

Sermon 56: God's Goodness and Our Expectations: Matthew 7:7-11

Text: Matthew 7:7-11 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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?"

Summary: If flawed people are generous and protective of their children, how much more is a perfect God who is infinitely good generous and protective of His children.

Truth 1: We should expect good things, because we know God is good: 7:11 "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?"

- **God's goodness is a major theme in the Sermon on the Mount:**
 - **Matthew 5:44-45** "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust..."
 - **Matthew 5:48** "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect..."
 - **Matthew 6:7-8** "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him..."
 - **Matthew 6:25-26** "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on...Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"
 - **Matthew 6:30** "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"
 - **Matthew 6:32** "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."
- **How we view God is the centerpiece of our worldview:**

- **We can have a diminished view of His holiness and hatred for sin: Romans 3:18-19** "There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God..."
- **We can have a shortsighted view of His grace and goodness:**
 - **Romans 8:1, 31-32** "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
 - **Ephesians 4:14-19** "For this cause I bow my knees...That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge..."

Truth 2: Because He is good, He would never give us a worthless substitute: 7:9 "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?"

- **Bread is a staple food, essential to sustain life.**
- **If we ask Him for an essential, He will not give us a worthless substitute.**
- **He would never do this because He is good.**
- **We need to hear this, because we often approach Him with a skeptical view of His goodness and practicality: Jeremiah 2:13**
 "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water..."
 - "They have forsaken me..."
 - "They have hewed out broken cisterns..."

Truth 3: Because He is good, He would never give us something that will ultimately harm us: 7:10 "If he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?"

- **Fish is also a staple food, essential to sustain life.**
- **If we ask Him for an essential, He will not give us something that would harm us.**
- **He would never do this because He is good.**

- **We need to hear this, because we often approach Him with a skeptical view of His goodness: Hebrews 12:6-13** "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons...he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed..."
 - "Whom the Lord loveth..."
 - "If ye endure..."
 - "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous..."
 - "Lift up the hands which hang down..."

Truth 4: We should view Him as better than any human example:

7:11 "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

- **Four Preliminary Observations:**
 - There is no goodness without God.
 - There is no basis for us to call a thing good or evil without a Divine standard.
 - Those who do good do it, because God has worked it in them and is working through them.
 - The people we know, and our difficult experiences, can become a hinderance to our view of God.
- **Anything good in our conscience comes from God: Romans 2:14-15** "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another..."
- **Anything good we experience in this world comes from God:**
 - **James 1:17** "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning..."
 - **Matthew 5:45** "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust..."
- **Our practical development into Christlikeness is entirely from God:**
 - **The removal of Divine wrath: 1 John 2:1-2** "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world..."

- **Growth in love: 1 John 4:7-12** "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins...If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us..."
- **Love at its best: 1 John 4:16-19** "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect...There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us..."

How do we apply this passage: James 1:5-8 "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. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways..."

- **Reminder yourself that God is generous:** "Liberally..."
- **Remind yourself that God does not have disdain for you:** "Upbraideth not..."
- **Purpose to not drift from a healthy view of God:** "Nothing wavering..."
- **Purpose to not allow yourself to develop a divided heart:** "Double-minded man, unstable in all his ways..."
- **Remind yourself that the best example you will ever witness points to a better example and falls short of that example.**
- **Let a healthy understanding of God's goodness drive you into His presence.**
- **Let a healthy understanding of His goodness support an unwavering conviction that He will work in the best way possible.**
- **May God's goodness shape your expectations when you approach Him in prayer!**