

# ASKING, SEEKING, AND KNOCKING - MATTHEW 7:7-11

When Jesus was preparing His disciples for their sense of loss when He would no longer be with them, he promised them another "Helper" who would always be with them (John 14:16). That Helper was of course the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). Jesus said it was better for them that He leave them, so the Holy Spirit could be sent to them (John 16:7). The Holy Spirit would remain Spirit and could be everywhere and with everyone at the same time. Jesus, locked in His physical body, could not do so. In the following verses from Matthew 7 we see an example of the task that lay before the Holy Spirit as He came into His unique assignment.

The Holy Spirit would be busy fulfilling all of the promises of Christ that were to be experienced during the life of the church on earth (2 Cor. 1:20).

Vs 7. "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to  
you."

vs 8. "For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall  
be opened."

Vs 9. "Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a  
stone?"

vs 10. "Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?"

vs 11. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

## SOME CONSIDERATIONS

1. A parallel (however in a different setting) in Luke begins with instruction about prayer, then tells of the importunate man who at midnight asks his friend for three loaves of bread to feed a guest. In the comparison with a son asking something of his father, it is will he receive a fish or a snake, or an egg or a scorpion (11:11- 2). We are not told to ask for a specific thing, but rather, the object of our prayer is left unspecified. What it does feature is that GOD IS THE PROVIDER, He is the one who gives, the one who makes it possible to find, and who opens the door.

3. The Greek indicates an insistent, continual asking, seeking, and knocking ("The three imperatives of v 7 as well as the three participles of v 8 are all in the present tense, conveying the idea of a continual asking, seeking, and knocking"...World Biblical Commentary, Vol. 33A, p. 174, D.A. Hagner).

4. Insistent, persistent asking is also demonstrated in Luke 18:1-8. Jesus told his disciples to pray, and not give up (v. 1), and then to illustrate His point, tells of the importunate ("stubborn or unreasonably persistent in pressing demands or requests" - Webster's Dictionary) widow. Her insistence moved the judge to say, "Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, lest by continually coming (to me), she wear me out", v 4-5).

5. G. Campbell Morgan makes an interesting comparison of the way we pray, and the way Christ prayed. "The Lord never used the same words to describe His own prayers as those He employed to describe the prayers of other people. The word "ask" here means as to simplest intention, to beg in the sense of dependence. It is the word of the man who comes with empty hands and says, "I have nothing to buy with." Christ never used that word of His praying; He never asked God as a pauper. When He spoke of His own praying He used words that might be translated: I will inquire of the Father, I will speak with Him concerning this matter--as One upon a perfect equality. (The Gospel According to Matthew, pp 74,75).

6. The comparison between the way God gives and parents give is stark. Even though they are sinful, they still want to do good things for their children. Then, how much more is our Holy, Perfect, Loving Heavenly Father willing to give us GOOD gifts, the greatest of which is eternal life with Him in heaven!. His are all good, those of parents are not so. He is the one of whom it is said, "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." (2 Chron. 16:9).

#### MATTERS OF DISCUSSION:

1. What makes persistent, insistent, repetitive prayer better? Why would asking one time not be enough? I heard of a wife who kept asking her husband if he loved her. Finally, with some emphasis he responded, "I told you I loved you on the day we got married, and if it ever changes, I will tell you! Thankfully, that is not God's attitude! God is different! For Him, it seems the persistent prayer is truly the prayer of faith. We are saying, "I know you can do it! Will you please, if it is your will."

2. Do you see any kind of progression in the terms - asking, seeking, and knocking?

3. Is it really true that whatever we ask will be given us? Have you ever asked for something that wasn't? The Bible tells us that God maintains a veto power which we are to recognize (see 1 John 5:14). It makes sense for God, who knows everything, to answer our prayers in terms of what is best for us (like parents do in a more limited way). I know that I have asked for things that at the time seemed urgently necessary, and later was pleased my request was not granted.

4. What are the things on our part that might hinder our prayers being heard?

a. When we do not ask (Jas. 4:2).

b. When we ask in order to spend it on our pleasures (Jas. 4:3).

c. When we do not get along together in our families as we should (1 Pet. 3:7).

d. When we do not keep the commandments of Christ (1 Jn. 3:22).

e. When we do not believe (Jas. 1:5-8).

f. When we have not made things right with our brother/sister in Christ (Matt. 5:23-24).

g. When we have not forgiven those who sin against us (Matt. 6:14-15).

h. When one is blinded by his/her self-righteousness (Luke 18:9-14).

5. Does Jesus' statement have any implications for the lost? I am sure that it does! In my work as a minister locally and abroad, I have come in contact with people who sometimes for years had been seeking to know the Lord and His will for their lives. I believe the Holy Spirit is busy keeping the above promises!

Carl Mitchell