

11-9-2025, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Sermon on the Mount, pt-13

Purpose: Provoke people to pray persistent faith-filled prayers and avoid the things that hinder God from answering our prayers.

Truth for Today: Our prayers will be answered if we pray persistent, faith-filled prayers and avoid the things that prevent God from answering our prayers.

Text: Matthew 7:7-11

Topic: Prayer, Persistence, Unanswered Prayer

Series Title: 100% Jesus...pure, undiluted truth.

Series Purpose: Provoke people to embrace the spiritual reality that true, lasting happiness is found by following Jesus Christ and obeying His words.

## The Sermon on the Mount, pt-13

### I. Introduction

- A. Review Series: '100% Jesus, pure, undiluted truth', Pt-13 of the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. ch. 5-7. Last week we talked about judging others.
- B. Today we're going to learn about answered prayer. Jesus already showed us how to pray in the Lord's prayer. Now Jesus will inspire us to believe that our prayers will be answered yet we need to be persistent and not stop praying. We'll also talk about some reasons our prayers aren't answered.

### II. Persistence in prayer

- A. [Matthew 7:7 (ESV)] "Ask, and **it** will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and **it** will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.]
  - 1. "It" in vs. 7 is important. Greek scholars say 'it' is a part of the 'divine passive construction' (Gk. language) i.e. the outcome of our prayers is ultimately determined by God. We ask in prayer, but God gives us [*what he deems best*].<sup>3</sup> This verse means we pray but God determines when and how our prayer is answered. God could answer now, later, or no.
  - 2. There are 2 'truths in tension': (1) Ask persistently and you will receive, (2) 'What God deems best'. This combines faith to receive and faith to keep going if God doesn't answer the way we pray.
- B. [Matthew 7:7-12 (NLT)] "**Keep on asking**, and you will receive what you ask for. **Keep on seeking**, and you will find. **Keep on knocking**, and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> **For everyone who asks, receives.** Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.]
  - 1. Jesus' intent is to inspire faith that God answers prayer even if we have to pray a long time. He urges us to pray continuously and persistently. The Greek present tenses in the verbs call for persistence: "keep on asking"; "keep on seeking"; "keep on knocking"<sup>2</sup> \*\*\* This is not a comprehensive teaching on prayer.
- C. [Vs. 9] "**You parents—if your children** ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? <sup>10</sup> Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? **2 pics** Of course

not! <sup>11</sup> So if you **sinful people** know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.**

1. The key thoughts here are God is good and it brings him joy to give us good gifts when we pray. Human fathers are sometimes evil, but they still give good things to their children; our Father in heaven is good, and so he is much more ready to give good things to those who ask him.<sup>2</sup>

### III. If Jesus taught persistent prayers are answered, why are some prayers not answered?

- A. We're not praying God's will, [1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)]...**if we ask anything according to His will**, He hears us. <sup>15</sup> And if we know that He hears us, **whatever we ask**, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.] Lord's prayer, 1<sup>st</sup> request is God's will be done. **E.g.** girl Japan, God had something better in mind.
- B. Sinful or selfish desires, [James 4:1–4 (NLT)]...<sup>2</sup>...you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. <sup>3</sup> And even when **you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure...**] Prayer is more than a way to get God to give us what we want. **E.g.** different truck each day
- C. God's Timing, [1 Samuel 1:20 (NKJV)] So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, "Because **I have asked for him from the LORD.**" **E.g.** I'll give him to the Lord...
- D. We doubt and lack faith, [James 1:5–6 (NCV)] <sup>5</sup> But if any of you needs wisdom, you should **ask God** for it...<sup>6</sup> But **when you ask God, you must believe and not doubt.**] **E.g.** Peter walk on water...wind and waves...Jesus said 'why did you doubt me'.
- E. We give up too soon, [Lk 18:1 (NCV)] Jesus used this story to teach his followers that they should **always pray and never lose hope.** (*Persistent widow and judge*) <sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, **who cry out to him day and night?...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"**] We want something now and if we don't get it, give up. *always pray and never lose hope.*
- F. Satan hinders our prayer, angel to Daniel about a vision, [Dan 10:12–14 (NLT)].... Since the **first day** you began to pray...your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your **prayer.** <sup>13</sup> But **for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way.**] demons hinder prayer. Fight [Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.] Prayer is how we fight.
- G. We're unwilling to forgive, [Matthew 6:14–15 (NLT)] "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But **if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.**] Speculate: If God won't forgive our sins He probably won't answer our prayers until we repent and forgive. **E.g.** kink hose
- H. Someone else's behavior is holding up the answer to our prayer, Jonah running from God's assignment, [Jonah 1:4–6 (NLT)] the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea...<sup>5</sup>...**the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help...**]

### IV. Conclusion: Our prayers will be answered if we pray persistent, faith-filled prayers and avoid the things that prevent God from answering our prayers. Let's not let the possibility of unanswered prayer keep us from believing God will answer persistent prayers.

[Matthew 7:7 (NLT)] "**Keep on asking**, and you will receive what you ask for. **Keep on**

**seeking**, and you will find. **Keep on knocking**, and the door will be opened to you. **1**  
**Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT) Never stop praying.]**

- V. Prayer: I'm waiting for an answer, and I feel like giving up. I've been doing something that is keeping God from answering prayer and I need to change.

VI. Souls

VII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 34). Victor Books.
2. Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992). [A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew](#) (p. 200). United Bible Societies.
3. Blomberg, C. (1992). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 22, p. 129). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
4. Morris, L. (1992). [The Gospel according to Matthew](#) (p. 169). W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

VIII. Supplemental Material

- A. *Ask* is quite general, but the context makes it clear that Jesus is referring to prayer. The general expression shows that no particular kind of prayer is in mind; Jesus is concerned with praying as such and telling his hearers that prayer is efficacious: *it will be given*. *Seek* is an interesting word in this connection. It can scarcely mean that the praying person does not know where to find what he is looking for; if that were so he would not be praying. The fact that he is asking the Father shows that he knows that what he seeks is within the gift of God. Perhaps the meaning is that the praying person does not know exactly what he should be praying for, but he knows that the Father will not lead him astray. There is also the thought of prayer with a greater intensity than would be implied when the person is doing no more than asking. And as he seeks the good gift from God, he is to know that he *will find*. For a second time we notice that the answer to prayer is certain. So is it with the third way of looking at praying: *knock*. It is not said at what the praying person should knock, but the imagery is that of a closed door that he cannot open (*NIV* brings this out by inserting "the door" before "will be opened"). All who serve God know what it is to be faced with "doors" that are fast closed, and it means a lot that prayer will result in the opening of such doors. The three expressions underline the effectiveness of prayer. Look at it which way you will, it gets things done. All three imperatives are present, underlining the importance of continuous action.<sup>4</sup>
- B. The two passive structures (*will be given ... you will find*) presuppose God as the subject: "God will give you ... God will let you find." The last clause may be rendered accordingly: "Knock, and God will open the door for you."<sup>2</sup>
- C. *Ask* means to ask for; *seek* means to look for, to try to find what we need; *knock*, means God will open the door for you."<sup>2</sup>
- D. Verses 7–11 may also link back with the rest of the sermon in that they show people how to get the help they need to obey all that Jesus has previously commanded. We must ask, seek, and knock—petitioning God with an expectant attitude.<sup>3</sup>

- E. Why? Because **your Father in heaven** (v. 11) delights in giving **good gifts**<sup>1</sup>
- F. No decent father would give **his son ... a stone** instead of a round loaf of **bread** (which looked like a stone), or **a snake** instead of a similar-appearing **fish**. If an earthly father, with his sinful (**evil**) nature, delights to do right materially for his **children**, it makes sense that the righteous, heavenly **Father** will **much more** reward His children spiritually for their persistence.<sup>1</sup>
- G. Even if human parents did occasionally prove untrustworthy (and far too often they do), God would never so mistreat his children<sup>3</sup>
- H. *Who are evil* (TEV “*as bad as you are*”) is not intended to be a philosophical statement regarding human nature; the comparison is between God and the human race, all of whom are sinful. The phrase *who are evil* may be expressed “Even though you are sinful (or, bad), you know how to ...”<sup>2</sup>
- I. Jesus is reasoning from the less to the greater: if even an earthly father will give good gifts to his children and not bad ones, how much more will the heavenly Father do so!<sup>4</sup>
- J. This is not Jesus’ or the Bible’s complete teaching on prayer; for that we must remember the importance of forgiving as we pray for forgiveness, of asking in faith, asking in accordance with the will of God (cf. 6:12; 21:21–22; 26:39), and more. Here he is simply making emphatically the central point, that prayer to a loving Father is effective. The point is not that human persistence wins out in the end, but that the heavenly Father who loves his children will certainly answer their prayer.<sup>4</sup>
- K. Jesus also presupposes that his listeners will (6:7–8). Those who today claim that in certain contexts it is unscriptural to pray “if it is the Lord’s will” are both heretical and dangerous. Often our prayers are not answered as originally desired because we do not share God’s perspective in knowing what is ultimately a good gift for us. We are especially tempted to think of the values of this world (e.g., health and wealth) rather than spiritual values.<sup>3</sup>