

GIVE US A DAY OF WONDERS

THOUGHTS BY DR. JAMES E. READ

MATTHEW 7:7 (NIV)

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

When we pray, how many of us tell God we want Him to do big things? This song does. "Give us," the opening lyrics say; not, "Would you please take it under consideration, God?" "Today," it says; "Not in your time, God." "A day of wonders;" not, "A little peace on our journey." There is an audacity and demand in the lyrics of this song that some of us might find uncomfortable.

Its frankness confronts us with a challenge to our own prayer lives. Are our prayers too small? When we think of it, Jesus did not teach His followers to pray small. "Ask," He said, "and you will receive." "Ask anything in my name," He said. Later His brother James said, "You do not have because you do not ask." The Apostle Paul told the Thessalonians: "in every situation...present your requests to God." And Hebrews instructs Christ-followers to "approach God's throne of grace with confidence!"

In other words, praying big bold prayers is biblical.

But audacious asking is only part of the story. What we pray for and why matters too. "You do not receive when you ask, because you ask wrongly," James explains. And so, as we sing this song, we should ask, why do we want a day of wonders? Are we merely hoping for an experience of excitement, a thrill of divine fireworks? Are we praying for results that will give us bragging rights? Do we want to show off like Elijah on Mount Carmel? Or, rather, are we praying that the world will see God's Good News and glorify God?

This song is a battle cry, clearly. A prayer for victory. But it is not a battle song like other battle songs. The world expects armies going to war to pray for massive kill counts—the metric of the world's day of wonders is how many of the opposition are disarmed and how many enemies die. Not so for the Christian. The army to which Christians belong is a salvation army. Our measure of success is not the number of the living who die, but how many of the dying are saved. Not how many are made powerless, but how many begin to thrive. Note how this song has us sing again and again the gospel battle cry: "Let the dying **live!**"

The whole song is directed to God, not by individuals but by a company, an army, a community. Many of the songs sung in church these days use the first-person pronouns "I" and "me" and "my." They focus on the individual's relationship to God. And that is important. God saves the world one at a time. And yet, a core message of the Scriptures is that God did not create people to be solitary. God creates a "body" made of many parts, a "holy nation," a family that addresses Him as "our Father in Heaven." In language that should resonate with us, God entrusts His mission to an army.

But if we are to be pursuing God's wonder-working mission in the world, what sort of people should we be? People who are beginning to look a lot like Jesus. People of courage, strength, cheer, rest, peace, faith, patience, and grace as verse 3 says.

WHEN THESE ATTRIBUTES DESCRIBE THE CHARACTER GOD'S SOLDIERS -

WHEN THEY/WE REALLY ARE A HOLY COMPANY - EVERY DAY WILL BE A DAY OF WONDER.

GIVE US GRACE, GIVE US FAITH, GIVE US BLESSINGS WITHOUT NUMBER, LORD.