



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: PRAYER • REQUESTS (INWARD) •

MATTHEW 7:7-11 • 1/28/2024

MAIN POINT

Jesus exhorted His followers to ask Him for the desires of their hearts in prayer. When we go to God in prayer, He always treats us with the same concern a good father has for his children.

INTRODUCTION

What is the most outlandish thing you have ever asked someone for? Did you get it?

When you pray, do you find yourself asking for extravagant things or “small” things? What are some of the things for which you ask? How has God answered some of your prayers?

How persistent are you in asking for things in prayer? Do you ever feel selfish or that you are bothering God?

Jesus gave three directions in Matthew 7:7—ask, seek, and knock—providing valuable and timeless instruction for how all believers can connect with God the Father and live in the power that God provides. Today we will focus on “ask” — petitioning God in prayer.

Jesus desires that His followers ask Him for the things they need. We will also be reminded that (beyond needs and requests) prayer is the primary way we communicate with God, and He wants us to continuously approach Him with our requests. He delights to give us what we need.

UNDERSTANDING

READ MATTHEW 7:7-11.

Count the number of times the word “ask” is used in these verses. How would you summarize what Jesus said in these verses?

When Jesus told the disciples to ask, in what manner was He telling them to do so?

The verbs used in this section all signify continuously repeated activities. When Jesus told the disciples to ask, He did not mean for them to ask once and never again. Rather, Jesus commanded the disciples to continuously ask. And when we ask, Jesus expects us to make petitions. When Jesus responded to the disciples’ request of “Lord, teach us to pray” in Matthew 6, He gave them a prayer that included not only

praise (“Hallowed be Thy name”), but also petition (“Give us this day our daily bread”). Jesus knows that there are things we need and wants to hear those petitions.

What definite requests does the child make to the parent in these verses?

These verses include examples of asking for specific needs. Just as the child asks a father for bread and fish, followers of Christ can trust that Jesus will also answer their clearly defined requests.

READ JOHN 16:24.

Why had the disciples not yet asked for anything in Jesus’ name?

What did Jesus tell them would happen as they asked God in prayer? How does asking God in prayer fulfill our joy?

In John 16, Jesus taught His disciples about the new order that will be established in the advent of His resurrection. When Jesus left to go to the Father, the disciples would be able to ask for all things in His name. If they asked, they would receive. When we ask Jesus for the desires of our heart in prayer, our joy is fulfilled because we are able to see God’s work in our lives. God wants to answer our prayers. The problem for the early disciples and followers of Christ today is that we too often fail to see that our asking is expected.

Why do you think we often fail to ask God for things, even though His Word makes it clear He expects us to ask?

READ LUKE 11:9-13.

Ultimately, what does God do for those who continuously ask of Him?

What additional insight does Luke 11:13 give us into the good gifts from God?

Just as children should expect good gifts from their earthly parents in response to trusting requests, we can pray expectantly, knowing our Heavenly Father will give us His best. In the parallel text (Luke 11:13), Jesus promised the Father will “give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” God gives His children His own indwelling presence. Perhaps the most delightful outcome of asking God is entering into His presence through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit allows every believer to experience the indwelling presence of God.

Read James 2:17. Who is the source of every good gift?

Asking has a delightful outcome, because when we ask God for good things, He is able to supply them out of the abundance of who He is. He is the source of supreme goodness. Even the best parents are limited in what they are able to provide for their children, but with God this is not the case. If earthly fathers delight to provide for their children, how much more will our Heavenly Father?

APPLICATION

Asking God involves desired petitions and definite requests. What are the definite requests represented around the room? How can you better ask God for your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Do you get discouraged if your prayers aren't answered immediately? When God doesn't do something you've prayed about, how can this passage bolster your faith?

What can you do to align your prayers with the good things God wants to give you? How can you alter your schedule this week to make more time for prayer?

PRAYER

Close your time in prayer, thanking God that He answers our prayers and that He loves us and gives us good gifts that we ask for. Pray that God would transform our prayer lives, so that our prayers would align with His character and His will. Ask God to help our group value daily and disciplined time alone with Him. Pray for the definite requests of those present.

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 7:7-11

7:7-8 While some people interpret these verses as a promise that God will give disciples whatever they pray for, linguistic connections between these verses and other portions of the Sermon on the Mount suggest that Jesus promised that those

who ask, search, and knock will be invited to enter His kingdom. The command to keep asking is tied to the promise of “good things” to those who ask in verse 11. In the Lukan parallel, these good things are interpreted as the Holy Spirit who transforms the disciple and makes him fit for the kingdom. Keep searching uses the same Greek verb as 6:33, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” Since the word door is not in the Greek text of verse 7, and because ancient people knocked on gates as well as doors to request entrance (Ac 12:13), keep knocking likely refers to knocking on the gate of the kingdom (mentioned in vv. 13-14).

7:9-10 Round loaves of bread resemble smooth, brown stones. Certain fish in the Sea of Galilee resemble snakes.

7:11 Jesus’ description of humans as you... who are evil disproves the modern concept that people are basically good. Although Jesus acknowledged that humans may perform gracious acts like providing for their children, He insisted that they do so contrary to their sinful nature. God’s gracious acts, on the other hand, express our heavenly Father’s perfect nature.

JOHN 16:24

The final paragraph of this portion of chapter 6 offers us a lesson in purpose for the crowd. Obviously they were confused, never having thought the Lord crossed the lake by walking on the water. They assumed the disciples had gone west across the water and that Jesus was still on the northeastern shore. Unable to find Him there, they eventually made their way to Capernaum. What did they want? More food? Another deliberate attempt to force Him into political office? Whatever it was, they were hardly prepared for what they heard.

LUKE 11:9-13

11:9-10 Asking, searching, and knocking visualize different aspects of prayer, all of which are valid. Keep asking... searching... knocking reflects the persistence theme emphasized in the story of verses 5-8. The assurance that everyone who asks receives does not mean that every prayer is answered as we want it to be. Rather, it

means that if we persist in prayer, our prayers will eventually be answered according to God's best for us.

11:11-12 No human father who really loved his child would be so uncaring as to give him a snake in place of a fish or a scorpion in place of an egg.

11:13 The parallel passage in Mt 7:11 reads, "Give good things to those who ask Him." If those good things are related to the Holy Spirit, the wording may be speaking of spiritual gifts (Rm 12; 1Co 12). This verse reflects Luke's emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Leading up to the day of Pentecost, the apostles and other believers waited in prayer (Ac 1:14) for the baptism of the Spirit to come. In that instance, the heavenly Father gave the Holy Spirit to those who asked Him.