

Asking with Expectation # 21

Matthew 7: 7-11

Tonight we have come to a very familiar and favorite portion of the Sermon on the Mount. We have considered the importance of prayer in previous studies, and yet once again Jesus emphasizes its importance in these verses. Our Lord understood the importance of prayer and the power associated with it. One cannot study the life of Christ without noticing His engagement in prayer and the many times that He spoke of it.

Prayer is the greatest tool the Christian has. It is through prayer that we make our petitions known unto God. We will never be any stronger spiritually than our prayer life allows. We have heard the expression, "Seven days without prayer makes one weak." I hope that our study tonight will remind us of the great benefit we have in prayer and challenge us to engage in prayer on a consistent basis. Take a moment to consider this small poem written in regard to this passage.

*I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish I didn't have time to pray.
Troubles just tumbled about me and heavier came each task.
Why doesn't God help me, I wondered; He answered, "You didn't ask."
I tried to come into God's presence; I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided, "Why child, you didn't knock."
I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled on grey and bleak,
I called on the Lord for the reason—He said "You didn't seek."
I woke up early this morning and paused before entering the day.
I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray.*

—Author Unknown

I want to take a few moments this evening to consider the [gracious principles](#) regarding prayer as we think on: [Asking with Expectation](#).

I. The Commitment to Prayer (7-8) – Here our Lord conveys the need for committed prayer.

A. The Participation Involved – *Ask, and it shall be given you, for everyone that asketh receiveth.*

That is very simple, but also extremely profound. We cannot expect God to answer prayers that

are never prayed. We need to learn to ask the Lord for our needs. Simply take it to the Lord in prayer. He desires us to come before Him with our needs in an attitude of faith, believing He will hear and answer our prayers. [Jam.4:2... ye have not, because ye ask not.](#) [1 Jn.5:14-15 – And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: \[15\] And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.](#)

B. The Passion Involved – [seek, and ye shall find; he that seeketh findeth.](#) This reveals seeking with the purpose of finding. It reveals commitment and a sense of urgency. It presents the idea of seeking diligently for something of great value.

- We know that God has exactly what we need and the ability to provide that for us. We have committed the keeping of our eternal souls to Him, and yet many times we lack confidence in His ability to provide for our everyday needs. We must seek the Lord in prayer as if we sought something of great value, fully expecting to find what we need!

C. The Patience Involved – [knock, and it shall be opened unto you; to him that knocketh it shall be opened.](#) Prayer requires participation and passion, but it also requires patience. We must intercede at the door of faith, until it is opened unto us. God will reward the faithful and fervent prayers with fulfillment. His answer may not be what we desired or expected, but it will always be just what we need!

- He may not always answer the first time we pray. In fact, He may even deny our request; but remember, when God says no, He has a better yes! If we will continue to knock, God will eventually open the door of His abundant grace.

I. The Commitment to Prayer (7-8)

II. The Covenant in Prayer (8) – [For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.](#) Here we find a gracious promise from our Lord concerning our commitment to prayer. Consider:

A. The Audience – Jesus has instructed the disciples to pray unto the Lord. They were not making their petitions known unto an idol made of stone or someone who didn't care for their needs. They were not praying to a God of limited power. They were instructed to pray to the God of heaven, the Almighty, the I Am. He cared for them and had the power and resources to meet their needs. They could be confident when they prayed.

- That glorious principle relates to us as well. We have the privilege of entering the very throne room of God, making our requests known before Christ our Lord and the heavenly Father. Through Christ we have access to God. We have an audience with the Almighty when we pray! Heb.4:16 – Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. 1 Tim.2:5 – For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Rom.8:26 – Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

B. The Abundance – Jesus instructs that we ask, seek, and knock so that we can receive, find, and have the door of our petition opened to us. As we consider to whom we are praying, this provides great comfort. We can have the petitions that we desire of the Lord. We have the promise of the abundance of God being provided for us. Ephes.3:20 – Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Phil.4:19 – But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

- The child of God has the privilege of prayer, backed by the fullness of heaven. Our God is not limited in power and He is not bankrupt. Our every need He can supply!

C. The Affirmation – Did you notice the availability that Jesus spoke of? He reveals that prayer is not limited to a select or elite group. Every one that asks can receive. He that seeks can find and to him that knocks, it shall be opened. The disciples were not well accepted by the Pharisees or religious elite, but they had access to God.

- Isn't that wonderful! We may have little notoriety in this life. Few outside our circle of influence may know our name, but we have the assurance of access to the Lord when we pray. The ground is level at Calvary and all believers have access to God through prayer. You don't have to depend on another to pray for you; you can go directly to the Lord.

I. The Commitment to Prayer (7-8)

II. The Covenant in Prayer (8)

III. The Confidence in Prayer (9-11) – Here we find encouragement to pray in full assurance and confidence. Let's consider what our Lord reveals in these closing verses.

A. The Illustration (9-10) – Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? [10] Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? He appeals to the love a father has for his son. Jesus knew that anyone in their right mind would take care of their children. We would not possibly consider giving our children a stone to eat when they are hungry. We would never give them anything knowingly that would harm them. There may be some parents who mistreat and neglect their children, but those who are right with the Lord will seek to care for them in a loving, responsible manner.

- As I considered this illustration, I was reminded of the dependence of children on their parents. Small children in particular depend upon their parents for the vast majority of their needs. When they are hungry and ask for something to eat, they expect us to give them something that is edible and will satisfy their hunger. They do not worry that we would offer them something that would be dangerous or harmful if they tried to eat it. That brings us to:

B. The Expectation (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? Jesus reminds us of our fallen nature. He reveals that even sinful humans care for their children in a responsible manner.

- If we who are sinful care for the children we have, how much more does our Father in heaven care for His children? If we have the desire and ability to provide for our children, how much more can the Father provide for us? We have already established His ability and resources, and we ought to pray in full expectation of God meeting our needs. He may not give us all that we ask for, but He will give us what we need. We can rest assured that He would never give us anything that is not beneficial to us. Everything that God gives will benefit us as we are drawn closer to Him and learn to rely upon Him for our needs.

C. The Satisfaction – We must not miss the nature of the gifts we receive from God. Jesus describes them as **good things**. That is not to say that we will always understand what God is doing in our lives. There may be times when it appears that God is silent or that He has not answered our prayers, but we know that He always works for our good. There will be times when we do not realize the benefit of all that God is doing, but we know that He is working for our good. **Rom.8:28 – And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.** God would never send anything that would pollute or corrupt His children.

Do we sense the need for prayer as we should? Do we pray as we should? Prayer is a powerful resource, but we must exercise it to reap its benefit. We need to become a people of consistent, fervent prayer. If there is a need in your life, there is no better time than the present to bring that before the Lord in prayer! Ask if you desire to receive.