

Praying for the Salvation of Others by the Will of God
 Scripture Reading: 1 John 5.1-17

Key Verse: v 14 & 15. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

This is an amazing promise. It tells us that it is not only possible to pray and receive what was ask for, but that we may be confident that our prayers are heard and answered. We should be careful to read this text in its context.

Consider this illustration. I have a need for a particular article and as I have an account with my local store. The salesman assures me that it is in stock so I order one to be delivered to me. The arrangement is to deliver it on the next delivery day. I tell my wife that I have that article. She says, "Let me see it!" "Well I don't actually have it, but it is mine and it is being delivered."

This is what happens in 1 John 5.14&15. I have contacted the store. I have made my need known. I have ascertained that the item is available. I have arranged payment . I have arranged delivery.

Again I have spoken to My Heavenly Father in prayer. I have made my need known. I have ascertained that it is within His will. I have charged it up to my account in Him in glory.

Notice these important points:

First. The promise is made to a certain

group of people. I must be known to the retailer and have an account with him. I also must have a relationship with my heavenly father. See verses 1 and 11. I must be born of God and therefore be a child of God. The promise is made to those who have believed on Jesus Christ.

Second. This promise reminds us that prayer is necessary for the accomplishment of God's will. Until the article was asked for, it remained unsold. It would not be delivered. Note James 4.2. I don't know exactly why God decided on this, but He in His wisdom has chosen to act on the prayers of His people.

Third. This promise requires confidence in prayer contingent upon our asking according to His will. The store would not deliver an article that it did not have in stock. So God will not answer a prayer that is inconsistent with His nature. This

condition is not given to hinder our prayer life, but to encourage it.

Fourth. This promise implies that we may be absolutely sure of God's will when we pray. The word 'confidence' is the same word translated elsewhere in the AV as 'boldness' and 'openness' and suggests freedom in speech. An example of this is in John 11.41-44. The store has told me when the goods would be delivered when we discussed it. We gain confidence in the transaction as we arrange the detail of the agreement.

Fifth. This promise is for the salvation of others. Although this promise fits nicely into the activity of prayer for any need, note the special context of this promise. Verses 12 & 13 speak of the confidence we may have in our salvation, and verses 16 to 18 speak of the confidence we may have in the salvation of others. What I want you to note is the emphasis that God through John places on prayer in the salvation of others.

Sixth. This text tells us it is always the will of God that others should come to Him and be saved, no matter how sinful that person may be, nor how terrible are their sins, nor how consistently they commit them. After all this is why Jesus came, "*Christ*

Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1Timothy 1:15 and 2 Peter 3:9 "*The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*"

Seventh, There is only one category of people who are outside the scope of this promise, which John in v17 says, "*There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*" It is elsewhere called blasphemy (evil speaking) against the Spirit whose work it is to deliver sinful men from evil, Matthew 12.22-37; and in John 3.16-21. Those who have chosen to reject the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, and have instead chosen a life of sin, run a terrible risk. God, who made man in His own image, gave him a will, and accordingly respects that decision, even if it is to their eternal damnation. We like God must respect the free will of others. See Hebrews 2.2&3. Thus verse 17.

Last. The purpose of this text is to urge us to do business with God in prayer. Remembering that there are those who place themselves outside God's will, God through John, invites us to become soul winners through prayer. We may not be Billy Graham, or Bill Newman, but each of us can shut ourselves up with God and do business with Him in prayer.