

KINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH ONLINE NOTICE BOARD - 14

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<https://www.kingtonbaptistchurch.org/>

My Prayer – God’s Will

We’re assured we have ‘great and precious promises’. But sometimes we may doubt that. We’re assured God hears and answers prayer (Psalm 66.19; 145.18; Matthew 7.7). Sometimes we may doubt that. We ‘ask’ but seem not to ‘receive’. Struggling with these doubts perhaps we should ask ourselves what answer did we expect; how did we expect God to fulfil his promise?

Paul had a serious problem. He doesn’t tell us what this problem was. That’s intentional, so we can apply Paul’s experience to many different situations. He repeatedly prayed for his problem to be removed. But it wasn’t. He didn’t get the answer he expected. But God heard him and he answered Paul’s prayer. *God didn’t take away what Paul had, but gave him what he lacked.* God didn’t remove Paul’s problem but gave grace to overcome his problem: *He said, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness.’* (2 Corinthians 12.9)

To pray is to open ourselves for God’s unpredictable grace.

Paul learnt a vital lesson about prayer. The same lesson is taught by the experience of many others. Prayer isn’t a ‘silver bullet’. Prayer isn’t a way of imposing my will on God. There’s nothing automatic about prayer. I’m not promised that I’ll get what I want. I am promised I’ll be heard. For God to *hear* is for God to *respond*. And as I know God is wise, loving, gracious and almighty I’m willing to trust his answer will be better for me than my self-centred expectation.

This helps in the present crisis – and for what we hope may follow after. We are to pray. We are to pray trusting the wisdom and love of God. We’ve no right to expect that praying for the end of this crisis will mean the virus will be lifted away automatically. That’s not God’s way. God’s way is to lead us step by step; to open our hearts and minds; to show us what will be fruitful, not futile. God’s way is to open for us the resources we need for the problems we face – he assures us his grace sufficient: *He told me, ‘My grace is enough; it’s all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness.’* (2 Corinthians 12.9 *The Message*)