning, I want to make a couple applications of our study

1. If prayer is centered on calling on the name of the Lord, and calling on the name of the Lord means crying out for God to keep His promises, what does that mean for us? How do we call upon the name of the Lord
12. I'll make three applications this morning, and they will all flow out of Romans 8:18-30 - **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.**

1 B. First, we need to know how much we need God's promises

1. If promise and prayer are always joined, if promise is the driving force of prayer, then our first application must be to know God's promises and to know our need for God's promises
 - a. An steadfast and earnest prayer life will only be filled by knowing how deeply we need God to keep His promises
 - 1b. Our life should be built on a longing for God's promise, a longing that knows we are without hope unless God keeps His promise - and this is exactly what Romans 8 describes to us (above)
12. Paul says a similar thing in Ephesians 2, talking to Gentiles about before they came to Christ
 - 1a. Ephesians 2:12 - *remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.*
 - b. Without God's promise, we are without hope in this world - our lives ought to flow with deep longing, even groaning for God to come and keep His promises
13. So before we come to prayer we need to come to promise - God's promises spur prayer
 - a. And we need to know God's promises and allow our desires to be shaped and driven by God's promises
 - b. When we desire God's promise, then our desire will be fulfilled - our longing should be for the promise of God

2 C. Second, our need for God's promises should drive us to prayer

1. When we know how deeply we need God's promise to be fulfilled and when that is all the longing of our heart, then obeying Paul's commands about prayer will be no burden, it will only be natural
 - 1a. Paul commands us to always be praying, I Thessalonians 5:17 - *pray without ceasing!*
 - i. If our hearts are burdened and groaning for God's promises to be fulfilled, then the constant movement of our heart will be toward God, crying out for His promise to be fulfilled - we will want to pray without ceasing
 - ii. To not pray without ceasing would be like not breathing or not eating to us, we would wither and die without prayer, looking for God's promise to be fulfilled
 - 1b. Or again, Colossians 4:2 - *Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.*
 - i. We should be steadfast in prayer, being watchful in it - but what does being watchful mean?
 - ii. It means, we are always in prayer looking for the promises of God, watching for Him to keep His promises
 - 1c. And this is where Romans 8 leads us - if our lives are filled with groaning we should be driven to prayer (above)
 - i. Romans 8 seems to turn on a dime right there - why does Paul all the sudden turn to the Spirit's intercession
 - ii. But it actually flows very well - our lives should be filled with groaning, a groaning for God's promise to be fulfilled, a groaning that is expressed to God, a groaning that is calling upon the name of the Lord
 - iii. And when our groaning is this deep, we would be driven to such prayer that we would almost despair of possibly praying enough, possibly desiring God's promises enough - but Paul says there is another promise, when we desire God's promises that much, the Spirit will aid us in our prayer, He will groan with us
 - iv. Our groaning for God's promises leads us to Spirit-filled prayer for God's promises to be fulfilled

2 D. Third, the center and thrust of our prayer should be crying out to God to keep His promises

1. As our need for God's promises drives us to our knees in prayer, the content of our prayer should be the promise of God
 - a. Our prayer should come full circle - the promise of God drive us to prayer and prayer focuses on the promise of God
 - b. Our desire should be for our justification, our sanctification, our glorification, so we cry out to God for Him to forgive our sins, for Him to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, for Him to preserve us and present us blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy
 - c. These promises should be our desire and we should express our desires back to God, calling out for Him to keep His promises - crying out before Him how much we need His promise and calling Him to be faithful to us
- 1 2. And this is where Romans 8 concludes, Romans 8:18-30 - *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
 - a. If our groaning leads us to Spirit-filled prayer, then Spirit-filled prayer should lead us to the promises of God
 - b. These promises - that God will bring all things together for our good, that He will conform us to the likeness of His Son, that He has chosen us and will justify us and glorify us - these promises should be the content of our prayers
 - c. Our prayers shouldn't be merely about shallow, worldly things - our desires, and therefore our prayers, should be consumed by the depths and riches of God's promises
 - d. That doesn't mean we don't pray about temporal things - we should pray for each other in sickness and in trials and uphold one another in prayer - but even in these things we should have a deeper desire, that God's promise would be fulfilled - we can cry out for healing and for blessing, but our ultimate cry should be for salvation
 - e. If our prayers are merely for worldly goods, for health and blessing in this world for ourselves and for others, then our desires are no different than the world and our prayers are no different than an unbelievers
 - f. But if our desires have been transformed, if we are groaning for the promises of God to appear and that is all our longing and desire, then everything we pray for will lead back to God's promises
 - g. Father, please heal so-and-so so that they can know more of your promise and they can proclaim your greatness, or if not, give them peace and joy in the gospel, use this as a time of sanctification in them, to grow them in the knowledge of you and the joy of the gospel and present them blameless before the presence of your glory, with great joy
 - h. These are the desires that God wants to hear and these are the desires that God promises He will answer - when we call upon His name then have confidence that God will answer - healing may or may not come, but when we seek God's promises we know that they will come true
 - i. So we pray for ourselves, we pray for each other, but ultimately we pray with great earnestness that God would keep His promises to us and to all of His people - O God, please come with salvation!
- 2 3. Our prayers ought to sound like the end of Psalm 119 - Psalm 119:169-176 - *Let my cry come before you, O LORD; give me understanding according to your word! Let my plea come before you; deliver me according to your word. My lips will pour forth praise, for you teach me your statutes. My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right. Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight. Let my soul live and praise you, and let your rules help me. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.*
 - a. The Psalmist cries out to God to keep His promise - to give understanding of His word, to deliver according to His word, to give Him salvation, to give Him forgiveness
 - b. He heard the promises of God and cried out to God for His promise
4. And this is where prayer ends in the Bible - a final promise and a cry to God to keep that promise
 - 1 a. Revelation 20:22 - *He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*
 - b. And we can respond with great joy: Yes, come quickly, Lord Jesus! Keep your promise to us!