Spurgeon, Charles
The Practice of Powerful and Effective Prayer

11. 8. Prayer Perfumed With Praise

A sermon on Philippians 4:6, where Spurgeon argues that every prayer should be mixed with thanksgiving. He works through three points: why we always have reason to give thanks when we pray, what goes wrong when praise is missing, and what blessings follow when praise is present. The core claim is that thankful prayer is the kind God answers.

Key takeaways

- Pray both generally (worship, common needs) and specifically (definite requests you can name), like Abraham pleading for Sodom or Elijah praying for rain.
- Never separate prayer from praise. Blend thanksgiving into every petition, even prayers offered in the depths or at the point of death.
- We always have grounds for thanks: that prayer is even possible, that we're still alive to pray, that we've already received great mercy, and that God has answered before.
- Thank God in advance for what you ask, trusting the promise like a banknote. George Müller praised God for answers before they came.

- Praise God even when He refuses or delays. His refusals are often love in disguise, sparing us from things we wrongly wanted.
- Prayer without thanksgiving shows ingratitude, selfishness, weak faith, or a will not submitted to God. Prayer doesn't change God's mind; it aligns ours with His.
- Thankful prayer produces the peace of God, warms a cold heart to pray, and often signals the blessing is about to arrive.
- For the unconverted: 'God be merciful to me a sinner' is enough. Find Christ first, then let thanksgiving never cease.

Passages worth keeping

> *"With all thy prayers thou shalt offer praise."*

Spurgeon's gospel counterpart to the Old Testament command to salt every sacrifice — praise belongs to every prayer.

> *"You shall get your answers to prayer when you multiply your thanksgivings in all your prayers and supplications."*

The sermon's central promise — thankfulness is the mark that a prayer is ready to be answered.

How it connects

The sermon ties together the whole biblical pattern of worship: the Lord's Prayer opens and closes with praise, the Psalms rise from complaint into song, and Paul opens nearly every epistle by thanking God as he prays. Praise and prayer are the two cherubim over the ark — never to be parted.

Scripture referenced

- **Philippians 4:6-7** -- The text: requests made known with thanksgiving, and the peace of God results.
- **Psalm 51:15** -- Even in repentance David turns to praise: 'open thou my lips.'
- **Psalm 18:3** -- 'I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved.'
- **2 Chronicles 20:20-22** -- Jehoshaphat's singers praise, and God routs the enemy — victory came when praise began.
- **Mark 11:24** -- Believe you receive when you pray, and you shall have it — basis for thanking in advance.
- **Psalm 37:4** -- Delight in the Lord and He gives the heart's desire — character underlies prevailing prayer.