



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 54 “Learning how to Pray Pt. 2 - Persistence”

By Pastor Jody May

Luke 11:5-13 ESV

⁵And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If 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!”

Introduction:

Kingdom *SEEKING* prayers are always rewarded with exactly what you need.

1. You’ll never know/have if you never ask.

When Jesus tells us this story He starts off with this phrase, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, “ If you don’t take the time to do your work of deciphering what this means it doesn’t make sense. Because, I almost bet that if any of you were to get a knock on your door at midnight and if your neighbor were to ask for some bread you would most likely be calling the cops. As of matter of fact I can tell you if you knock on my door at 12, I would be showing up armed. Jesus says this in such a way that this stuff happens all the time?

You see back in the middle east a lot of people, depending on the seasons, traveled at night, after their full day’s work, and to avoid heat of day. There were no phones and no motels, therefore you could have a friend/family visit from



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yonder without expectation or invite and you would be obligated to put them up, AND it was expected for you to take care of them. So, at night, you may or may not have prepared your bread for the morning, so being a good host, you have a guest show up, and you want to provide so off to the neighbor’s house you go.

Upon arriving at the neighbors, you knock, you wait, and you are answered with another weird phrase, **“Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything”** Back in those days most of the population did not have multiple bedrooms so everyone slept together, for space considerations, safety, and warmth. At this point, I would be giving up - I am thinking this is way too much hassle for some bread! My neighbor is going to call the cops, I am going to have to try and make this up, he’s going to pay me back and wake me up whenever he wants, and I am going to have to live with this guy and were not going to get a long for a while, etc.

As my sense of despair and annoyance grows, I begin to believe it is too much to ask for help from this guy, which leads me to giving up. **BUT JESUS**, in this parable tells us that thing in our head that says give up because it is too much of a hassle, it’s too much of a pain in the butt, is **exactly when we need to push through!**

⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

Because of his **“anaideia”** means shamelessness, that means not getting or not concerned of the perception of the coming and asking. It’s kind of like my kids pestering me for a new _____ they either don’t care or have no idea how annoying they are but they won’t give up.

Jesus is here sharing the good news with us that God, the Father, when you pray is like that good neighbor that even though He should not have to put up with you **He answers the door because of your persistence, your shamelessness.** The Father, you see, does this not because you’re such a great neighbor, NO, it is because Jesus, it’s in His name you’re asking. That is His great deeds, He bore the shame of our sin on the CROSS so we can ask God with impudence, that is



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SHAMELESSNESS. You see our Gospel is a story about a man that the world tried to shame all the way up to His death, and in His resurrection He made the devil look like a fool!

AND NOW, for you, the really wonderful thing about this experience is instead of letting the bleakness of your situation keep you from wanting to ask, to bother God, **it is the bleakness of the situation** that **increases** your **joy** when your prayer is answered. God enjoys rescuing His children in their need because the **greater the need the greater the joy** His people have when He rescues them! (The Lassiters) **That is what increases FAITH - answered prayers**, and the more prayers that are answered the more you will go to Him. The Gospel is always increasing the Glory of God in front of you and it does it through your need for Him.

But here is the challenge for us today, you have got to be willing to walk up to that door and knock, In James 4:2 Jesus’ brother says “We have not because we ask not.” We have got to be willing to be **SHAMELESS, because you never know/have unless you ask.**

2. What seems like a “No” may really be a “Test” to see if you really want it. Do you “Seek” in earnest?

⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Jesus is assuring us, that those that truly go to God looking for answers are going to get them. Notice the terminology though, it doesn’t sound like you get everything you ever asked for but that in the quest of shamelessly approaching God you begin to see and understand what it is God wants to give you. We often times go to God for the physical tangible elements of our lives, but God wants to give us so much more. In his great wisdom though He will use our **worldly desires** to bring you to Him, **SEEKING Him.**



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This is a tool that I still go to my wheelhouse for coaching. Kids will ask all the time, can I do And we always tell them **NO** upfront for two reasons, **1st** I do not want to waste my time and the team’s time to work with a kid to do a job when they don’t want it, **2nd** it is in the act of persistent asking that I get to perceive if they really want it.

It is much like the story of Jacob in Genesis 32.

Jacob cries to God for protection as he returns home through the path that leads to his estranged brother Esau. Jacob then does something that we all should do, he recites God’s promises back to God.

Genesis 32:12 ESV

But you said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude’.

Jacob has spent years in rebellion, after deceiving his father and brother, dwelling with a people he should not have been around, and now he asks for protection from his heavenly dad. So, dad puts Jacob through a test so that Jacob can see for himself if he is ready to receive God’s blessing.

That night Jacob communes with God, whether it’s a dream, a vision, but he wrestles with God, he won’t let him go, and by the time morning comes he is injured but still clings to **“BUT YOU SAID!”** and God’s like, “What’s your name kid?” Jacob tells him, and then God replies, **“Your name shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.”** **Gen. 32:28** You left me and went looking for your fortune, and you came back with what you thought you accumulated for yourself and want my protection to keep it. **BUT NOW in SEEKING ME**, you have discovered I never left you, and all you have I gave to you, to keep my promise to you to make you the father of my people, to bring Jesus into this world. Through my Providence you acquired , through my providence you have been saved and through it you will gain so much more!



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This is how life plays out for us to as we are taught by the author of Hebrews to the early Church:

Hebrews 4:15-16 ESV

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Let us seek with boldness our God, that even when we think we can't approach him, that He has told us “No” so many times, let me encourage us all here to keep wrestling with Him. Because when it is over you will be blessed to discover all the ways He has been with you to bring you into eternal life with Him. **God's answers are always worth the struggle! And here's what you will discover along the way:**

3. The best answers aren't necessarily what you want, but with God. They are always what you need.

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!**”

So again, some weird terminology. Some better theologians than me, here made better sense of this, a serpent can mask what a fish can look like and scorpions in that region are many times white and curled up under rocks looking like eggs. The allusion here is that that Father when you ask for a specific thing, will not give you something that will hurt you but it most likely will not be the thing you're asking for. Even we as fallen creatures will give a good thing to our kids, how much more will God give to you? It will be infinitely more valuable that what you and I could ever ask for!



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Then why pray!? Because of the thing that you are going to get that is SO much better, the **HOLY SPIRIT**, God’s presence in your life!

Illustration: It is like the corporate buy-out when it so needs to happen. The desperate business owner comes to a friend when he has been turned down by the bank more than once. He asks the friend for the favor, calling on the love of that friend that relative. That friend out of love says I am going to buy you out of this debt **BUT I am going to take control**, I will become your boss, you will always have what you need, I am going to give you that paycheck, that insurance, that balanced life so you can go home at 5, but it means I will be a constant in your life...

God wants to give to all of us that which we push against, what we don’t want, His presence directing our lives, taking the pressure off of us, graciously ruling where we have messed up. **MacArthur summed it up well I think:**

... It doesn't say you ask for the Holy Spirit necessarily. It says, “Give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.” When you go to ask God for whatever you ask God for, whatever it is, God gives you the Holy Spirit. Let me show you what I mean. You ask for comfort, He gave you the Comforter, right? You ask for help, He gave you the Helper. You ask for truth, He gave you the Truth teacher. You ask for power, He gave you the Spirit of power. You ask for wisdom, He gave you the Spirit of wisdom. You ask for guidance, He gave you the Guide. You ask for love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control and He gave you the Spirit whose fruit were released in your life.

You see, this is the generosity of God. You ask for the gift, He gives the giver. You ask for the effect, He gives the cause. You ask for the product, He gives the source. Is that generosity? He gives you according to His riches, not out of His riches. You ask God, as it were, going to the bank, you ask for some money, He gives you the bank. That’s the point. I’ll just give



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you the Holy Spirit, then you’ve got it all because out of the Holy Spirit comes power. - MacArthur¹

Kingdom *SEEKING* prayers are always rewarded with exactly what you need.

The best answer God can give you is not necessarily what you want but it is always **what you need, it’s Him!** God is constantly, by love and sacrifice, is gaining control of our lives, saving us from gloom of trying to do it all by our power.

Family, this morning let me encourage you, put down discretion and run to Him **shamelessly**, knock on heaven’s door, **seek Him out**, he has promised to answer your prayers. Know and rejoice that the answers you seek will always be a better gift than what you could have hoped for, because the HS is about to bring you the full measure of His goodness.

PRAY

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that is always ready to open the door to your petitions.

Go in the name of the Son that wrestled with the world and took God’s Wrath so we could seek Him and always find Him.

Go in the name and the power of the HS that comes to us as the full measure of God’s goodness providing exactly what we need.

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-158/gods-generous-response-to-boldness-in-prayer>