

Matthew 7:7-11: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ 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!

Intro: Two Sundays ago: We should be gracious, loving people who turn from being sinfully critical & turn from hypocrisy so that we might lovingly & humbly correct others, in love, for the glory of God, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit; Last Sunday: We must be discerning & judge wisely who we should share Christ & His Gospel message with, & we must be discerning & judge how best to share Christ & His Gospel message.

How do these verses this week fit in with verses 1-6 and the whole Sermon on the Mount? We need God's help!

Sinclair Ferguson: Philippians 1:9-11: And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

D. A. Carson: the Sermon on the Mount lays down the righteousness, sincerity, humility, purity, and love expected of Jesus' followers; and now it assures them such gifts are theirs if sought through prayer. The sermon has begun with acknowledgment of personal bankruptcy and has already provided a model prayer. Now in three imperatives (ask, seek, knock) symmetrically repeated and in the present tense to stress the persistence and sincerity required, Jesus assures His followers that, far from demanding the impossible, He is providing the means for the otherwise impossible . . . Far too often Christians do not have the marks of richly textured discipleship because they do not ask, or they ask with selfish motives (James 4:2-3). But the best gifts, those advocated by the Sermon on the Mount, are available to "everyone" who persistently asks, seeks, and knocks. Jesus' disciples will pray ("ask") with earnest sincerity ("seek") and active, diligent pursuit of God's way ("knock").

1. Ask And It Will Be Given To You

Matthew 7:7-8: Ask, and it will be given to you . . . ⁸ For everyone who asks receives

a. Jesus taught us what to ask: Matthew 6:7-13: And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

b. Our Father doesn't always give us what we ask for: Commentators: I'd be scared to death if God always gave me what I asked for! I wouldn't pray anymore!

- **Hezekiah:** God answered with "Yes!" and gave him 15 more years.

- **Paul:** God answered with "No": **2 Corinthians 12:7-9:** So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers! **Borgman:** Prayed for celebrity wife at 14! (Baseball prayer)

Richard Ellis: The life that you have now is the life that you would pray for . . . if you had the wisdom of God.

c. This invitation to pray, be heard, & receive is for children of God: This is for Christians! **GOSPEL!**

Spurgeon: A dear brother beautifully said in prayer on Monday night—"You, O Lord, are perfectly satisfied with the Lord Jesus, and if we are satisfied with Him, You are satisfied with us." That is the Gospel put into a few words. God is satisfied with Christ, and if you are satisfied with Christ, God is satisfied with you.

d. This is a strong invitation and command for us to pray: Ask & keep on asking! Seek & keep on seeking! Knock & keep on knocking! (present tense imperatives!)

- **John 14:13-17:** Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. ¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth

- **John 15:7-8:** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

- **John 15:16:** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

- **D. A. Carson:** these closing words again remind the reader that the means of the fruitfulness for which they have been chosen is prayer in Jesus' name.

- **John 16:23-24:** Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

John Newton: Come, my soul, thy suit prepare, Jesus loves to answer pray'r; He Himself has bid thee pray, rise and ask without delay; Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with thee bring; For His grace and pow'r are such, none can ever ask too much.

e. This is a strong promise that our Father answers prayer: Can you testify this morning that our Father answers prayer?!

Personal prayer; Corporate prayer (Sunday, Wednesday, Weeknights); Noon prayer; Wednesday fast and pray

2. Seek And You Will Find

Matthew 7:7-8: seek, and you will find . . . ⁸ the one who seeks finds

a. Jesus has taught us what to seek: Matthew 6:31-33: Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

b. We should seek God above all else: Jeremiah 29:12-14: Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴ I will be found by you, declares the LORD

Psalms 34:10: The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Heaven Taken By Storm (Thomas Watson): Prayer is a lifting up of the mind and soul to God . . . It is called wrestling and a pouring out of the soul; both of which imply vehemency [showing strong feeling; forceful, passionate, or intense] . . . The apostle speaks of an effectual, fervent prayer . . .

He warned against giving God a dead, heartless prayer: Some are half asleep when they pray, and will a sleepy prayer ever awaken God? Such as mind not their own prayers, how do they think that God should mind them? Those prayers God likes best, which come seething hot from the heart.

He warned against giving God a distracted prayer: While they are praying, they are thinking of their

shop and trade. How can he shoot right whose eye is quite off the mark? . . . Will a king tolerate that, while his subject is delivering a petition, and speaking to him, he should be playing with a feather? When we send our hearts on an errand to Heaven, how often do they loiter and play by the way?

He warned against prayer without fervency: He wrote this is no prayer at all; it is speaking, not praying. Lifeless prayer is no more prayer than the picture of a man is a man. To say a prayer, is not to pray; Ashanius taught his parrot the Lord's Prayer. It is the violence and wrestling of the affections that make it a prayer, else it is no prayer.

3. Knock And The Door Will Be Opened To You

Matthew 7:7-8: knock, and it will be opened to you . . . ⁸ to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Spurgeon: The Knock on the Door: 1) The promises of God; 2) Faith in these promises; 3) The name of Jesus

All of these words (ask, seek, knock) point us to perseverance, persistence, passion, desire, & longing in prayer!

Luke 18:1-8: And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.

This widow came as a stranger; but we come as children, as beloved, as the very Bride of Christ!

This widow came alone with no one to help; but we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous!

This widow came as one of the most vulnerable in society; but we come as those God is for, and if God is for us then who can be against us!

This widow came as one treated unjustly; but we come as those free from the just condemnation of God forever because Jesus was punished in our place so that God might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus!

This widow came nameless; but we come as those foreknown by God, chosen by Him, and loved by Him with an everlasting love! Engraved on the palms of His hands! **John 10:27:** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; **Galatians 2:20:** I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

This widow came with no promises to plead; but we have God's assurance that He will hear us and answer us: **Luke 11:13:** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! **Romans 8:28**

If the unjust judge can be won over by the pleading of the widow, how much more will the righteous, loving, wise, all powerful most just Judge answer His precious children when we cry to Him!

This parable does not teach us to nag God, and if we nag Him enough, then He will give us what He doesn't really want to give us! No! This parable teaches us that if this widow was so persistent when she had absolutely no reason to be – how much more persistent ought we to be in prayer because we have every reason to hope our God will hear and answer us because He is the just of all just ones! He is the loving Father of all loving fathers! He's righteous! He's good! He's great! He's wise! He's love! **SO LET US PRAY!**

4. Sons Of The Very Best Father Get The Best Gifts

Matthew 7:9-11: Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ 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!

a. Faithful, good, earthly fathers give good gifts to their children: Bread is good and nourishing; a stone is useless. Fish are good and nourishing; a serpent is dangerous! Fathers love their children and give good gifts!

b. You are evil: None is righteous, no not one; there's none who seek God; Dead in sin; Enemies of God

c. But if you are evil and yet still give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him: God is not evil! He's the very opposite of evil! He's the perfect, holy, everlasting, loving, best Father of all fathers – He will give us (His children) the best of gifts!

Do you know & believe God is your Father? Lloyd-Jones: If you asked me to state in one phrase what I regard as the greatest defect in most Christian lives I would say that it is our failure to know God as our Father as we should know Him . . . Ah yes, we say; we do know that & believe it. But do we know it in our daily life & living? If only we got hold of this, we could smile in the face of every possibility & eventuality that lies ahead of us.

d. The greatest gift our Father gives us is Himself and being made like Him: Luke 11:13: If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

- **Matthew 10:20:** For it is not you who speak, but **the Spirit of your Father** speaking through you.

- **Romans 8:9:** Anyone who does not have **the Spirit of Christ** does not belong to him.

2 Peter 1:3: His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness

Lloyd-Jones: Ask for any one of these things that is good for you, that is for the salvation of your soul, your ultimate perfection, anything that brings you nearer to God and enlarges your life and is thoroughly good for you, and He will give it you. He will not give you things that are bad for you. You may think they are good but He knows they are bad. He does not make a mistake, and He will not give you such things . . . the promise literally is this, that if we seek these good things, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the life of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, etc., all these virtues and glories that were seen shining so brightly in the earthly life of Christ, He will give them to us. If we really want to be more like Him, and like all the saints, if we really ask for these things, we shall receive

We can ask and receive because Jesus asked and did not receive! Gethsemane! Cross! Death! Resurrection!

Christ Jesus Is The Son Who Asked
His Father Gave Him All At Last
Inherits Nations Holds Them Fast
But For This Prize God's Wrath Amassed
The Son's Denied Of What He Asked
And Treated As If Sins Outcast
The Cup Of Wrath His Soul Would Blast
He Died And Rose In Love Steadfast
No More By Death We Are Harassed
By Faith Alone God's Wrath Is Passed
Behind His Back All Sins Are Cast
And Now We Ask For Gifts So Vast
For His Great Love Is Unsurpassed!