

God's Attitude Toward Prayer.

Text: Luke 11:5-13

Suggested Hymns:

422, 357, 424, 420, 426

- 1) God Expects our prayer
- 2) God Desires Frequent, Repeated, And Earnest Prayer
- 3) God Promises To Hear Our Prayer

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 11:5-13, ⁵ *And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 'and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?"*

⁸ *"I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. 'So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 'For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

¹¹ *"If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 'Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 'If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

There is a wide difference of opinion among people, even among Christian people, about the value of prayer.

There are some who confidently believe that a Christian may go to his heavenly Father in devout prayer, and the heavenly Father will hear that prayer and give the Christian what he needs.

There are others who say that the only value of prayer is to make us see clearly our dependence on God and to make us stronger in bearing our trouble. They say that prayer does not change things, but changes us.

And then there are people who say that prayer is valueless, a waste of time and words. So you see, there is a wide difference of opinion among people about the value of prayer.

But after all, it does not make any difference what people say about prayer. The thing that really counts is God's attitude toward prayer. And, fortunately, we can find that out. We can take a look into God's mind as it is revealed to us in the Bible. Let us study the text we have before us today to learn *God's Attitude Toward Prayer*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. God Expects Our Prayer

It is evident from the words of our text that God expects us to pray. He is waiting for us to come to Him with our petitions. The door is open, and God is ready to hear.

If you wanted to make a request from some rich or powerful man and went to his home or to his office to see him about it and stood before the door, you would begin to think: May I go in? Will it do any good? Will he listen to me?

But if someone you knew was standing at the door and would say: "Go right in, you are expected; he is waiting for you," that would make a great difference to you.

And so it is with our prayers. There is Someone standing at the door who knows us. He is Jesus, who has redeemed us, who made us children of God and acceptable to our Father in heaven. He stands at the door and says, ***ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.***

It is Jesus, who says, *I am the door; you can enter in to God through Me. He knows what you want to ask.* Scripture says in John 16:23, ²³ ***Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.*** And in Matthew 21:22, ²² ***And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.***"

Yes, indeed, God is expecting us to pray to Him. He tells us that in many different ways. ***Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you***

shall glorify Me.”¹ And “¹⁸The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.”²

And one time the Lord said in the Holy Bible that “*you do not have because you do not ask.*”³ That is a significant statement. There are many things you do not have. Other people may have them; you do not have them. Why not?

You may find several reasons for that, but maybe this is the reason, “*you do not have because you do not ask.*” God is waiting to give us what we ask for, if we will only go to Him in prayer. Should not all this make us willing and eager to pray?

If God, our heavenly Father, is expecting us to pray to Him, should we not do it? It would be disrespectful to God if we did not pray to Him.

If a wealthy relative invited you to come to him for the help that you need, and you ignored his offer, he would be offended at you. God is offended too when His children do not come to Him in prayer.

So let us be a praying people. Do not let yourself get too busy for prayer. Take time for it. God expects it. You need it. Begin early in life to pray. You children should be praying children. God is expecting you, too, to pray to Him. And you who are older, continue in prayer throughout your lives. Do not ever give it up. Pray till you die. God is waiting for your prayers throughout your whole lives.

2. God Desires Frequent, Repeated, And Earnest Prayer

The second thing that we learn from this text about God’s attitude toward prayer is that God desires our persistent, repeated, earnest, and zealous prayer.

Our Saviour tells us a story. A man had gone to bed, and in the middle of the night someone knocked at his door. The man at the door said that a friend of his had come and was hungry, but that he had nothing in the house for him to eat.

But the man inside said, “*No, I am in bed, I do not want to get up.*” But the other man pleaded and begged so that finally the man in the house got up and gave the man the bread. So it is with our prayers to God.

God wants our persistent and earnest prayer and wants us to pray again and again. We sometimes act similarly. Someone may ask a favour of you that you are not inclined to grant, and you tell him to go away; you have no time for him. But if

he comes again and pleads and explains again and again, you finally feel the earnestness of his need and yield. The Saviour tells us the story in our text to teach us that God in heaven is seeking constant, earnest prayer from the hearts and lips of His children.

Examples of Persistent Prayer

You remember the Bible story of Abraham, who pleaded repeatedly for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of Moses, who prayed for the people of Israel. Then there was the Syrophenician woman, who prayed for her daughter. She asked Jesus to heal her daughter. The Saviour paid no attention to her, but she asked again. Jesus spoke a sharp word to her, but she renewed her plea. Finally, Jesus granted her prayer.

So it is right that we pray repeatedly. It is right for us to say the Lord's Prayer often. God does not tire of those words. It is right for us to pray the same prayers at each meal. It is right to teach little children to say, *Our Father*. It is right for us to sing our hymns of prayer many times. It is right for us to pray repeatedly the words of the General Prayer in our church services.

And it is also right to pray in our own words. You should not just ask for things once and be done with it, but you must repeat your prayers. Never does our God in heaven tire of persistent prayer. He said, "*Pray without ceasing.*"²⁴ We should never tire of our prayers.

A Comforting Thought

This teaching of our text, that we can keep on asking God for what we need, is very comforting to us. There are some things that we need only once, and if we have them, we need not pray for them any more.

But for most things we must pray repeatedly, because we need them continually. Such things are food and drink, clothing and shelter, health and happiness, forgiveness of sins and faith, and the hope of heaven. We can never finish asking for these things. And it is comforting to know that it is all right with God if we keep on praying for them. He will not tire of our repeated requests.

But you may say in your mind that God knows what you need. Why not just pray once and be done with it? Why pray so often? If God hears prayer, then He knows what we want and can grant the prayer.

Well, is it not true of us, too, that we know of the needs of people but we wait until we are asked to help? We know that the poor in our community need help, but we usually help only when we are asked directly.

We know that charities need help, yet we do little or nothing until we get a letter or a phone call. Somehow we expect to be asked for help. Someone must tell us about it.

So God, though He knows our needs, is expecting our repeated and persistent prayers. He knows what we need, yet He wants us to come to Him and ask for it. God wants to see that we rely on Him for help in all our needs. Scripture says in James 5:16, *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

So let us do as God expects — pray often, sincerely, and persistently.

3. God Promises To Hear Our Prayer

The third thing we learn from our text is that God will hear our prayers. In the story that Jesus told, the man in the house finally listened to his friend's pleadings and gave him what he asked.

God expects and desires our earnest and persistent prayers, and we are assured that He will hear us. How happily we may bring our petitions to God, for we know that He will listen and hear us. How joyfully we can ask for all that we need for body and soul, property and honour, for forgiveness of sins and for a place in heaven.

Indeed, God often gives His children more than they ask, and better things than those for which they pray. Joseph's wicked brothers threw him into a pit, and there he doubtless prayed to God to let him go back to his home. But what happened? He was sold into slavery and was cast into prison. But all this was God's way of making him ruler of Egypt. God had something better for him in store than he asked.

There was a man who owned a small grocery store. Things were going badly, and he saw bankruptcy staring him in the face. He tried to sell the business, but no one came to buy it. Fearful of losing everything he had, he prayed earnestly and sincerely that God would send someone who would buy out his business and save him from losing everything.

It seemed to him as if he had prayed in vain. Then one day some men appeared on the ground across the street from his store and began to drive stakes into the ground and measure distances. Soon there were excavators, and after a while a large public school building was erected there, followed later by many new residences.

Children and grown people began to buy. His business began to flourish again. Soon he had a large and successful store, better than he ever had before.

Then he understood that God had answered his prayer in a much better way than he himself had expected. That is often God's way of dealing with His children.

Often God's answer to our prayer is a better gift than we had asked for. That is indicated in the last part of our text where the Saviour speaks of the son who asks his father for food and the father gives him what he had asked for.

So our Father in heaven gives us what we need; but often He gives us something we need still more, ***"how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"***⁵ God gives us gifts for our soul, He gives us the Holy Spirit, He leads us to repentance and gives us faith in Christ and strength to lead a godly life.

The man who was paralysed, and his friends who brought him to Jesus, thought of only one thing to ask, namely, that he should be healed of his disease, but Jesus gave him something he needed more than that, ***'Your sins are forgiven you.'***⁶

God often hears our prayers for material things but grants us first the needs of our soul. That is the reason why sickness and trouble do not always vanish as soon as we pray for help. God has a spiritual benefit in store for us.

That is the teaching of this text. Let us therefore be praying Christians. Let us not be too busy for prayer. You men and women who are so busy at your various tasks, do not neglect to take time for prayer. You young people, intent upon your social life and your ambitions, do not fail to ask God daily for His blessing and protection.

You children of school age, ask God every morning for help in your lessons. Let us all pray for what we need for body and soul. Let us pray in Jesus' name. Let us pray with firm confidence that God will hear us. God expects us to pray; He

wants us to pray sincerely and repeatedly; and He promises to hear our prayers. Let us be a praying people. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Psalm 50:15

² Psalm 145:18

³ James 4:2

⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:17

⁵ Luke 11:13

⁶ Mark 2:9