

In My Name...

Background

I have just started reading “Dreaming with God” by Bill Johnson. In Chapter 1, he talks about the difference between a servant and an intimate attitude and includes a number of Jesus’s “... in my name ...” quotes (see John 15:16, 14:14, 16:23-24). This set me thinking, “what do we understand by the phrase ‘in my name’?”

My thoughts

I think there are at least three ways of thinking about this depending on where we are in our walk with Jesus. I will outline these below but want us to ask ourselves where we are in the process, not just what we understand but what we truly believe with our whole mind, soul and spirit and how that plays out in our lives.

1. Closing our prayers

When we first learn that we can ask the Father for provision we may start by ending our prayers with something like “For we ask it in Jesus’s name.”

What do we mean? Are we trying to justify our request or impress God in some way? I suspect that subconsciously we may be simply handing over responsibility to God. In other words, I’m unsure if anything will happen but if not, it’s down to him and not my fault. I did my bit by praying. (Note that I said subconsciously, I’m sure we don’t really think in those precise terms).

Sadly, too often Christians stay at this level.

2. As a stamp of approval

At the next stage of our spiritual journey, we may claim Jesus’s authority by proxy. We are asking for needs as his representative based on the fact that we have been saved. It’s similar to an ambassador going to another country in the name of the king, queen or president of the nation from which they have come.

While this implies trust on the part of the sending country head, the ambassador does not need to have any personal relationship with his leader. He performs his role based on a sense of duty and loyalty rather than out of a close relationship.

For the Christian at this point in their walk, this is a servant attitude. What they do is aimed at obeying their Lord more than just to please him. This is what drove Martha to prepare dinner while Mary sat listening to Jesus.

3. Because we’re family

As I thought about it, I realised that there was more to this phrase than what is expressed in level 2. It’s not that this is a new thought, but I was now feeling that it

was time to express this in words to help me get my thoughts clear. So, I lay in bed churning it over in my mind.

After a while I think Jesus was not simply meaning in my authority but something much deeper. I believe that by "in my name" he meant "because we have the same family name".

As the result of the cross, we have been adopted into God's family. We are co-heirs with Jesus; he is our brother and our friend. If we fully enter into this relationship (and that is what he is eager for us to do) then it will be more intimate than we can imagine. Our human experiences cannot come close. We will do what he wants and be who he wants us to be because it gives him pleasure and that in turn will overwhelm and excite us.

Am I there yet? No! I believe it with my mind and my heart, but my gut still needs to fully take it on board and live a life which expresses it 100%. If I'm honest, I have to admit that I fluctuate between all three levels. However, I believe I'm facing and moving in the right direction. With God's help I will move forward - in his name.

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