



# His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



The title for today's article is: "Comfort and Encouragement When God Doesn't Seem to Answer Your Prayers." In Matthew 7:7-8 Jesus says: **"Ask and it will be given to you... For everyone who asks, receives..."** Some interpret these words to mean that God will give you whatever you ask for in prayer. But this interpretation leads to problems when God does NOT give us what we want.

Let's say a woman falls and breaks her neck. The result is that she is paralyzed from the neck down. This woman then asks God to heal her of her paralysis. But instead of being

healed her paralysis remains and even gets worse over the years. What are we to make of this? Some would say: *"Her problem was that she had doubts. She didn't believe strongly enough that God could actually heal her!"* Others would say: *"Her problem is that she is guilty of some horrible sin. God did not answer her prayer because she was not worthy!"* However, such explanations are wrong and sinful!

For example, there are many people who DO sincerely believe that God could miraculously heal them if He chose to do so – and yet these people have not been healed, even though they asked God to heal them. In addition, Scripture clearly teaches that we are ALL equally sinful and therefore NONE of us deserve anything from God except His wrath. The notion that God heals some people because they are worthy but refuses to heal others because they are not worthy is evil false teaching!

*So, why doesn't God always give us what we want?* The answer is: **God loves us!** When God says "No!" to

our prayer He is actually saying: "I've got something better for you!" At one point in his life the Apostle Paul was suffering greatly. In 2nd Corinthians 12:8-9a Paul writes: **"Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" In Romans 5:1-11 Paul teaches that God uses suffering to strengthen our faith in Christ who gives us forgiveness of sins through His atoning death on the cross and the hope of eternal life through His physical resurrection from the dead!**

I recently read an article by Joni Eareckson Tada which appears in the July-September 2009 issue of *Answers* magazine. The title of her article is: "Why Do God's Children Suffer?" In case you do not know Joni's story, over 40 years ago she broke her neck after diving into shallow water. Since that time she has been paralyzed from the neck down. Now, Joni is a Christian! She confesses that she is a sinner

and she trusts in Jesus, the Son of God, as her Lord and Savior from sin, the devil and eternal damnation. She sincerely believes that God could heal her paralysis. In fact, she has asked God many times to do just that. But God's answer has been: "I've got something better for you!"

In Joni's article (mentioned above) she writes the following: **"When all these things happen – famine, crib death, snake bites, gas station robberies, pistol whippings – God has not taken His hands off the wheel for a nanosecond. Psalm 103:19 says, 'His kingdom rules over all...' He is determined to... use suffering for His own ends... God is heaven-bent on inviting me to share in His joy, peace, and power. But there's a catch. God shares His joy only on His terms, and those terms call for us, in some measure, to suffer as His beloved Son did while on earth. 'For to this you have been called,**

**because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps' (1 Peter 2:21). Those steps lead us into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings where we... daily take up our cross and die to the sins He died for on His cross... my suffering has taught me to 'be done with sin,' putting behind me the peevish, small-minded, self-focused 'Joni' to mature into the 'Joni' He has destined me to be, honed and polished by years of quadriplegia (1 Peter 4:1)."**

In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus says: **"Ask and it will be given to you... For everyone who asks, receives..."** However, a few verses later Jesus goes on to say: **"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!"** Scripture never teaches that God will

always give us exactly what we ask for in prayer. Instead, God promises to give us "good gifts" – and sometimes those "good gifts" include suffering and trials which help us keep our focus on Jesus Who gives us forgiveness of sin and the hope of eternal life! (Read *John 16:33, Romans 8:18-39, 2nd Corinthians 1:3-9, Hebrews 12:1-11 and 1st Peter 1:3-9*)



*Please read the next "His Word is Truth" on Monday, August 17th!*

Next month Pastor Eckstein will begin a new series of articles entitled: "The Bible: Answers for Modern Questions." *The topic of next month's article will be: "Does the Bible Condone Slavery?"*

*For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page: [www.concordiajt.org](http://www.concordiajt.org)*

*Paid for by Concordia Lutheran Church*