

“WHEN YOU STAND PRAYING”

Jesus used the cursing of the fig tree to teach the disciples about faith (**Mark 11:20-26**). We recently discussed a similar passage from Luke in our Wednesday evening class. Jesus is not as interested in us being able to landscape miraculously as He is that we have the faith to ask God for anything. We must first make sure that we ask according to God’s will (**1 John 5:14-15**), that it is for a higher purpose, not a selfish one (**James 4:1-4**). God knows our hearts; our hearts may be in the right place, but we may be asking for something less than what is best for someone else or ourselves (**Romans 8:26-27**). We can thank God that the Spirit makes intercessions for us concerning these things.

However, we do know beyond a shadow of doubt that God wants us to forgive others when we pray (**Mark 11:25-26**). We should be more interested in having the faith to remove these spiritual mountains that no bulldozer or earth-moving machines can move.

Unresolved sin is a great mountain. The gospel of Christ is the only brand of dynamite that can remove it (**Romans 1:16**—“power” is from the Greek word DUNAMIS, the source of our word “dynamite”). We must correctly handle it (**2 Timothy 2:15**), and we must light the fuse (live it and provoke questions to answer with meekness and fear—**1 Peter 3:15**).

We must also exercise faith in our willingness to forgive others. Jesus said, “*When you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him.*” He did not say that you have to get an apology from the person first. It is for our peace of mind that we are not to harbor ill will against those who wronged us. We are usually only burdening ourselves in such cases; the offender may be oblivious or may not care what he has done to you.

Repentance is a necessary condition of receiving **God’s** forgiveness. We cannot grant this, because we cannot read people’s hearts and know when they have repented. We must forgive them when they say, “*I repent.*” (**Luke 17:4**) Our forgiveness is not the same as God’s forgiveness (**Mark 2:6**).