

and contemplating about it, and dreaming and scheming for it instead of praying! Don't dream; pray! Go to your heavenly Father and ASK! *Rogate!* Don't waste yours or anyone else's time, "Sending positive thoughts or vibes someone's way." That literally does nothing. I suppose it might make them or you feel better knowing someone cares, but if you want something to actually get done, pray about it! And trust the Lord is good, slow to anger, and abounds in steadfast love! The one who trusts the Lord is righteous in His sight. **James 5:16 teaches, "The prayer of a righteous person availeth much."**

When we don't pray for things, it's like what **James** says in **4:2** of his letter, "**You do not have, because you do not ask.**" Don't be tempted to think your prayers are ever in vain! The heavenly Father always hears them. As we confessed in the Introit, "**But truly God has listened; he has attended the voice of my prayer**" (**Ps 66:19**).

Now the second lesson Jesus teaches today is to ask "in His name" (**Jn 16:23**). This is not merely a magical incantation. Jesus is not a genie. Praying in Jesus' name is not the same thing as teaching children to "say the magic word" if they want someone to give them something. The name of Jesus is not equivalent to saying please! Instead, praying in Jesus' name is praying in accord with who Jesus is. So if someone prays that God would help them get away with stealing, for example, that is a prayer God will never answer because that is not in accord with who God is. God is not a thief. That's the nature of the Devil.

But what about the times God says, "No" to our prayers? Sometimes He says, "No" to our petitions because He knows some of the things we ask for or want aren't good for us. My kids would love it if we said, "Yes" every time they asked for Macaroni and Cheese for dinner, which would be like every day. Parents have to say "no" sometimes because they do what is best for their children. Just because God does not answer your prayer in the way you want Him to does not mean He has not heard it. He is always overjoyed that you went to Him with it. He wants us bringing all our supplications to Him! But when we ask for things that do not accord with the name of Jesus, we can't hold it against God when He doesn't grant us them. **James 4:3, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."**

Nevertheless, KEEP ASKING! Keep praying. Because remember what Jesus says: "**Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full**" (**Jn 16:24**). Whether God answers your prayers with a "yes" or "no" or "not yet", confess along with the Psalmist, "**Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed His steadfast love from me**" (**Ps 66:20**). God cannot ever reject your prayer. Even when God says, "No" or "Not yet" to our prayers, He does so out of love. He's teaching us to love Him and trust that He knows what's best for us. He cannot throw your case out of His court as it were. He loves you and He loves when you come to Him with your needs. That doesn't ever change. That's what makes His love steadfast. God is the giver of all that is good as we prayed in the Collect. So ask Him for all good things! And trust that He will provide them! In Jesus' name, Amen.