

Prayers God Always Fulfills

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[0 : 00] Amen. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to 1 John 5.

I think it was mentioned last week that we've been in this book about a year, something like that. Isn't that right? Huh? Feels longer?

Wow. See what you started, Mark? Where'd Mark go? He's not even in here to take it. Okay. Well, in verses 13 through 21, John is ending his letter.

He's concluding. This is his epilogue. Verse 13, he is giving the purpose of his writing, which writers in the first century wrote that way.

They wrote their purpose and why they were writing at the end of the book. So when John writes his gospel, the gospel of John, he gives the purpose for that gospel at the very end.

[1 : 09] In chapter 20, verse 30, he says, I write these things. That you... Okay. I got to cheat.

Hang on. See it, I'll remember. Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

So the purpose of the gospel that John wrote is to convince people to believe, to convince them that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, to believe, and then by believing, experience life.

So the purpose of 1 John is not to convince people to believe, but it's the written two believers to convince them that they're truly saved.

So, gospel, 1 John. So he is ending his letter, but you know how preachers say, you know, I'm closing, with this I close, or, you know, this is the end, just a few more statements in the end, and then they keep going.

[2 : 22] You know, that's, yeah, John does that too. So, he says I'm ending, and then he says, oh, wait a minute, there's a couple more things I want to say. So, we're going to look this week at verses 13 through 17.

He's going to talk about how we know we have eternal life, and then how we know we have the prayers that we're asking for. And then in verses 18 through the end, he's going to talk about some other things.

So we're going to break it into two more. So, this is not the last week, but next week will be the next to last week, and then after that will be the last week, when we do the review. Unless I find a way to extend it further.

So, that's all right, we're in the Word of God. But the plan is, the plan is, by the way, as is our pattern, we take a book of the Old, or New Testament, and we go through that, and then we go back to the Old Testament, and go through that, and come back to the New Testament.

We're trying to be full Scripture, teach the whole counsel of God. So, the plan, where are we going in the Old Testament? I was thinking of Habakkuk. I don't know, because it's nice and short, and, right, never done that one.

[3 : 38] Not too scary. Not as scary as like Ezekiel, or something. But then I thought, we did a class a little while ago, on our Thursday night, that was, making sense of the Old Testament.

A survey, kind of an overview, of the whole Old Testament. I think, many Christians, don't have a good grasp, of the Old Testament. We know some of the stories, but how does it all fit? How does, how does it move?

How does it, I think that would be beneficial, to do that. We're planning on doing that, unless the Lord says, no, I don't want you, I want you to do Habakkuk. So, so far, so good, we'll see, unless the Lord changes that.

That's the plan. 1 John, chapter 5, verses 13 to 17. If you're able, please stand, as I read our text, for this morning.

1 John 5, 13, John says, I have written these things, to you who believe, in the name of the Son of God, that, you may know, that you have, eternal life.

[4 : 48] 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.

If anyone sees, his brother, committing a sin, not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him, life, to those, who commit sins, that do not lead, to death.

There is, a sin, that leads, to death. I do not say, that one should pray, for that. All wrongdoing, is sin, but there is a sin, that does not, lead to death.

So, he writes, let's pray. Father, we pray, this morning, that you would show us, your will. Fill us, in fact, as Paul prays, fill us, with the full knowledge, of your will, that, we might walk, in a manner worthy of you, in every pleasing way, bearing fruit, in every good work, increasing, in the intimate knowledge, of you, being strengthened, with all power, according to your glorious might, so that we might, attain to endurance, and long suffering, and joyously, give thanks, to the Father, who has qualified us, to share, in the inheritance, of the sons, and light, who has rescued us, out of the kingdom, or out of the authority, of darkness, and transferred us, to the kingdom, of his beloved son, in whom, we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, this we pray, in Christ's name, amen, please be seated, so, does God answer prayer, congregation says yes, so, does God answer, your, prayer, yeah, yeah, yeah, always, no, yeah, well, he always answers prayer, yes, no, or wait, right, does he always, fulfill what you ask, so, when we think about prayer, we have some basic, assumptions, we have some basic questions, right, so,

God is a sovereign God, how do you move, a sovereign God, do we change, God's, mind, won't, a sovereign God, do as he pleases, no matter, what we do, now, you have stories, in scripture, that, appear, that God changes his mind, right, Moses, praise for it, God's gonna, wipe out Israel, Moses says, don't do that, think of what people will say, God appears to, change his mind, or does he, so, you have different instances, right, and, so, so, why do we pray, right, does prayer make a difference, why do we pray for things, that God already knows, before we ask, remember,

[8 : 50] Jesus says, he tells us to pray, and then he says, you know, he talks about, what not to do, you know, don't pray out in public, to be noticed, don't, you know, so go in your inner room, praying secret, don't use a lot of words, because, the father already knows, what you need, before you ask him, well, it's kind of like, begs the question, then why am I asking, he already knows, and Jesus' point is, obviously, that, you don't have to explain it to God, he knows what's going on, in fact, he knows before you ask him, so why do we ask him, why does he want us to ask him, relationship, relationship, relationship, in fact, he's determined, his will, according to our asking, I mean, it's part of how he does things, so, does prayer make a difference, yes,

Jesus urges us to pray, ask, keep asking, and you will receive, keep seeking, and you will find, keep knocking, and, the door will be opened, to you, Jesus taught, a lot on prayer, James says, you do not have, why, because you don't ask, so therefore, ask, and then he says, James says, you do, when you do ask, you ask, you don't receive, why, because you ask, with wrong motives, you ask wrongly, to spend it on your pleasures, Jesus said, probably even more boldly, in Matthew 21, he said, whatever you ask in prayer, whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, believing, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive, he said that, right after he cursed, the fig tree, right, and it changed, he also talked about, you know, if you have faith, you could move a whole mountain, so it's like, so today, we're talking about, confident prayer,

John talks about, not only why he wrote this, letter, but he's going to talk about, this is the confidence, we have before him, when we go to him, when we pray to him, whatever we ask, we know we have, if we ask, according to his will, ah, so, we're having, he's not saying, you will just get a yes, or a no, or a maybe, or a wait answer, he's saying, these are prayers, you pray, and you have, you have it, is that name it and claim it, no, not as it's understood today, so, that's what we're going to look at today, first of all, in verse 13, he reminds us, the purpose of, of this whole letter, right, certainty of having eternal life, we've mentioned this, before, we've mentioned it from the beginning, as we've been studying this book, we've recognized, that's his purpose, right, he's giving, he has written, these things, what are the these, what are the, these things, to believers, right, that you might know, you have eternal life, well, he's written, these series of, marks or tests, right, these things, if you walk in the light, versus walking in the darkness, right, there's the true, authentic believer, who walks in light, even in his sinfulness, even with his sins, he walks in light, that he might be cleansed, in the light, right, he's authentic, he doesn't hide, he doesn't walk in the darkness, and then the second test, is we love, right, we love our brother, instead of hating our brother, we lay down our lives, instead of closing our heart, so that's an authentic,

Christian as well, I know I have eternal life, if I'm, if I'm laying down my life, for my brother, I'm not closing my heart, against his need, and then finally, the third test, is confessing Jesus, right, confessing, who Jesus really is, that he is the Christ, he is the son of God, he is the one, who came in the flesh, right, that God himself took flesh, that he might die, in that flesh, as a pure lamb of God, for us, right, so it matters, what we believe, so those are the tests, if we're doing those things, walking in light, loving one another, confessing, believing, the true Jesus, we have, right, those are marks, that you are born again, that you are, that you truly possess, eternal life, so we'll get more to that, again, in a couple of weeks, when we do the review, then we do our review, talk about all these things, so, cool, so, what I want to focus on today, is verses 14 to 17, when he talks about prayer, how do we have, how do we have, how do we possess, the request, that we ask for, when is that true, when do we have confidence, that God will answer the prayer, as we have asked, so, there's two kinds of prayers, he brings in here, verses 14 to 15, he talks about, prayer according to his will, and so praying according, to his will, so in general, as we pray, anything, that is according to his will, that corresponds, to his will, that agrees with his will, by the way, it's the same thing, as praying in Jesus name, in Jesus name, isn't like the, the little code word, you pray, put at the end, when we say, pray, when Jesus said, pray in my name, he meant pray, according to what I want, pray, that in a way, that corresponds, to who I am, to what I have taught you, right, and it also means praying, you know, we come into the presence of God, not in my name, but in his name, but in his name, but here, here John, captures,

I think, and one of the last letters, written, in New Testament times, by the last apostle, he now kind of summarizes, that is praying, according to God's will, that's the prayer, that God will answer, and then in verses 16 and 17, he's going to talk about, another kind of prayer, when we pray, not for ourselves, but we pray for a brother, who's in sin, a brother, who is sinning, God will answer, that prayer too, he will give life, to the one, sinning, not to death, then you have that whole, sin to death thing, what's that, we don't know, so we're just going to skip it, no, we'll try to tackle it, we'll try to tackle it, so first of all, the first kind of prayer, the general prayer, praying according to God's will, that we can have confidence, that whatever we ask, according to his will, we have it, we have it, we have what we're asking for, so what kind of confidence, is he talking about, verse 14, right, this is the confidence, that we have toward him, the word confidence, means boldness, freedom, you know, when we go before God, we aren't hesitant, we are confident, we're bold to pray these things, because we know, that's what he wants us to pray, we're bold, we have freedom, we're not restrained by, oh I'm not sure, there's lots of prayers, we pray,

[17:13] I don't know if that's his will, right, so I'm praying for guidance, I'm praying for, but here are a set of prayers, that we pray, that we know he's going to answer, so we pray both, okay, anything we ask, according to his will, we're praying it before him, so he's talking about, when we go to him, when we draw near to pray, we can be sure, we can be certain, he hears us, and now John clarifies that, confidence as certainty, listen to his logic, he says, if we ask according to his will, then what, if we ask according to his will, then we know that he hears us, if we're asking the right stuff, he's listening, he's responding, he's receptive, he's hearing it, okay, we know that, and if we know, that he hears us, if we know, that he's attending, that he's receptive, that he's listening, to this prayer, then John says, then we know we have it, we know we have it, we possess it, he doesn't say, we will have, he says, we do have, present tense, we are having it, we are possessing it, it's as good as done, in the present, so what's that cause, what is the reason, that we have certainty, and confidence, right, he says, whatever we ask, right, anything we want, right, anything, whatever we ask, you know, like when Jesus, was in Gethsemane, he got what he wanted, didn't he, what did Jesus pray, in Gethsemane, take this cup, in his, he's, you know, he's sweating, drops of blood, right, in his humanity, he feels the, the entire pressure, of what's before him, he's committed to this, but as it's looming, he is, in his humanity, let this cup pass, this cup of the cross, but, as he's praying that, he realizes, but not my will, what I want,

I want out, the human Jesus wanted out, like the rest of us, could I have plan B, but as he's praying it, and God accepts, and that's, is it wrong for Jesus, to pray that, when he already knew, no, he needs to pray that, he needs to work through it, that's what the Psalms, give us all kinds, of those things, right, right, but he's praying, but not my will, but thine be done, and by the way, how many times, did he have to do that, in Gethsemane, three times, three times, don't you think, he could resolve it, after the first time, in Jesus, it's Jesus, and if Jesus, couldn't resolve it, and how are we going to do, okay, if it's three for him, it's 300 for me, you know, whatever, so,

John here says, if we ask anything, according to his will, corresponding to his will, that agrees with his will, what do we mean by his will, what's this word will mean, it's his design, what he purposes, what he desires, what he has determined, right for us, what is it that God, has purposed for us, what is it that God, desires for us, we're not talking about, a wish, I wish we'd do better, we're talking about, what has he determined, that is right for us, what has he purposed for us, what is his plan for us, has he revealed that to us, that's what we pray, that's what we pray, so, how do we pray, well, we've got several guidelines, we've got this letter, that says, here's what authentic Christianity, looks like, three areas, right, walking in light, loving my brother, confessing Jesus, well, that's his will, because John just made it clear, so I can pray those things, help me walk in the light, help me not hide my sin, help me to be honest, before not only God, but when I'm with the fellowship, to be honest and transparent, because that's scary, help me love the brother, that I don't like, or, you know, help me not stop avoiding them, and really love them, show me how that looks, and we pray those kind of things, how do I, how do I confess Jesus in public,

Lord, show me how to do that, I can take this cross, now show me how to do that, Lord, with that, show me how to do that, how can it be more, so that's, that's praying according to his will, you can look at the Jesus, how Jesus taught us to pray, how did Jesus teach us to pray, right, he talked about praying in secret, he talked about praying, simple, not a lot of words, and then he talked about praying strategically, he said, he didn't say pray in these words, that we just repeat the Lord's prayer, he said pray in this way, so here's six things to pray for, cause your name to be hallowed, where, here, here, here, you know, here, that's a big prayer, cause your kingdom to come, not in the distant future, cause it to come now, cause the work of your Holy Spirit to be done, I wrote down a whole bunch of kingdom prayers today, as we were taking requests, that's how I divide prayer, kingdom, will, bread, right, will, thy will be done, so we're already praying like Jesus prayed, you know, not my will, but thine being, we're surrendering it, pray for my bread, my physical needs,

I pray for relationships, forgive us, this relationship up and down, forgive us, our debt to you, and, oh yeah, just as I, pray for these relationships this way, right, and then my, you know, lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from you, whoo, that's biggie, but usually if I prayed pretty well through the first, if I prayed pretty well through the first three, last three, peace of cake, if I've really prayed about his name, his kingdom, anyway, so that's another way to do it, you can talk about the greatest commandments, what's the greatest commandment, that's his will, love the Lord with all your heart, soul, strength, right, heart meaning mind, soul meaning, affections, desires, passions, strength, and, love your neighbor as yourself, well, that covers a lot, that pretty much covers, so, there's a lot of ways you could look at, what is his will, here's another one,

[24 : 53] I stole this, no, I borrowed it, I mean, I learned it from John McCarfer, I'm grateful to him, for this, I learned a long time, because he was talking about, what's the will of God, how do I know the will of God for my life, what is the, you know, what job do I take, who do I marry, what do I, you know, all these kind of personal questions, how do I know all that, and, and, Pastor MacArthur, kind of said, here's seven explicit statements of scripture, that explicitly say, this is his will, and it's actually in seven different categories, that I'll start with S, can you believe they start with S, seven S's, can it be more, yeah, okay, sorry, I'm being ridiculous, but here, here they are, okay, and actually, I had to correct John on some of them, because he didn't have an S for one of them, so I fixed it, bless his heart, yeah, as if I can fix MacArthur, all right, so, John 640, so what does it look like to pray according to God's will,

Jesus said, John 640, this is the will of my father, okay, here's his will, what, that, everyone who looks on the son, and believes into him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day, what are we praying for there, salvation, I'm praying, for my loved one, that they might look upon Jesus, and fully believe into him, and it's God's will that, then they will have, eternal life, it's God's will to give eternal life, Romans 12, 2, we pray for surrender, to the mind of Christ, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed, be transformed, so I surrender, that's not something I do, I don't transform myself, I receive transformation, be transformed, by the renewal of your mind, so not think man's thoughts, but God's thoughts, that by testing, you may discern, what is what, the will of God, that's the will of God, to not be conformed, but to be transformed,

Ephesians 5, pray to be spirit filled, do not be foolish, but understand, what the will of the Lord is, don't get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the spirit, don't be filled with spirits, but be filled with the spirit, intentional, again, that's a being filled, 1 Thessalonians 4, 3, pray about your sanctification, to be set apart in purity, this is the will of God, your sanctification, what does he mean by that, that you abstain from sexual immorality, sexual immorality, sexual immorality, what would be sexual, I don't know what sexual immorality would be, that's my bad, got it, so in other words, I'm praying for my sanctification, I'm praying for my purity, I'm praying that God would guard my eyes, I'm praying that, you know, Psalm 119, turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, because I'm weak, so Lord, turn them, avert my eyes, right, from idols, etc, here, here's a good one, 1 Thessalonians 5, 16 through 18, you know this, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks, why, this is God's will for you, so how's that an S, so you got, you got to rejoice always, okay, always in rejoicing, pray without ceasing, okay, always praying, give thanks in, also, okay, so I'm doing all that all the time, so if I'm always rejoicing, and always giving thanks, it means I must have some measure of contentment,

I must have some true satisfaction, in God, the opposite of Ecclesiastes, I find my full content, if you eat this bread, you will never be hungry again, I find the real satisfaction, so that's the one, I had to change for John, they didn't get the S, I don't know what he had, he had something weird, teasing of course, you know, 1 Peter 2, pray that God will help me, in submission to authority, 1 Peter 2, and actually Peter says this, a few different times, and Paul also talks about it in Ephesians, be subject for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, to every human institution, whether it be to an emperor as supreme, or to a governor as sent by him, to punish those who do evil, and to praise those who do good, for this is the will of God, you ever need help doing that, you ever need help submitting to your government, and Jesus was talking about, a much more malevolent, government, in his day, and he even supported taxes, can you imagine, you know what Caesar did with that money, no okay, no right, different sermon, and then finally, oh good, you'll love this S, 1 Peter 4, 19, actually I could have picked several places, in 1 Peter, because he talked about it all through the book, pray how you handle suffering as a Christian, right, like Jesus said, not my will, but mine, therefore, let those who suffer, according to the will of God, entrust their souls, to a faithful creator, while doing good,

Peter began chapter 4 of 1 Peter, with this whole thing, don't stop, arm yourselves to suffer in the flesh, you've had enough time to live in the flesh, now arm yourself to live, to suffer, for the will of God, so, so what is it, what does it look like to pray, according to God's will, well imagine all those areas, if, if I'm seeking his will, I'm asking whatever, according to his will, I will have it, I'm praying for salvation, I'm praying to surrender, I'm praying to be yielded, for spirit filling, to be sanctified, to be satisfied, to be submissive, to trust and suffer, I'm praying along those lines, you have it, you have it, that's what God wants to do in you, say,

[32 : 00] I don't want to pray for suffering, you don't, you don't have to pray for suffering, he'll bring it, pray for how you handle it, how you embrace it, instead of fight it, and I got to pray about that, because it's, it is natural to embrace it, Jesus knew that, okay, all right, second kind of prayer, intercession for, a sinning brother, this is interesting, that he brings this up like this, it's kind of, you know, it's an addendum, it's kind of, he's ending his letter, but he's kind of in prayer, oh yeah, by, by the way, about praying according to God's will, when your brother sins, wow, that's, because remember, in this book, John is concerned about, if we continually sin, if we're, if we're always sinning, that may be a mark, or probably is a mark, that we're not born again, because he's going to go on, and say in verse 18, that we know that everyone, who has been born again, does not keep on sinning, so if you see a brother, that's sinning, pray for them, and pray that they're praying for you, right, so, when praying for a sinning brother,

God gives them life, is what we find here, in verse, 14 and 15, no, excuse me, verse 16, if anyone sees his brother, committing a sin, better translation, if anyone sees his brother, sinning a sin, not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life, to the one, who, who, who sins a sin, not to death, there is a sin, that leads to death, let's, hold off on that one, for right now, so it's, the need is a sinning brother, note that it's, it's if you see, not if you suspect, if you see, if you see, the sinning, it's observable, it's not subjective, it's not an, I think you got a bad attitude, I think you got a bad attitude, I can't,

I can't, I can only see the fruit, and make a determination, from that, all right, so if you see, a brother sinning, so also, he's sinning, so in other words, not a single act, not if he, just, just, just blew it, you know, but there's a, but he's stuck in it, he's entrapped in it, he's, he's ensnared, what Paul talks about, in Galatians 6, you know, we see a brother, who's ensnared, who's caught, they're trapped, they can't get out by themselves, they need help, right, they're stuck, because of their weakness, or, or their, their baggage, whatever, so, so pray for them, and he adds, what kind of sins, are we talking about, the sins that are not unto death, verse 17, he says, all wrongdoing is sin, but there is a sin, that does not lead to death, so, so we're talking about, all kinds of sin, all wrongdoing is sin, all unrighteousness is sin, every time we disregard, what is right, we sin, that's what unrighteousness is, unrighteousness, or what this translation has, wrongdoing, is a disregard of what's right, so how do we respond, so, he says, he shall pray, if, if, anyone, sees his brother committing a sin, not leading to death, he, the one seeing his brother, shall pray, shall ask, and God will give him life, he shall ask, he shall pray for him, he shall request of God, and then note the assurance, and God will give him life, he will, that's different, this, this one's future, whereas verse 15 is present, we have, here it's God will give, there might be a process involved here, of course, if I'm in sin, it takes me a while, to recognize, that sometimes, if I'm not, if I'm not paying attention, if I'm, deceived, distracted, blind spots, right, but he will,

God will give him life, so what does that mean, so it kind of relates, to the other sin, that's to death, what kind of death, are we talking about, right, so, every Christian, experiences spiritual death, right, when we sin, James 1, James says, here's what temptation, looks like, James says, how are we tempted, when are we tempted, according to James 1, chapter 1, 14, 15, somewhere in there, you know, do I just sin blatantly, what's the process, so what's the process, so when is it, when is it sin, and when does it, become, death, right, so, so, we're tempted, when what, we're enticed, there's a luring, there's a, there's a bathing, like a fish on a, you know, we're enticed, by our desires, so it's just a desire, at that level, it's not, he doesn't call it a sin yet, our desires entice us, those are natural desires, we're naturally, we want to, take the easy way, we naturally want to, avoid things, et cetera, we're enticed by desire, and then it, gives birth to, sin, so the desire, leads to the sin, and when sin, is full grown, it becomes, death, death, that's the process, every time we sin, we're enticed, our desire, attaches to that, it gives birth to a sin, so in other words, we follow through, on that desire, we, it becomes, something we act on, and then, as that grows, it becomes, death, so what does that mean, do we die physically, what's spiritual death like, we all experience it, when we sin, right, after we sin, what do we feel, horrible, right, what did you say, separation,

God's, I've just pushed God away, he hasn't moved, right, but I, I put a barrier up, I'm losing life, fellowship, there are, John describes, eternal life, as knowing Jesus Christ, knowing God, my relationship with God, is the first thing, affected, Adam and Eve sin, what happened, he said, the day you, you eat of this fruit, you will, die, they didn't die physically, what did they do, oh boy, got a cover up, right, all of a sudden, they're self aware, all of a sudden, they're, they're, they're different, so it's spiritual death, okay, so we all experience that, so God, when, when we pray for a sinning brother, who is now like, remember how David felt, when, when, when he had sinned with Bathsheba, and he did not confess it, right, he's holding it in, remember he talks about, my, my bones, were dying, and my flesh was, you know, he describes this misery, your hand was heavy on me,

[40 : 01] I had no life, no joy, Psalm 51, I couldn't sing, I couldn't, I couldn't do anything, I had no life, I had no joy, I had no, nothing, so that, God will give him life, in other words, God will restore him, God will bring him back into his light, cleanse him, God will soften his heart, God will bring him to repentance, remember how Jesus prayed for Peter, even before Peter sinned, remember Peter wasn't going to sin, right, you're going to deny me Peter, you're going to deny me, for the rooster even crows, you're going to deny me, are you talking to me, you're talking to me, right, Peter, don't you know me, don't you know I'm the rock, I mean I'll die for you, there's no, right, Peter, and he really believed that, I am so, my loyalty is so firm with you, I can't even conceive, why would I, I took out a cross at the, you know, when the soldiers came, I took out a cross, took out a, my sword, I got my sword, when the, when the lead, when the whole squadron, of soldiers came, you think I'm going to deny, yeah,

Peter, you're going to deny, but here's the thing Peter, Luke 22, Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded, to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, so Jesus is already interceding, for Peter, now, now Jesus knew ahead of time, we didn't always know that, but I've already, I've already prayed for you, that, what, that you won't deny me, no, he didn't pray that, I've already prayed, that you don't sin, no, he didn't pray that, what did he pray, I've prayed for you, that your faith, may not fail, you're going to fail, but not your faith, that you don't lose your faith, because this is going to break you, Peter, this is, and remember afterwards, what, you know, Peter finally caught the eye of Jesus, after the third rooster, and said, Jesus just looked at him, and then Peter's done, he's out weeping bitter, you know, he's just broke, how could I do that,

I pray for you, that your faith, will not fail, and when you have turned again, he prays for his turning, strengthen your brothers, Wow.

Do you pray like that for your kids? Do you pray like that for your brothers, for your family, for your spouse? Do you pray like that for people you care about?

You don't pray that, oh, show them, Lord. You pray that their faith doesn't fail. And that they turn. And that not just that they turn, but then they get back into it.

[43 : 01] Then you can strengthen your brothers. I mean, that's just... By the way, he prays for us that way, I believe. That our faith doesn't fail.

When we turn, then we get back out of our humility and brokenness. Now we can actually serve our brothers, right? Peter's not going to keep telling, you know, John, you just need more loyalty.

You know, John, if you make more promises and keep those promises, that doesn't work. Peter's going to say, okay, dude, I know you think you can, but you can't.

Don't depend on that loyalty. Don't depend on that faithfulness. Don't depend on your physical, on your strength, on your past, because you're going to fall. Anyway, I just love that.

Okay, so what's this other... So we pray for our sinning brother, like Jesus did. Pray that their faith doesn't fail. Pray that they turn again and that they will be even stronger out of their weakness.

[44 : 04] So what's this sin leading to death? Okay, let's take a stab at this. So death can only mean three things. It either means physical death. Okay, if my brother committed a sin unto death, In other words, he sinned and now he's dead.

Like 1 Corinthians 11, those that were coming to the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. Remember what Paul says?

That's why some of you are sick and that's why some of you are now asleep. God can take you. So do I pray for my sinning brother who is now dead?

Do I pray for the dead? No. No. What about spiritual death?

So if their sin is unto death, a spiritual death, well, all Christians have that experience. So it can't be that. He's talking about something else. So the other kind of death is eternal death.

[45 : 11] The unforgivable sin. The eternal sin. The sin that when someone commits it, they don't care to repent.

And they don't care, period. When people ask me what they think, what do you think is the unforgivable sin? Or if they're worried that they have, I would ask them, are you worried that maybe you've committed that?

Yeah. Then you haven't committed it. You wouldn't care. I mean, if you want, if you're desiring God to forgive you, yeah, you're, you're, you're in hope.

So what's the sin leading to death? Well, Jesus talked about one of them that's not forgivable, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, right? That's not forgivable. Everything else is forgivable, but the, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the eternal sin.

So what is that? Well, Jesus mentioned that after the, after the Pharisees, Jesus was doing miracles or Jesus was casting out demons. And they, the Pharisees attributed Jesus's exorcism to Beelzebub, to Satan, the Lord of the flies.

[46 : 34] And Jesus didn't even call him, Satan called him Lord of the flies, which is, okay, anyway, pretty low blow. You know, the guy that hangs around where the flies hang around?

That guy. So, so, so, then Jesus said, you can, you can slander me.

You can slander just about anything and be forgiven, but you cannot slander the Holy Spirit. You cannot say that the work of Satan, that the work of the spirit is the work of Satan.

Now, why can't you do that? Why? Why the work of this? Why is the work of the spirit distinct? What does the spirit do?

He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. That doesn't mean they believe, but he convicts them. So, so, those Pharisees were convicted, and they willingly, knowingly, slandered.

[47 : 52] it's making God a liar. Another way to say it. When you know the truth and you reject it.

Okay, so what does that look like? I'm not talking about a brief time where, where I lose it and I call God a liar. I'm not talking about a, a brief time where I'm just upset and I'm cursing or whatever.

I'm not talking about that. Because that's something I regret later. I'm talking about something that somebody would not regret. So here's an example of it.

So blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is one example of an unforgivable sin. And here's another one. And it's probably the same thing, but it's, but it's not described it that way. Hebrews 6, 48.

It's a very hard passage, right? Some people wonder if it applies to a real Christian losing their salvation. I think we look at the language very carefully and we will find that it's not.

[48 : 56] The writer of Hebrews, which is Barnabas, by the way, you can write that in your notes. So now that you know, right? Well, he was a priest and an apostle.

All right. He writes, it is impossible in the case of those. Now he's going to describe this kind of person.

It's impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and have shared in the Holy, spirit, have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the, excuse me, the powers of the age to come.

Then have fallen away. It's impossible to restore them again to repentance. Wow. So they experience these things and then they fall away.

They can't repent. That's just impossible to restore them to repentance. Why? Since, now he's going to explain further what, what they have done in their falling away. Since they have crucified once again, the son of God to their own harm and are holding him up to contempt.

[50 : 13] For the land that has drunk the rain and that often, that often falls on it and produces a crop useful for those whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing. So when you bear fruit, you, you, you receive a blessing, but if it bears thorns and thistles, even though it's been rained upon, it is worthless and near to being cursed.

And it's end is to be burned. So in other words, this person that has once tasted and now fallen away and is now holding Christ up to contempt.

Is cursed and at its end is barren of all fruit. A person who has willfully, knowingly rejected Jesus Christ and thereby the Holy Spirit in this way is lost.

So, so here's the hard question. Are there sinners that we should not pray for? Pray for. And that's what John is implying.

You know, he says, there is a sin to death. I'm not saying that you should pray for that. Is that a command? He doesn't say it very strongly.

[51 : 51] If it is, I think rather that he's saying, I'm not talking about that one, about you praying for that one.

I'm talking about your brother who's sinning. And you know, it's not an eternal sin. You know, it's just a, he's, he's just blowing it. Pray for him.

But, so, so, so what do we do? Well, I'll tell you this. This is where I stand. Unless I'm absolutely sure the person has totally apostate, totally, right?

And I don't know how I know that. I ain't praying. I, I'm praying for everyone. I'm praying for the most hopeless.

Because, all things are possible with God. And it's his particular specialty to select those who seem the farthest away.

[52 : 54] The Paul's. Now, now, now Paul didn't commit this sin. But he was doing all this before he knew who Jesus was.

He was crucifying Jesus. He was, right, holding him up. He was doing all that before. But once he knew who Jesus was, he ain't doing that anymore. I'm sorry, what was your name, Lord?

You're Jesus? Jesus? Right? So, my, my, here's my appeal.

If we believe there's any chance, any hope, by all means, pray for a miracle. You see a brother that's sinning, a sister that's sinning, pray for them.

God will give them life. If you see someone you're not sure is a brother, maybe they've been here. As, as Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 5, the so-called brother, right?

[53 : 56] The one that's here. It's the tear among the wheat. It's the, it's the goat among the sheep. But we don't know. It's maybe the wolf in sheep's clothing, but we don't know. Right?

Jesus says, don't pull the tear, right? You don't know. You might be pulling a, a baby wheat. Because you don't know. So if there's any chance, pray, by all means, for a miracle, for true repentance, for something more than superficial faith, something more than experience, that they would experience a, a true conviction, a true awakening.

Not just taste the heavenly gift, but feed on it. Not just taste the work of the Holy Spirit.

I grew up tasting the work of the Holy Spirit. I experienced his work. I experienced his conviction. But I was not changed. So you can experience all. I experienced the wonder of God's word.

I knew it was his word. If I had walked away after that, I saw many do that. And they prayed the prayer and walked the other.

[55 : 09] And they never wanted to have anything to do with it again. But that wouldn't stop me from praying for them. Because I don't know.

Are you with me here? The focus of this text is not who we shouldn't pray for. The focus of the text is, who do I pray for? That God will give life.

Here we go. So I'll ask you again. Does God answer your prayers? Your prayer?

Yeah, he probably wouldn't be here if he hasn't answered. Does prayer make a difference? Yeah. Are there times when you struggle with prayer?

Yeah. There's times when he's saying, I don't know if he's saying no, or if he's saying wait. Yeah. Those are hard. That's why Jesus gives all those illustrations.

[56 : 11] Keep going after him. Pursue him. Keep knocking. Get him out of bed. So to speak. I mean, if the unjust judge will give the widow, because she just festers me.

Imagine what the holy, righteous, merciful God, your Father will give to you if you keep coming to him. Right? Let us pray with confidence, according to his will, and for one another.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. And again, I pray that you would fill us with the knowledge of your will and all spiritual wisdom and insight that you might, that we might know your will so that we might walk in a manner worthy of you to please you in every way.

So we'd be filled with your, the knowledge of your will so that we would bear fruit fruit and every good work that we would increase in our knowledge of you, that we would continually be strengthened, we would receive strength from you according to the greatness of your power so that we might endure and we might suffer long instead of short.

And that, Father, that as we're being filled with the knowledge of your will, that will also fill us with joy, joyfully giving thanks to you, O Father, because of the, the gifts, not only the inheritance we have, but the deliverance we've experienced from darkness to light.

[58 : 11] All because you gave your son, your son, so that we, undeserving ones, could live.

Fill us with that kind of knowledge of your will to please you. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.