

#TRUTH | #BLACKHISTORY | #ASBCSERMON

**GENESIS
25:21-26**

► **FEBRUARY 18 | 11AM ET**

THREE TRUTHS

**— ABOUT —
ANSWERED PRAYERS**

► **A SERMON BY MINISTER OTIS BYRD, JR.**



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Date: February 25, 2024
Preacher: Minster Otis Byrd Jr.
Sermon Title: *Three Truths About Answered Prayer*
Scripture: Genesis 25:21-26 (NIV)

²¹ Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²² The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³ The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger. ²⁴ When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. ²⁵ The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. ²⁶ After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

SERMON SUMMARY

Minister Otis Byrd begins this sermon by reminding us that if one attempts to be a Christian without praying, it is equivalent to trying to be alive without breathing. Prayer, our sacred conversation with our God, is a necessary part of our Christian walk, without exception.

For those who pray, we share a common goal; we all desire answers to our prayers. However, this sermon seeks to take us beyond the prayer, beyond even answered prayer, to the space and time after the prayer has been answered. Min. Byrd suggests we must understand three important truths made plain after the prayer has been answered. Min. Byrd uses the marriage of Rebekah and Isaac and the birth of their twin sons, Jacob and Esau to illustrate these three points:

- 1. ANSWERED PRAYER IS THE PRODUCT OF PRAYER.** Abraham, Isaac's father, had prayed for a wife from the people of God for his son. God's answer to Abraham's prayer was indeed, the product of prayer. Once married, Isaac and Rebekah prayed for a child. For over twenty years they remained barren. Instead of taking matters into their own hands, Rebekah and Isaac continued to pray and Esau and Jacob were born. Their answered prayer was a product of their trusting and waiting on God.
- 2. ANSWERED PRAYER DOES NOT PRECLUDE DIFFICULTY AND MAY REQUIRE MORE PRAYER.** Rebekah's pregnancy was an answer to prayer. In the midst of her pregnancy she suffered discomfort, worry, and a prophecy that pitted her sons against one another. Just like you and me, Rebekah's blessings brought her to a place that required more prayer as she prayed for relief for the sons she would bear.

- 3. ANSWERED PRAYER MAY BE PRECEDED BY PERIODS OF WAITING.** Once God has answered the prayer, periods of silence and waiting may still be a part of the process. In the waiting, we must trust that God is at work, our prayers are still being heard, and God, who is sovereign, still cares.

KEY POINTS

1. You cannot be a Christian without engaging in sacred conversations (i.e., prayer) with God.
2. Prayers are the tailored expressions of the soul, directed toward God.
3. We all want answers to our prayers, and we want them on our schedules.
4. History shows us that God does not always answer prayer in the way we anticipate.
5. God can only answer prayer if we pray. Answered prayer is a result of us praying.
6. When we pray, we ought to take our hands off the request and make room for God to do what only God can.
7. There is safety in God-answered prayer because God is in it.
8. When we seek to answer our prayers, we have self-assembled provision, which is never as good as what God can provide.
9. Sometimes when God answers prayers, circumstances may require even more prayer.
10. God can work in silence and in spaces where it seems nothing is happening. In those moments of silence, we must trust and rely on God.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. There are many different physical positions of prayer. Some kneel, stand, lie prostrate, or walk the pattern of a labyrinth. What are your favorite positions of prayer? Why? Do you use different positions at different times of the day or for different kinds of prayer?
2. Min. Byrd asked a tantalizing question early in the sermon; “After you have prayed and fasted, what are your expectations from your sacrifice and discipline?” What is your answer to this question?

INTO THE BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Min. Byrd reminds us that Christians must pray. Jesus gives the disciples an example of how to pray in Luke 11:2-4, better known as the Lord's Prayer shown below. What are the vital takeaways this prayer offers for your life?

The Lord's Prayer Matthew 6:9-13 NIV

"When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

2. In the introduction to the story of Rebekah and Isaac, the sermon places emphasis on the **consent** Rebekah gives to be married to Isaac. Why do you think Min. Byrd asks the congregation to focus on Rebekah's consent?

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Minister Byrd calls prayer a "sacred conversation." The word sacred can mean, *set apart for the work of the holy*. How is prayer a sacred conversation to you? What other adjectives could you use to describe prayer?
2. How does prayer figure into your life? What are your expectations for those prayers?
3. We come to Alfred Street and engage in Sunday worship, in part, to learn and grow. What does this sermon invite you to consider that you had not taken into account before regarding answered prayer? What steps do you think are wisest to take, especially when the answer is not what you hoped for?
4. Abram and Sarai took matters into their own hands, interrupting God's plans by forcing Hagar to bear a child with Abram. However, one generation later, Isaac and Rebekah behaved differently. When you look back on your elders and ancestors, has prayer helped you break free of patterns that were unhealthy and unwise? How did prayer assist you? What has been the outcome of those prayers?
5. Min. Byrd ended his sermon with the phrase, "I had to wait, but God answered." Please complete these two sentences, "I had to wait for _____, but God answered. Now I can testify that _____."

6. Min. Byrd spoke of the different ways and languages people use in their prayer. How was your method of praying formed? Have you always prayed the same way? If not, what prompted the change in your prayer life?

“CAN I PUSH IT?” QUESTIONS

1. Rebekah and Isaac waited and prayed 20 years for the birth of Isaac. The preacher suggests that we trust and pray. How do we wait for our nation's change to come for all to enjoy the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Min. Byrd ends his sermon by saying, “I did not come with an answer, but I did come on assignment to encourage you...” How might the church encourage us as we wait?
2. There are those participating in this study who have the ability and the resources to attack life's problems. This sermon reminds us that even when we “can,” we must still consult God before we “do.” In what ways does your ability to meet life's challenges hinder you from coming before God first in prayer? How does your success interrupt your prayer life? What are the steps you think necessary to take to place God and prayer before the application of your self-assembled provisions?

FOR INDIVIDUAL OR VILLAGE STUDY

ACTIVITY/SPIRIT WORK

The Hebrew word for wait is **qāwâ** (kaw-vaw'). It is defined as “to wait, look for, or hope.” In this season of Lent, as we await Christ's death and resurrection, what are you waiting for? List three things you are waiting, hoping or looking for. Create a prayer, incorporating the words of Psalm 27:14 that help you trust God in your time of waiting. *Psalm 27:14, Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Can you recall a time when you heard a prayer and it really got deep down inside of you? In that moment, what made that prayer even more powerful?
2. Have you ever had a prayer answered in the way you hoped, and the result required more prayer? What happened when you held your answered prayer in your heart, knowing you had to pray more. How did you feel about this circumstance and about God? How did you pray?

3. How can we exercise the will of God in prayer, while understanding God's will, may be a process?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. A modern offering of the old hymn, **Leave it Alone**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqdlNKFA97M>

2. Review this list of prayers below:

<http://www.lbdsoftware.com/All%20the%20Prayers%20of%20the%20Bible.pdf>