

When the psalmist writes the words of verse three he speaks from experience. He has felt the pangs that sin puts on the conscience; the psalmist has experienced the separation that guilt puts between him and God. But, dear reader, the psalmist has experienced forgiveness. God has provided forgiveness at the cross of Christ that is free for the taking. This forgiveness enables you to be free to pray to God about everything and the God who hears prayer wants His children to do just that!

There is one more thing that I want to bring to your attention. Psalm 65:5 informs us how God answers the prayers of His children: *“By awesome deeds you answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth.”* It is by *awesome deeds* that God answers prayer.

When God answers prayer He does so by *awesome deeds*. Verses five through the end of the psalm are devoted to fleshing out these awesome deeds. I do not have room here to go into those

verses now but let me say this: God always exceeds our expectations when He answers our prayers. Do you consider this great fact when you pray? Meditate deeply on this fact and it will transform your prayers. You will begin to pray for your loved ones, your personal needs, and the needs of others with great expectation. May God richly bless you.

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This pamphlet is an excerpt from one of Pastor Rick Anderson's sermons. If you have benefited from this message please come and visit us at Tri-State Community Church.

We meet for worship and Bible study at the Chester City Building, 600 Indiana Ave., Chester WV. Our Sunday service time is 10 AM. Thursday bible study is 7 PM. Feel free to contact Pastor Anderson at 304-387-3882. For more information visit us at www.tri-statecommunitychurch.org

Praying with Great Expectation

O You who hear prayer (Ps. 65:2)

As a Christian, you are probably like most in that you wish your prayer life was more motivated, fervent, and expectant of God to do great things. You wish that you could call heaven down on the problems in your family, the shortcomings and failures of your own life, and the welfare of your neighbor.

Well God has given us a great hymn which, when understood, has exactly that affect on one's prayer life. This hymn is Psalm 65.

The Psalmist begins with ecstatic praise for God. He is praising God because God is *“[He] who hears prayer”* (Psalm 65:2). Now the idea that God *“hears prayer”* carries with it the expectation that God will answer prayer. This is expressed in many places in Scripture. For example in 1 John 5:14-15 we read: *And this is the confidence that we have*

toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

Notice that John tells us that if God hears us “we know that we have the request that we have asked of him.” Though His answer will often be quite different than we imagined or asked He will answer. So when the psalmist calls God the God “*who hears prayer*” he is saying that God answers prayer. These prayers must be *according to God’s will*. God does not submit Himself to the beck and call of carnal desires. That having been said, He is generally pleased to give good gifts to His children—“*If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him*” (Matthew 7:11). Sometimes the best answer to prayer is no because we occasionally ask for things that are harmful for us!

The next thing that I want you to notice about Psalm 65:2 is that the psalmist is saying much more than God answers prayers here and there. The psalmist has come to know God as answering prayer so much and to such a degree that the psalmist is giving God the title of “*You who hear prayer*.” In other words, we should understand this phrase as describing God’s character. Just as we say God is love we can and should say *God hears prayer* and in saying that we mean that God listens to and answers prayer!

What kind of affect should this have on your prayer life? This should motivate you to pray. This is exactly what the psalmist is implying with the second part of verse 2 which reads: “*to You all flesh shall come*.” Of course you are going to come to God in prayer when you understand that God hears and answers prayer!

Let me take this a step farther. The title that the psalmist gives to God describes the very character of

God. For God to not hear the prayers of His children would require Him to act out of character—something that He is never willing to do. If you are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, God will not refuse to hear your prayers. Why wouldn’t you come and pray to a God who would have to deny His own character in order to not hear you?

Well, there is one reason—guilt. You do not come to God when you know you are not living right before Him. Does Psalm 65 say anything about that? Yes! It is in the very next verse which reads: *When iniquities [sin] prevail against me, you atone for [forgive] our transgressions (Psalm 65:3)*.

Only God Himself knows how much prayer is not being offered by His children for this reason alone. Isn’t it interesting that the psalmist would begin with praise for God answering prayer, call God the God who hears prayer, and then bring up personal sin.¹

¹ See Rick’s pamphlet: “When God Doesn’t Answer”