

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

Worship with others in the Chapel

Emmanuel is God With Us

Sermon on The Mount - 53


Matthew 5 - 7; Luke 6:17-49


Knock Knock


January 22, 2023

Communion: Ben Colon

1.  **Doxology 815**

2.  Standing on the promises of God 410

3.  Be still my soul 712

4.  Amazing Grace 343

5.  My faith has found a resting place 528

6.  As the deer 548

7.  **Family of God 419**

Matthew 7:7-11 (NKJV)

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! ¹²Therefore, whatever you want men to do to

you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Think about this:

God is infinitely *strong* and can do all that He pleases

God is infinitely *righteous* so that He only does what is right

God is infinitely *good* so that everything He does is perfectly good,

God is is infinitely *wise* so that he always knows perfectly what is right and good,

God is is infinitely *loving* so that everything He does is for benefit and welfare.

When you pause to consider this, then the lavish invitations of this God to ask Him for good things, with the promise that He will give them, is unimaginably wonderful.

I cannot imagine a better, more cheering or a more comforting statement with which to face all the uncertainties and hazards of our life in this world of time than that contained in verses 7–11.

It is one of those great comprehensive and gracious promises which are to be found only in the Bible.

There is nothing that can be more encouraging as we face life with all its uncertainties.

To whom, therefore, is our wonderfully loving Lord speaking these words of comfort?

And of what is He speaking?

Well, we know that He is speaking to His disciples, those that hang on to His every word with the intent of implementing them in their daily lives.

Matthew established that for us back in Chapter 5. So Jesus is specifically speaking to you and I. But good people can often wrestle scripture out of context, and make it mean more than was intended by the speaker.

They say “Well, Jesus said *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.* ⁸*For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened,* so doesn't that mean whatever I want or desire, God is going to give me?”

And when their requests are not granted, they get angry at God.

We have to take the Scripture as a whole, and not just attempt to find things that suit our fancy.

This is not a universal promise that God is pledged to do for us anything and everything that we may ask of Him.

As I said a moment ago

God is infinitely *strong* and can do all that he pleases, He is infinitely *righteous* so that He only does what is right, and that he is infinitely *good* so that everything he does is perfectly good.

He is infinitely *wise* so that He always knows perfectly what is right and good.

And He is infinitely *loving*.

He can see consequences of our requests that we have no way to forecast.

I would guess that all of us have the experience of asking God to do something, or give us something, that at the time we believed were the very best things for us.

But standing back later, and objectively appraising our requests, we were profoundly grateful to God that He shut the door in our face.

So we thank God that this is not a universal promise, and that God is not going to grant us our every desire and request.

God has a much better way for us.

So Jesus has a lesson here.

God will always answer our prayers; but he will answer them in his way, and his way will be the way of perfect wisdom and of perfect love.

Often if he answered our prayers as we at the moment desired it would be the worst thing possible for us, for in our ignorance we often ask for gifts which would be our ruin.

This saying of Jesus tells us, not only that God will answer, but that God will answer in wisdom and in love. Jesus is saying, "Go on asking; go on seeking; go on knocking."

We know from our English grammar that those words are in the form of continuing action.

He is telling us to persist in prayer.

He is telling us never to be discouraged in prayer.

As someone said to me "*Pray? Does it have to come to that?*"

Isn't a tragedy at how little inclination we have to pray.

The greatest invitation in the world is extended to us, and incomprehensibly we regularly turn away to other things.

It's as though God sent us an invitation to the greatest banquet that ever was and we sent word back,

Luke 14:18-20 (NASB)

18 ‘*I purchased a field and I need to go out to look at it; [o]please consider me excused.*’ ***19*** And another one said, ‘*I bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; [p]please consider me excused.*’ ***20*** And another one said, ‘*I took a woman as my wife, and for that reason I cannot come.*’

My prayer is that God would use this message and this word from Jesus in Matthew 7, and other influences in your life, to awaken a new compelling inclination to pray in 2023.

I pray you will ask God to do that as we look at this text. Our Lord is emphasizing that we are to show persistence perseverance and importunity.

Do realize that Jesus gives us eight encouragements to pray in this text.

To be blunt, He commands us to pray.

When He says

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Ask, Seek, Knock are all imperative commands.

Three times He commands us to pray.

But it’s striking that He gives the commands a second time, as if we aren’t listening.

⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Why does He repeat the commands?

The repetition is meant to say, “**I mean this.**”

He wants us to do this.

He wants to ask our Father for what we need.

He wants us to seek our Father for the help we need.

Knock on the door of your Father’s house so He will open and give you what you need.

He say “*Ask, seek, knock. I invite you three times because I really want you to enjoy your Father’s help.*”

It is absolutely astounding that Our Lord actually commands us to pray.

But then it just gets better.

How could it get better?

Jesus gives us seven promises in verses 7 and 8.

“*Ask, and*

[1] *it will be given to you; seek, and*

[2] *you will find; knock, and*

[3] *it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks*

[4] *receives, and he who seeks*

[5] *finds, and to him who knocks*

[6] *it will be opened.*

Then at the end of verse 11

[7] *how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

Seven promises:

it will be given to you;

you will find

it will be opened

The asker *receives*.

The seeker *finds*.

The knocker gets an *open* door.

Your Father will give you good things.

What is our Lord trying to convey to we, the sheep in His pasture?

Surely the point of this lavish array of promises is to encourage us to come to Him in prayer.

Pray to him.

It is not in vain that you pray.

God is not toying with you.

He answers.

He gives good things when you pray.

Be encouraged.

Pray often,

pray regularly,

pray confidently.

Jesus encourages us not only by the number of invitations and promises, but by the threefold variety of invitations.

Ask. Seek. Knock.

God stands ready to respond positively when you find him at different levels of accessibility.

Ask. Seek. Knock.

If a child's father is present, he asks him for what he needs.

If a child's father is somewhere in the house but not seen, he seeks his father for what he needs.

If the child seeks and finds the father behind the closed door of his study, he knocks to get what he needs.

The point seems to be that it doesn't matter whether you find God immediately close at hand, almost touchable with His nearness, or hard to see and even with barriers

between, He will hear, and He will give good things to you because you looked to Him and not another.

When He says in verse 8

⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

that word *everyone* is addressed to *everyone* in the **Family of God**, which has several names in Scripture.

Household of faith. Gal. 6:10

God's Household. Eph. 2:19

The apostle Paul identified the "**God's Family**" as

1 Timothy 3:15 (GW)

the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth

That word *everyone* is addressed to *everyone* in the church of the living God.

He wants to overcome our timidity and hesitancy that somehow it will work for others but not for us.

He is not speaking to everyone on earth.

He is specifically speaking to those in the Household of God who know Him as Our Father.

If we will not have Jesus as our Savior and God as our Father, then these promises don't apply to us.

As John puts it in

John 1:12-13 (NASB)

12But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.

To become the child of God, we must comply with His terms of pardon.

To become the child of God we must accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, change the way we think and act, confess that Jesus is the Christ, and be immersed into the body of Christ.

As Paul told the Ephesians, we are

Ephesians 1:5 (NASB)

adoption as sons through Jesus Christ Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.

That is who these promises are for.

The promises of divine good gifts are for the adopted children of God.

For those who receive Jesus, *every one* of them who asks receives good things from his Father.

The point is that none of his children is excluded.

All are welcome and urged to come.

Jesus is motivating here because He knows that we are timid and shy, that we feel unworthy and unfit to present our needs to God. That is why Christ wants to lure us away from such timid thoughts, to remove our doubts, and to have us go ahead confidently and boldly.

The epistle to the Hebrews is explicit

Hebrews 4:16 (NASB)

16Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need.

I can sympathize with those of you who don't want to pray out loud in front of the congregation or an assembly of the saints.

After I became a Christian, I was called on one Sunday to lead in prayer.

I respectfully declined.

After worship, Brother Don Mitchel, pulled me aside and asked me who I prayed to.

God or the congregation.

From that day I've always kept my prayers be to Our Father.

If you feel self-conscious praying in an assembly, try to remember to whom you are praying.

We know, do we not, that God is called Our Father.

Jesus says in verse 11

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

For Jesus, *Father* is one of the greatest of all truths.

God is our Father.

He will never, never give us what is bad for us.

Never.

He is our Father.

Jesus encourages us to pray by showing us that our heavenly Father is better than our earthly father and will far more certainly give good things to us than they did.

There is no evil in our heavenly Father like there is in our earthly father.

Consider Verse 11 again:

¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

We know that our earthly fathers are sinful.

This is why the Bible repeatedly draws attention not only to the similarity between earthly fathers and the heavenly Father, but also to the differences, as He does in

Hebrews 12:9-12 (NLT)

***9**Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? **10**For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. **11**No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. **12**So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees.*

To the discomfobulation of some, Jesus is being very blunt here.

This is a clear instance of Jesus's belief in the universal sinfulness of human beings.

He assumes that his disciples are all evil — he doesn't choose a softer word (like *sinful*, or *weak*). He simply says that his disciples are evil.

Rom. 3:23 (NLT)

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Don't ever limit your understanding of the fatherhood of God to your experience of your own father.

Rather, take heart that God has none of the sins or limitations or weaknesses or hang-ups of your father.

Jesus goes beyond the encouragement of merely saying that God is your Father.

Jesus declares that God is always better than your earthly father, because all earthly fathers are evil and God is not.

And the point Jesus makes is even fallen, sinful fathers usually have enough common grace to give good things to their children.

We know there are terribly abusive fathers.

But thankfully most fathers are zealous for the good of their children, even when they are unclear about what is good for them. But God is always better.

In him there is no evil.

Therefore, Jesus' argument is that it doesn't matter whether or not that your earthly father gave or did not give you good things, your heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask.

There is an important point to catch here.

Jesus said

⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Does that apply to you and I?

If Jesus says to his disciples, "You are evil," then the only people that can come to God in prayer are *evil* children of God.

We are children of God.

And yes, we are evil.

Even after you are adopted by God into his family, sin remains in you.

But Jesus says, *everyone* will receive — *every one* of God's *evil* children!

But consider this.

Those whom have completed God's terms of pardon have already been adopted into His family.

And this fact should be an encouragement to pray.

If God has freely made us adopted children, how much more will he give us what we need?

Don't take your adoption lightly,.

It cost Jesus His human life to have you adopted.

It can't be clearer than

John 3:16 (NLT)

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

The cross of Christ as the foundation for all the answers to our prayer.

The reason I say this is because He calls us evil and yet He says we are children of God.

How can it be that evil people are adopted by an all holy God?

How can we presume to be children, let alone **ask** and expect to receive, and **seek** and expect to find, and **knock** and expect to have the door opened?

He says in

Matthew 26:28 (NKJV)

For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Because of Christ's blood, our sins are forgiven when we comply with His terms of pardon and place our trust in him.

This is why even though Jesus calls us evil, we can be the children of God and count on Him to give us good things when we ask him.

The death of Jesus is the foundation for all the promises of God and all the answers to prayer that we ever get.

This is why we say "in Jesus's name" at the end of our prayers.

Everything depends on him.

Jesus really means to encourage us to pray.

So He gives us encouragement upon encouragement to pray to Our Father.

Now, the question is how shall we understand these six promises in verses 7 and 8:

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Does this mean that everything a child of God asks for he gets?

I think the context here is sufficient to answer this question.

No!

We do not get everything we ask for and we should not and we would not want to.

We simply don't know enough to infallibly decide how every decision will turn out and what the next events in our lives will be in our journey of life,
So, Jesus Himself implies we shouldn't get everything we ask for.

He says

⁹Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

This prompts us to ask, "*What if the child asks for a serpent?*"

Does the text suggest that our earthly father may give us a stone or a serpent?

Yes, it does.

But Jesus clearly points out the truth when He says

¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Did you hear that?

your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him

He gives good things.

Only good things.

He does not give serpents to children.

If we take the passage as a whole, it says that when we ask and seek and knock — when we pray as needy children looking away from our own resources to our trustworthy heavenly Father — He will hear and He will give us good things.

Sometimes just *what* we asked.
Sometimes just *when* we ask it.
Sometimes just *the way* we desire.
And other times he gives us something better,
or at a time he knows is better,
or in a way he knows is better.
Let's take Jesus at His word and know in our hearts that
we have a friend named Jesus.

*What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!*

Prayer and Invitation