

Sunday, November 15, 2020 am

TEACHINGS OF Jesus (25)
Ask, Seek and Knock
Matthew 6:7-11

As we continue our study of the sermon on the Mount, today we find yet another passage that addresses prayer. Recall that earlier in this lesson, Jesus talked about how to pray – what a prayer should consist of and some improper motives in our prayers. In our lesson today, we revisit the subject of prayer, this time dealing with prayer and faith.

I. Ask, seek and knock –

- a. First, this is a passage that has been abused by health and wealth preachers of our day. Many today, and this would include some of our most influential “preachers” (Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyers, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, etc.) are under the delusion that God is an ATM, or some Jeanie in a bottle that we rub and He appears and grants our wishes. This is contrary to what the Bible teaches, the nature of the kingdom and what we see in this world, even among believers. It is contrary to what the apostles and disciples of the first century saw and experienced. And quite honestly, it is not good for us either.
- b. Furthermore, like so much of this sermon, this is not a statement without qualification or exceptions. There are so many Biblical principles to consider as we weigh our requests in prayer. The New Testament has much instruction about prayer.
 - i. John 15:7 – Jesus said to His apostles, if they abide in Him they could ask and receive.
 - ii. 1 John 5:14-15 – emphasizes that our prayers need to be according to His will. if we ask for anything, we with confidence knows that He hears us (and knows what we need)
 - iii. 1 John 3:22 – we receive because we keep His commandments.
 - iv. James 4:3 speaks of asking for selfish and materialistic reasons
 - v. WE MUST keep things like these in mind when we consider the words of Jesus in this message, and everything else He taught.
 - vi. THEN, there is the understanding that while God answers prayer, it is not always AS WE intend for it to be. He may say, “Yest” or “No” or “Wait” or “Not the way you were thinking”. What we must understand is that God knows what is BEST, even better than we do.
- c. This is about faith - trusting God. We must not put our confidence in men, but in Him. It is when we understand and have true faith, that we can go to Him with anything. James 1:6-9 – we must ask in faith, which I believe is part of what Jesus is emphasizing in this text.

II. The text – Ask and It will be given, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened.

- a. What Jesus IS saying is that you CAN go to God with your requests. And furthermore, He listens and has the power to answer. AND, if it is the right thing, He can give you what you ask for.
- b. Putting this in context, is Jesus dealing with material requests? While such might be included (He just finished talking about food and clothing, and in the earlier prayer passage we ask for our daily bread – NECESSITIES, not wants and luxuries, etc.), remember that this is a sermon about spiritual things, a TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS.
- c. Could His emphasis be primarily spiritual?
NOTICE that in His teaching about prayer earlier – we ASKED (for daily bread, forgiveness, deliverance from temptations, etc.), and in Matthew 6:33 we find what we are to SEEK (His kingdom and righteousness). NOW, having asked, sought and found His kingdom, we take it a step further and we

knock. ***Could that which we desire to be opened to us be the kingdom of heaven itself?***

The significance of this is that it is something that WILL be given to “everyone who asks...” (vs. 8).

That is different from material requests (consider Paul’s thorn in the flesh – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 – he asked that it be removed, but the Lord said “no” and that His grace was sufficient – note that this “thorn” kept Paul humble. Therefore, Paul gladly accepted the answer).

- d. The expressions are present, imperative verbs – meaning a command that is ongoing. This is not a one-time request, but ongoing throughout our lives. We need to keep turning to Him, seeking His will and opportunities.

Thus this is about persistence. Jesus taught 2 parables about persistence in prayer -

Luke 18:1-8 which speaks of a persistent widow approaching an unjust judge. NOTE vs. 1

Luke 11:5-10 which speaks of a friend that comes at midnight. **NOTICE vs 9-10**

So, if you need something HOW LONG do you keep asking? Until it is answered!

- e. There is also a progression in this verse – you ASK looking for answers, you get an answer directing you toward the answer, THEN you SEEK for it; and when you find it, you KNOCK so that you can enter and receive it. You CANNOT ask for something and then quit looking.

III. **“Everyone”** who asks receives,...

- a. We have already noted there are qualifications to what we ask of God.

- b. But spiritually, be reminded that salvation and God’s grace is available to everyone (John 3:16, Titus 2:11-12, 1 Timothy 2:4, etc.).

- c. BUT, not all are willing to ask properly. Many ask for something, but it is NOT what God intends.

Many ask, but are unwilling to seek for it. They do not ask for the right things.

What is interesting is that the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees is that while they wanted God to save them (on their terms) they would NOT ASK Jesus, but rather rejected Him outright. They refused to SEEK what He taught and offered (they were blinded – Matthew 13:13-15, John 5:46-47, 10:37-38 – believe the works that I do, , etc.). And thus they refused to KNOCK. Therefore, NOTHING from God would be OPENED to them. They would shut themselves out of the kingdom (cf. Luke 13:28, Matthew 23:13, 21:31, John 15:22 – now they have no excuse, etc.)

IV. **God is a loving God (vs. 9-11) –**

- a. Jesus makes an appeal to worldly fathers. They know how to give what their children need to them and if they love them, they will give them what they need. 2 illustrations are given. A son who for bread and for fish. Jesus notes that a father will not give him a stone instead, or a poisonous snake when he asks for a fish (something useless and then something harmful).

Worldly fathers care for their own children.

- b. God, more so (Vs. 11).

Jesus speaks of man “being evil” – the observation here is made that He is making a lesser to greater contrast (much in the same way He spoke of hating our father and mother in Luke 14:26 – where the emphasis was to love less (cf. Matthew 10:37):.

- c. In comparison to God, man is evil. But HOW He becomes evil is not addressed (it is not the Calvinistic doctrine of hereditary depravity, but rather we sin).

ALSO, consider again the context. Jesus is contrasting TRUE righteousness with the “scribes and Pharisees” who have already been continually identified for their corruption. Did they know how to give their children fish and bread? Certainly.

- d. The point: God, who is all good, knows what you need and can and will give it to you, when you ask Him.

NOTE: One source observed that Jesus did not qualify this to limit it only to those deserving. He did not say He would give good things only to those who are worthy. ANYONE can come to God and receive His kingdom. BUT you have to ask, seek and knock.

- e. Final point: God desires to give us good things. Again, this is what we need, not necessarily what we want. Consider the child who wants to live on a diet of candy and junk food. That is not what you need. What God offers and provides is always good – James 1:17, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*. Keep this in mind when we ask.

And thus we can see Jesus as He continues to describe life in His kingdom. A life of true righteousness. So the question for each of us then is: Are we seeking Him and when we find Him, will we knock so that He can open? Jesus Himself said He is waiting and knocking. Revelation 3:20, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

What about you? Are you in need of something that God is offering? How can we help you with that? Think about it.