

A.S.K. (6/28/26)

Part 1: Our Relationship with God

Please turn to *Luke 11:9-13*

If we want God to do things in our lives, whether to change us on the inside, or to change something outside, we need to ask Him.

- Not hope.
- Not hint.
- Not wait.
- Not assume.
- ASK

In the late 90's I worked as a ***sales associate at a retail gift shop*** in a Mall in Tulsa, OK. Every day I came to work, I was handed an index card telling me how much I needed to sell that day to keep my job. I had my own employee number and, when I made a sale, I typed my # into the cash register (or had the cashier do it) to give me the credit. At the end of the day, the manager printed out the results of everyone who worked that day and recorded who made their sales goals and who didn't. If you didn't make your goals 3x in a month, you got "the talk" and that continued to happen, you got fired.

We had lots of things for sale in our store, some items costs a few dollars all the way up things costing nearly \$1000. The biggest ticket items in the store were **telescopes** and just selling one put you way over your goal. We had 5 different types that were different from each other: reflecting and refracting. The \$700 telescope saw further and clearer than the \$99 one.

Our manager Dave was the top telescope salesman in our region. The previous year, the company had a contest of which employee in the OK-TX region sold the most, and Dave won. His prize was a really big and fancy telescope that only a true enthusiast would spend that kind of money on!

One day I was in the store, and a **fellow walked in and started looking at our telescopes**, so I rushed right over looking for a big sale. Problem: he started asking me a bunch of questions I couldn't answer b/c I wasn't knowledgeable. I had to go get Dave, who came out and took over. Sure enough within a few minutes, the fellow had purchased one and **Dave got credit the sale.**

After the customer left I did this: **I asked Dave to train me on telescopes.** He immediately took me over and did just that. I then asked if we had copies of the owner's manuals so I could take them home and study them. He provided them. If I needed reminding or tips, I went back to Dave and he gave them to me. I asked him to observe me while I tried selling telescopes to customers and give feedback on how I could improve.

Next thing you know, ***I was selling as many as he was and shooting past my sales goals.*** It got the attention of the district manager, who saw the results on her computer, and she showed up one day to congratulate me. When time came for a promotion and raise—both of which **I asked for**—I got both.

One of my fellow associates was named Christine and one day, her and I were working the store together. She got red in the face and demanded to know **how I was so knowledgeable about telescopes.** I answered that Dave had trained me. She got visibly agitated and spat out that Dave had never taken the time to train her, and that it wasn't fair. I responded ***“have you asked him to?”***

She replied that she had not and that **she shouldn't have to**...that Dave should have **came to her and trained her.** That she had been there longer than me, and it wasn't right Dave had trained me and not her. I said ***“he trained me because I asked him to. Do you want me to train you? We can do it right now.”***

She turned me down and said **Dave needed to be the guy to do this for her, not me.** I kept encouraging her to approach him and ask, and she refused. I worked there for another 6 months and never saw Christine sell a telescope.

Now let's ***read some famous verses*** from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Whose showing us our relationship with God our Father.

[Luk 11:9-13 ESV] 9 “And I tell you, **ask**, and it will be given to you; **seek**, and you will find; **knock**, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; 12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 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!”

This is a Father-child dynamic. Jesus previously told us that we enter Heaven's Kingdom as little children, and plenty of sermons have been preached as to what that might mean. Let me make it simple: **as kids, we're helplessly dependent upon God our Father.**

- If could obtain righteousness on our own, we wouldn't need God.
- If we could get into heaven based on the good things we did and said, Jesus would never have needed to go the Cross.
- If we could successfully navigate and manage ourselves to always be joyful, faithful, and stable, the Lord wouldn't be necessary.
- If we could do the same for our relationships, why would we need Christ?

We are the children of God and we need Him: all the time. Not just for the big things. Not just during a time of crises or loss. Not merely for the life-changing decision we need to make.

I need God when I drive, go to work, at home with my wife & kids, here at church, everywhere I go, everything I do.

Things go wrong in life, don't they? Think of all the obstacles that are present and the enemies actively working against us. We have a devil who hates us, a world that's fallen into sin and corruption, and an aspect of self Paul calls "the flesh" whose desires are opposite from that of the Holy Spirit.

We have a corrupt governmental system, we **come into conflict with the flesh of others** both those we love, and those we don't. Things get older and break down, everything costs money that we have to work for...lots of things can and sometimes do go wrong, threatening to take our peace.

Wouldn't it be great if there were **an all powerful Being Who could do something about it?** Who loved us enough to intervene on occasion? The millennia old question is: *how do we get Him to?*

Jesus told us: we A.S.K.

- ASK and it shall be given to us.
- SEEK and we will find.
- KNOCK and the door will be opened to us.

In Luke 11, Jesus is telling us that God isn't just our God, **He's our Dad.**

I've given this speech to my sons and my dad gave it to me: ***“you may think I'm too hard on you or too critical at times. But when you get out into the working world, your boss won't care about you like I do. Not because he's a bad guy, but b/c he's not your dad.”***

My son Jesse is 23 and on his own. **If he comes to my house and eats the food in my fridge I let him.** Why? He has his own food and a job! I let him do it b/c he's my son and always will be. What if he wants to do laundry at my house? Yes he can. What if he calls me late at night because his car battery is dead and needs a jump? I'm there.

Why do all these things for an adult? Because I'm his dad!

God is our Dad. Look what Jesus said in verse 13: He compares the righteousness of God to us...and calls us “evil” (not to be conflated with Hitler-type evil). Yet He's not just ***comparing righteousness, but love...God's love*** vs. human love. Which do we think is better, fuller, and superior?

In the verses above, **there are kids who need to eat:** breakfast, lunch, dinner. So what do they do? They go to their dad and ask for food: a fish and an egg here in Luke, Matthew has the kid asking for bread.

- They know who to go to: their Dad.
- They know to ASK their dad for food.
- They know He'll give them what they need, and not substitute something that will harm them.

Since sermon title was an acronym—A.S.K.—let's go over Jesus' teaching. First, the **context of the entire chapter 11 (or Matt 7) is prayer** and started out with the famous Lord's Prayer. Thus the verses we're studying today are prayer verses.

“ASK (our Father) and it will be given to you.” The word “ask” is “desire, beg, crave, require.”

Please listen carefully: **asking is an act of humility. Not asking is pride.**

Not asking is to say:

- “I don't need help from God.”
- “I can do it myself.”
- “I don't want to ‘bother’ God...He has bigger things to address.”

Our Heavenly Dad wants us to be dependent on Him. There are scores of verses about trusting God, leaning on God, He's our refuge, looking to God, approaching God, and petitioning Him.

Do we get everything we ask for? There's an old cliché in the church I fully believe in that goes like this. God has 3 answers to prayer: yes, no, or wait. I'm not a believer that God says yes every time.

This is what **James has to say about answered prayers** in his letter:

[Jas 4:1-3 ESV] 1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. **You do not have, because you do not ask.** 3 **You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.**

2 things here.

- The first reason people aren't getting their prayers answered by God is because they aren't asking.
- The second reason is they are asking, but according to fleshly passions which God doesn't indulge.

Today's focus is on the first one: ***we're not getting because we aren't asking.***

Let me give another famous verse and let's pay special attention to how it's worded:

[Mat 6:7-8 ESV] 7 "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. 8 Do not be like them, ***for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.***

Later on in the same chapter:

[Mat 6:32 ESV] 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things (material things), and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.**

Since God is all knowing, **He already knows everything we need** whether its everyday stuff like food, some inner change, encouragement, hope, deliverance, what have you.

So why doesn't He just give it without us having to ask? That's what some people consider the truest form of love...when something they want/need is provided w/o having to ask.

Yet the most loving, compassionate, and merciful Being—God—says we must ask Him.

- Are there starving Christians in the world, yes or no? Why doesn't God just feed them?
- Are there Christians being unjustly persecuted by some power in the world? Why doesn't God just free them?
- Are there enemies who are lying about and falsely accusing Christians? Why doesn't God just expose the truth and exonerate them?

I'm not claiming to know all the reasons why, but I say this: if you or I are in any of these positions or the 100 others I didn't mention, **let's cover the "ask" base and make sure it isn't that.**

Let's realize that we must humble ourselves before God, abase ourselves before our King, and **act like the dependents that we are?**

Why doesn't God just "do" stuff w/o being asked?

Because **asking humbles a person and exposes our pride.** And here's the relationship God has with a) the Humble, and b) the Proud:

[Jas 4:6-8 ESV] 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God **opposes the proud** but gives **grace to the humble.**" 7 **Submit yourselves therefore to God.** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 **Draw near to God**, and he will draw near to you."

These verses are all about prayer. Submitting ourselves to and drawing near to God is the following picture: He's on a throne holding court, and we approach Him as one of His subjects, having found ourselves in a position we can't solve whether it's our fault or not. We bow, kneel (humility) and confess our helplessness and need—whatever said need might be. We ASK Him for help.

A proud person refuses to approach the King and abase themselves. They remain at a distance from the Lord sitting on His throne, and won't bring their petitions before Him. They either endure or try and figure things out themselves.

This segues into the next part Jesus taught: seeking. ***"Seek and you will find."***

The word seek is almost the same as ask: it's to let one's desire be known in a targeted manner...like aiming a gun at a target. In other words, be specific.

Something I've noticed when I listen to people: **they're vague when they ask because of pride, but very specific when they complain about not getting what they wanted after the fact.** I'll talk more about that next week.

Last is *“knock, and the door will be opened to you.”*

In ancient Hebrew society, **doors didn't have knobs on the outside**...only on the inside. Therefore you didn't open or unlock a door if you were trying to come in...someone on the inside had to open it for you. Therefore it was common, even when coming back to your own home, to knock on the door so someone would open it.

Consider: just like asking and seeking, **knocking is an act of dependent humility**. Suppose there's a rich and powerful master who leaves on a journey, then comes home. Even he must knock on the door to his own house and wait for a family member or servant to open it for him.

What did Jesus say to us?

[Rev 3:20 ESV] 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

He's saying that He's coming to our “house” and ***even He knocks***...and we choose whether to let Him in or not.

Now look at the **parables** Jesus taught about praying to our heavenly Father:

[Luk 11:5-8 NKJV] 5 And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? 8 "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

The fellow needing bread goes to his buddy's house and knocks on the door, saying ***“I've got company and no food...can you give me some?”*** Buddy is asleep, in his jammies, and kids are asleep too. The persistent knocking will wake them up! “Go away!” he says.

Yet the fellow doesn't go away—he keeps knocking until when? His buddy opens up and gives the bread!

This parable is about prayer: we're the ones needing bread and look: we don't have any. Whether it's our fault or not, we're in a position of humble dependence. We KNOW our buddy has some, but we can't just walk in his house and get it. So we knock, knock, knock until he opens up and give us, as Jesus said, AS MANY AS WE NEED.

We are the man (or woman) w/o bread. God is the One with lots of it. KNOCK until He gives you what you ask for.

I end with this verse:

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

- Have we been asking God for things, or merely hoping & wishing?
- Have we been sitting around waiting for things to just work out, or have we brought specific requests to God?
- Have we been hinting, nudging, and insinuating to the Lord...or have we boldly approached the throne of grace, asking for grace and mercy in our time of need?