

## WHAT IT MEANS TO PRAY IN THE NAME OF JESUS

"If you ask anything in my name," Jesus promised, "I will do it." (John 14:14). What an incredible confidence this should infuse into prayer! But do we tap the power and potency of heaven simply by tacking the words "in Jesus' name" onto the end of our prayers? No. There's more involved.

Let me explain from personal experience.

Years ago a man named Bill Cavanaugh put me in charge of a large construction project. "I'm counting on you to get this job finished on time and within budget," he admonished. "I trust you to do whatever the situation requires, and I'll back you up in your decisions. But come to me quickly if you encounter trouble you can't handle."

As difficult and knotty problems invariably arose, I'd exert my influence as project manager to effect the necessary resolutions. But when my name and title weren't sufficient, I'd use the name of the one who had sent me. I'd say something like this: "Bill Cavanaugh wants this done, and if you can't help or won't help, I'll have to report that back to him."

Invariably, roadblocks suddenly melted away. But why? Because I'd invoked the name of one who had both the authority and power to make things happen. I didn't do this lightly. I could legitimately use his name because I was carrying out his express will, I clearly understood his plan and purpose, and I had his promise to back me up in the commission he had given me. And in my confident use of that name, the individuals on the other side of the problem knew that I was assured of the outcome. Bill Cavanaugh had said so, and I believed him.

So when we ask of the Father in the name of Jesus (John 15:16), it's much the same concept. We do so with a firm and clear understanding of the will of Jesus, of His plan and purpose, and with assurance that He will back us up as we seek to carry out the commission He's given.

I like to visualize what might be happening in heaven whenever I boldly go before the throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). When I make my petition to the Father in the name of Jesus, I envision my Intercessor and Advocate, himself seated at the Father's own right hand, make an appeal on my behalf. "Father, this request is in my will and my plan, and this child of mine is endeavoring to do what I've asked him to do. I back him up in this matter and ask that you grant his request--right now."

Then with the Father's speedy and resolute "So be it!" the answer is dispatched, and I have what I requested. Nevertheless, I understand from Daniel's experience (Dan. 10:12-13) that there may be stern resistance from evil but unseen principalities and powers in the heavenly realms to prevent a timely delivery of that answer.

And just as the name of Jesus gives me access to the Father, it also affords me authority over these invisible enemies against whom the Apostle Paul assured I would wrestle. (Eph. 6:12). Then persist I must, as Daniel did, until the answer shows up.

I can be confident that the Father will grant any petition according to His will (1 John 5:14-15). And when I properly invoke the name of Jesus in prayer, I announce to the unseen spiritual world that I am not only assured of the outcome, but also that the One whom the Father exalted far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named (Eph. 1:21) will back me up with the power, authority and influence embodied in His name.

Jesus said so, and I believe Him.