

## February 14

**Scriptures:** Read Matthew 21

**Key Verse:** “And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”  
(Matthew 21:22)

### Overview

This chapter includes a tough passage. First of all, it seems uncharacteristic of Jesus to be going about cursing trees, especially trees, as Mark tells us, that are out of season. Secondly, even though we're accustomed to Jesus using hyperbole (that is, exaggeration for the sake of emphasis), as any good Semitic teacher and rabbi would do we are thrown by His reference to physical mountains being cast into the sea, and anything being received that is asked for in prayer with faith.

What is Jesus really telling us here? “If you have faith and doubt not, or if you believe, you'll receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” The promise in its very form excludes a literal fulfillment. The phrase, “to remove mountains,” was a natural exaggeration and Jesus is referring to the mountains of difficulty that we face every day in life; but to refer to Mount Hermon, as likely this mountain indicates, just gave a greater vividness to an illustration which the disciples could easily understand. A mere physical miracle, such as Mount Hermon being thrown into the Mediterranean, would never in itself be the object of faith as Jesus describes it. The exaggeration is meant to impress on the disciples' mind the truth that lies beneath it.

When Jesus says that belief will see you receiving whatever you ask in prayer, there is the implied condition, as we see in chapter 7, that is asked is in harmony with God's law and God's will. In fact, if it weren't in harmony with His law and His will, it wouldn't be asked in faith. Every true prayer involves submission to God's will in the matter. This is why we don't use it as a springboard to irresponsible praying, or prayer as a mean to a worldly end.

We must always submit what it is we ask to the greater issue of God's will for our lives and the world and commit ourselves in a childlike way to whatever He chooses to do.

### Prayer

Grant, dear Lord, that as we continue learning how to pray, Your Holy Spirit will guide us to pray according to Your Will and not ours.