

Good God; Good Gifts

February 7, 2021

Luke 11:1-10

I so appreciate your being here today as we worship together and study the Bible.

The Daily Mail, a British online newspaper, has this interesting article this past week. Apparently the English retailer “littlewoods.com” took a survey of 1,000 mothers. They made some interesting discoveries. For example, moms field an average of 288 questions a day from their young children. The questions varied, of course, by age of child. So, from the girls aged four, as many as 390 questions a day. [Adapted from and found on www.dailymail.co.uk].

Here are the five toughest questions children have asked.

One, why is water wet?

Two, where does the sky end?

Three, what are shadows made of?

Four, why is the sky blue?

And five, how do fish breathe underwater?

So, how important are questions? If you were to read the New Testament this coming year and write down every time Jesus asked a question, you’d find that He asks about three hundred. For example, Mark 8:36 *“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Then there’s Luke 6:46 *“And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”*

And then we find this in Luke 12:25 *“And which of you with taking thought [worrying] can add to his stature one cubit [one foot and a half]?”*

And here’s the one He asked at a gravesite. John 11:25 *“Jesus said unto her [to Martha, brother of the deceased Lazarus], I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (26) and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this [do you believe this]?”*

So, you can be sure that today’s message includes one of the LORD’s questions. I’ve titled it “Good God; Good Gifts.” Shall we pray?

LORD, thank You for Your Living Word. Thank You for speaking so straightforwardly about so many things. Please open our hearts and minds to an understanding of the things that are important to You because we know that what’s important to You should be important to us. I pray this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Please find with me Matthew 7:7. This seventh chapter contains the three closing topics Jesus spoke about in His Sermon on the Mount: a word about judging others, a word about prayer, and a word on how you treat people. Today, it’s prayer.

As we read these verses, look for the questions; verse seven. Matthew 7:7 *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: (8) for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

(9) Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? (10) Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? (11) If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?”

Now, of all the things Jesus says about prayer while He was here, this part of the Sermon on the Mount is the most sweeping, profound, and maybe the most majestic thing anyone has ever said about it.

Let's begin with a question.

One, what are you asking the LORD for; vs. 7.

Matthew 7:7 "*Ask, and it shall be given you; ...*"

Earlier I mentioned that children ask a lot of questions. They probably only ask about things that are important to them. And, when he or she asks his mother or father a question, he expects an answer. You could say "It's a 'one time' ask."

Your son or daughter might keep peppering you with questions; but they're probably *different* questions.

And, remembering that Jesus never wastes even one word, *this* word that Jesus uses here is different than the one the child asks. He says "ask and keep asking." In other words, should you keep asking until you receive what you're asking for? Yes.

You might call this "relentless asking." It's not just a "one time" ask, according to Jesus, when you pray.

Here's a story Jesus told about such a person; someone with "relentless asking."

Luke 18:1 "*And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint [don't give up]; (2) Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: (3) And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.*

(4) And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man; (5) Yet because this

widow troubleth me [is making work for me to do], I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me [wear me out].

(6) And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. (7) And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?"

Do you see this word "weary" in verse five? It's got the idea in it that the outward wears down the inward. The outward act of this woman asking and asking and asking and asking for the judge to intervene for her, if she keeps it up, she'll will wear him down.

And, what is the point of the LORD's parable? One, verse six, listen to what that unjust judge says. And two, verse seven, "shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?"

Can you come up with a better illustration of Matthew 7:7 "ask" than this parable?

What happens in Heaven is this. God's heart is being touched every single time you take your "ask" to Him. And, He's *not* like this unjust judge. He "bears long" and is never "worn out" by your asking.

So, what is it you are invited to ask for? Two things. One, your needs. And two, your desires.

Listen closely to Jesus on this wonderful matter of prayer requests. Mark 11:24 "*Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*"

Matthew 21:22 "*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*"

John 14:13 "*And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*"

John 15:16 “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.”

John 16:24 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, he will give it you.”

When was the last time you “asked” the LORD for something? You see, if you don’t pray this way, if you don’t “keep on asking” for what you want, what do you think your Heavenly Father thinks about what you’re asking Him for?

You have within you, as a child of God, God-given desires. Every one of them, according to Jesus, can be taken before your Heavenly Father and He will not refuse you.

James puts it like this. James 1:5 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

First, what are you asking the LORD for?

Second, what are you seeking from the LORD? Vs. 7

Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; **seek, and ye shall find**; ...

It’s almost like Jesus piles on His point when He adds these next two words, seek and knock.

When you seek something, you are looking for it. It’s not the same thing as “ask.” But, Jesus is saying it exactly the same way. “Seek and keep seeking.” It’s “relentless seeking” just like praying is “relentless asking.”

To seek means “to look.” It means “to look for *Him*.” It means “to look for His answers to your prayer.” It means “to look for His presence.” It means “to seek direction.” It means “to seek wisdom from Him.” It means “to seek His will.” And,

how many of you go to work each day and forget to seek *wisdom* from the LORD to fulfill your job? Just say it plainly to Him, “LORD, I need Your wisdom today.” And don’t you need wisdom when it comes to raising your children? And don’t you need wisdom when it comes to handling your finances?

Your prayer life is a wonderful experience of “seeking” as well as “asking.” You see, you’re not just coming to the LORD with requests. You’re coming to Him as to a Father Who is absolutely happy to have you come to Him with whatever you’re looking for; whatever you are seeking.

So you have a problem in your home or in your life? You’re already “seeking” an answer. Why try everything else first? Why not go to the LORD and seek Him first? He loves to respond to the seeking heart.

The seventeenth century Christian, Fenelon, wrote a beautiful book he titled “The Seeking Heart.” It’s a masterpiece when it comes to walking with the LORD.

Now, remember what I said about your desires when it comes to praying. Your desires become even more sharpened when you seek.

First, what are you asking the LORD for?

Second, what are you seeking from the LORD?

Third, why are you knocking? Vs. 7

Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; **knock, and it shall be opened unto you**: ...”

Now, Jesus adds something to His understanding of prayer when He puts this word “knock” into the picture. Knocking implies a door, plain and simple.

And just like asking and seeking, the LORD says “keep knocking,” or “keep knocking and knocking and knocking.”

What would happen at your house, even during Covid, if someone came to your door and kept knocking and knock-ing and knocking? Here’s what you’d think. You think that, someone’s at your door who really wants you to let them in or, at the least, to answer your door.

I think many of us, myself included, have made prayer something other than it really is. Jesus says it’s relentless asking, relentless seeking, and relentless knocking. That’s it. That’s all. That’s as simple as you going to get when it comes to prayer.

You see, if you’re not knocking, then you really don’t want that door opened.

And what door is it that you’re knocking on? It’s the door to the Supply Room of Heaven. We have lots of ideas we’ve heard and learned about Heaven. But, if you are a man or a woman of prayer, you are learning that Heaven is just a knock away. It’s near. It’s here. It’s not far away. It’s not just when you die. It’s not just when you go to be with Jesus. Heaven is right here in front of you. Go ahead, knock on the door right now.

Now, can you not imagine this with me? You’ve been asking the LORD for something; a need or a desire. And you’ve been seeking Him. And now, you’ve been knocking relentlessly. And, the door opens.

What is that? That is God welcoming you into His supply room. I know you’re wondering. If God is my Heavenly Father, then I don’t need to knock on His door, do I? Really, what if you are knocking on the Supply Room door? It’s not the front door. The front door is Jesus Himself. He said “I am the door. By Me, if any man enter, He shall be saved.

This door is the “Supply” door. And, when this door opens, here’s what happens. You realize that that door opens to an endless supply; whatever you ask, whatever you need, whatever you desire, whatever you seek; He just opened to you His Supply Room.

Paul put it this way. Philippians 4:19 “*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*”

How many of you like to file your nails? GTFR Now, why do you do that? One reason, so they won’t grow so long and they won’t be so sharp and they won’t break.

OK. I agree. Then, why do you “file down” your requests when it comes to praying? There are no files in Matthew 7:7; just three very pointed words; ask, seek, and knock.

And, then there’s the promise. I imagine those who first heard Jesus preach this message about prayer must have felt completely overjoyed. And here’s why. Look at verse eight.

Matthew 7:8 “*for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*”

And, just like your relentness in a requirement for good prayer, God’s relentness is His promise to you.

Of all the aspects of prayer, this is very much at the top of the list; the promises of God.

So, what does it look like to rely on a promise when it comes to praying as Jesus says to pray?

Turn to the Old Testament with me to King David in II Samuel chapter seven and you’ll see it.

David’s good friend, Nathan, has just revealed a message from the LORD to David. He told him that a Temple would be built in Jerusalem as David had requested. And He also told

David that he'd have a kingdom, an everlasting kingdom, even after David leaves this world.

So, how does David respond when he hears these promises directly to him from the LORD? Here's how. II Samuel 7:25 *“And now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for-ever, and do as Thou hast said... (27) For Thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath Thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.”*

David is saying that, because of what the LORD has promised, he now takes courage to pray that promise back to Him. You see, prayer is your taking back to the LORD what He has promised to you.

Somebody has wisely said “prayer is how God's promises are delivered.”

Now, how can you apply all this to your life today? Here's how. I'd like you to fill in a blank. Here's the sentence. “God won't do this _____.”

You see; this way you'll be able to tell if you are believing God when you take that request to Him. If you don't believe He'll open His supply room when you keep knocking, then you can be sure your prayers are just bouncing off the ceiling, so-to-speak.

Also, set out this week to memorize Matthew 7:7

Matthew 7:7 *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: (8) for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”*

Then, throughout the week, go back to that blank sentence you filled in and ask yourself “Do I really think that He

“won't” do that?” “Are my doubts that much stronger than my faith?”

And, one final thing. What do you think will happen in Heaven when you do *this* in prayer? Matthew 18:19 *“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.”*

Shall we pray?

LORD, You know just what we need and want. You know what we seek. And you know the level of our knocking. Please teach us to trust You today when we pray. I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Hymn # 738 “The Wonder Of It All”