



Exploring the Kingdom of God in Matthew

Keep Asking, Seeking and Knocking!

April 8, 2018

HOLY TEXT: MATTHEW 7:7-11

- These verses are some of the most encouraging in the Sermon on the Mount to many, including myself!
- I must confess to continued amazement that the God of the universe not only hears my pitiful cries, but **delights** in hearing and answering!
- Who are we to come into the presence of the “high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy” and ask for something? (Isa 57:15)

A SELDOM DISCUSSED PART OF PRAYER

- Before we discuss the text, let us be reminded of what prayer actually is a bit more.
- Prayer is simply communication with God. Let us consider this act a bit more...

Prayer, in its many forms (petition, supplication, repentance, praise, corporate entreaty, intercession, etc.) is, amazingly, approaching the Holy and completely “other” God who created all things, through the blood sacrifice of his son Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is to leave our earthly confines and move into the eternal. It is to send up sweet smelling incense with our words of adoration before the throne of Almighty God! (Rev 5:8, Rev 8:3-4)

- As David said, “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” Psa 141:2 (KJV)
- Recall from a few verses earlier when we discussed the LORD’s Prayer:

First, when we pray, we should be amazed at our great privilege to call God, the creator of heaven and earth, “Our Father.” “The first words of our text, “our Father,” throw away all selfishness at a breath. “Father,” the fountain-word of all love and all confidence.” Also, it’s critical that we go before God **reverently**. “Our Father which art in heaven” is a statement that acknowledges the power, holiness, sovereignty, and immutability of God. God is in heaven. Of course God is omnipresent (Ps 139). To acknowledge God is in heaven is to declare that He is totally other. He is above all and rules all. He exists outside time and space. He is so holy that He requires a holy realm. He is in absolute charge of heaven and earth.

- What is often missed in prayer is the **truth** that we, the unholy by nature, are approaching absolute holiness, and the **attitude** that this sort of truth should produce!
- And then to be able to actually PETITION God...to ask for something?

IS THIS A BLANK CHECK?

1. As we look at the passage, it would be VERY tempting to disconnect these verses from their immediate **context** to satisfy our flesh. There are other verses in the Gospels that tempt us so as well:
 - Joh 14:13-14 (KJV) *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*
 - Mar 11:22-24 (KJV) *And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his*

heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

2. However, just like our text, these wonderful verses have a context. In the context of John 14 we find a call to pray in a manner that demonstrates the deity of Christ and obedience to the LORD's commandments. In the context of Mark 11, we find prayers relating to judgment and forgiveness of sin. This is often forgotten.
3. Likewise, Matthew 7:7-11 is set in a context of Kingdom **law** and **living**, much of which is nigh impossible to achieve without persistent prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit!
4. William MacDonald wrote:

*If we think that we can live out the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount by our own strength, we have failed to realize the supernatural character of the life to which the Savior calls us. The wisdom or power for such a life must be given to us from above. So here we have an invitation to **ask** and keep on asking; to **seek** and keep on seeking; to **knock** and keep on knocking. Wisdom and power for the Christian life will be given to all who earnestly and persistently pray for it.*

5. As a reminder, please consider the Kingdom precepts and principles Jesus had taught to this point (please review Matthew chapters 5-6).
6. How desperately we need to ASK, SEEK, and KNOCK to be able to attain to such heights of perspective, holiness and love!

KEEP ASKING, SEEKING, AND KNOCKING!

Mat 7:7 (KJV) Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you...

1. The Kingdom citizen is encouraged by our LORD to **Ask, Seek, and Knock**.
2. This is a call to petition God...a glorious and wonderful gift to lay our burdens and requests before Him.
3. And He promises to answer! "It shall be given you," "ye shall find," and "it shall be opened unto you" is part of your Kingdom **inheritance** on earth!
4. For the one who takes the words of our LORD seriously, these promises provide great assurance and great peace!

Mat 7:8 (KJV) For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

1. In case we missed it the first time, more blessed assurance!
2. Precious friends, our LORD hears us!

Psa 34:15-19 (KJV) The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

3. He listens to our cries for help and our pleas for mercy! He considers our requests, and in as far as they line up with His will, He grants them!

Mat 7:9-10 (KJV) *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?*

1. This verse reminds us that when we pray to our holy God, we are praying to our loving Father.
2. Again, astonishingly, by the blood of Christ, we are brought into an intimate, familial relationship with God!

Gal 4:6-7 (KJV) *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

Mat 7:11 (KJV) *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?*

1. Just like a good dad would never be so cruel as to abuse his son, so God does not abuse His children. His answers to prayer are always in this child's best interest!
2. Note that our Father promises to give "**good** things" to those who ask! I would suggest that "good" would be as God defines good. ("Lord, make me a peacemaker! Give me a thirst for righteousness!")
3. Matthew Henry said, "We must come to God, as children to a *Father in heaven*, with reverence and **confidence**. How naturally does a child in want or distress run to the father with (his) complaints; ...thus should the new nature send us to God for support and supplies."
4. Friends, you can trust our Heavenly Father. You can trust His will, His plan, and His perfect purpose.
5. You can approach Him humbly, in Christ, **Asking, Seeking, and Knocking** for those "good things" you need. He will answer. May we pray like David, who said...

Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Psa 86:1-7 (KJV)

Amen!

APPLICATIONS FOR EDIFICATION (BUILDING UP) AND ENCOURAGEMENT

(ROM 14:19; EPH 4:9; 1 THES 5:11; JUDE 1:20)

1. Do you humbly, but confidently approach our LORD in prayer?
2. Are you teaching your children to do the same in faith?
3. Often, the trials of life have a negative effect on our prayer lives. We pray as if we do not expect God to answer...to move on our behalf.
4. Discuss some hinderances you have experienced to expectant prayers.
5. Be reminded and exhorted: He is our loving Father who delights in giving good gifts to His children! Trust Him and ask!