

The Giving Hand

Matthew 7:7-12

The passage from which we will draw from the well of the Waters of Life is meant to be a passage speaking primarily of prayer and the power of prayer. The giving hand that I speak of in the title is the giving Hand of the Father in Heaven that bestows His goodness on all men, but especially upon those who diligently seek Him by faith. James wrote, “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*” (James 1:17) But for those of us who have prayed for many years, we know that asking and receiving, to be honest, isn’t that simple. In no WAY am I saying that what Jesus said here is wrong. That is NOT what I am saying. But I am saying that many a believer has looked at and read this Scripture, prayed, and asked for something, and then wondered what happened and why it wasn’t answered like they thought. Abraham and Sarah and their promise of a child in their old age should quickly come to mind. They waited 11 years and when God didn’t answer on their timetable, they ‘helped’ God out with an Egyptian woman named Hagar and she gave birth to a son named Ishmael. The world has been paying for that little bump in the road for centuries! I’ve heard other Pastors preach that they will keep pounding on the doors of Heaven until God answers and give them what they asked for. That’s not what Jesus intended either as He preaches this message. This passage of Scripture is actually tied to Matthew 6:19-34 where Jesus teaches the crowds that our God is a God who provides, and it is us that must trust in that provision with a faith that He and He alone knows what is best for us. This is where we also have a reinforcement of Biblical Doctrine as well. Scripture supports Scripture. So, as we pray to the giving hand of a loving Heavenly Father, let us check our attitudes at the door and trust that God will always do what is best for us, just like a loving dad does for his own children.

I. WITH GRACIOUS WORDS

Vss. 7-8

(a) **Perseverance**: Jesus uses three words in the present tense imperative, and they are “ask” (crave), “seek” (desire) and “knock” (open up). This isn’t something that Jesus is instructing the Jews to do tomorrow or in the future. The present tense imperative gives instructions for the immediate present...right now. With that obedience in the present there are rewards.

1. “Ask, and it shall be given you”: ‘given’ means to grant.

2. “Seek, and ye shall find”: ‘find’ means to get, obtain or understand

3. “Knock, and it shall be opened”: ‘opened’ means to open

a. All three present tense imperatives (ask, seek, knock) have a trifold reward attached when they are used in the prayer life of the believer (given, find, opened). Looks and sounds simple, doesn’t it?

Pastor Derrick Tuper of Cornerstone Christian Church in Syracuse, NY said this, “Sometimes we think God shouldn’t make us ask, seek or knock. He knows what we need so he should just give it to us. Sometimes God does operate that way. By his greatness he answers immediately. There are times when he blesses us without even asking for it. But just because he does it this way sometimes it’s wrong for us to expect or demand that he does it this way all the time. There are times when we will need to go through a process in order to receive. We might have to wait before God will answer but it’s not diabolical; it’s wise. It’s not punishing; it’s rewarding.”

b. If God gave you EVERYTHING that you asked for, sought after or tried to pry open, you may not...

- Be living where you live
- Be married to who you’re married to
- Be doing what you’re doing

(b) **Perspective:** I have mentioned that at this sermon, Jesus has thousands of people in attendance. Those attending include the everyday Galilean, the more orthodox Jew and the scribes and Pharisees. But a disciple named John is also in attendance, and I want you to hear what he writes 60 years later.

*1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything **according to his will** he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*

1. Garth Brooks wrote a song named “Unanswered Prayers” and it says, “Some of God’s greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.” AMEN!

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. (CSB)

II. WITH GODLIKE WISDOM

Vss. 9-12

(a) **Shifting Scenes:** Remember back in chapter 6 when we talked about laying up treasures either on earth or in heaven? Remember Jesus said that we should lay up those treasures in heaven where they are eternal and protected? Look at how Jesus shifts the scene here. He has just given us a look into heaven and how God the Father answers our prayers from heaven. Now, He wants us to look at the picture of the father **on earth** that exhibits Godly and Godlike wisdom when it comes to his children at home.

Vss. 9-11

1. “What ‘person’ (man; Anthropos) among you, if your son were to ask for bread that you would give him a stone instead?”

a. Some of you men may be thinking, “I might would.” But the female ‘anthropos’, called a wife/mother would be thinking, “You give my child a rock to eat and I’ll give you something that Mr. Clean won’t wash off!” Frankly, I’ve never tried to eat a rock.

2. “What parent among you would give him a snake instead of a catfish?” (Jews couldn’t eat catfish because it has skin instead of scales, but I love them. Also, I’ve eaten snake so...but it was already dead when it was given to me. Don’t hand me no live one!)

3. This is where that Jesus uses real life scenarios to His listeners for practical application in their lives and ours. LOOK again at verse 11. If we human beings, with our faults and failures and our schisms, know how to do good things for our own families and our own children, then why are we so doubtful to the goodness of the God that created us AND sent His Only Son to die for our sin on the cross?

a. **“Now preacher, how did you jump from an analogy with a snake to the cross?”**

John 3:14-16 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Illustration: The amphitheater of Capernaum overlooked the Sea of Galilee. The main source of meat to these Galileans was fish. Several of Jesus' own disciples were fishermen. The fishing industry of Galilee provided both income and food to the folks that were listening to this message. But you and I get to look at this in hindsight. We know that Jesus is the Bread of Life, the Water of Life and the Resurrection and the Life. As a loving Father, God did not send us 'a snake' to redeem us. God the Father sent to the world the source of life everlasting. That is His care for us. That is His love for us. If we can use godly wisdom on earth as parents, never dismiss the Godly wisdom of a Heavenly Father that loved us enough to offer us Jesus instead of us being stuck with Satan!

(b) **Solid Solutions**: By and by, verse 12 is seen by many as "The Golden Rule". I've said myself several times that "The Golden Rule" that most people quote is NOT found in the Bible and here is why I say that, what we quote is incomplete. The "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" is correct, but when you leave out the fulfilment portion then you leave out the meaning of it all. Listen to this same verse from another translation.
Vs. 12

"Always do for other people everything you want them to do for you. That is the meaning of Moses' Teachings and the Prophets." (God's Word Translation)

- These are the principles of your forefathers (the past)
- This is the precept from which you will go forth (the future)
- This is way to successfully deal with the world of fleshly men (Anthropos) in the present; I'm here now to teach you that!
- You will visibly watch Me do what Moses and the Prophets taught and what YOU will teach from here on out

Romans 12:9-21 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. Take the lead in honoring one another. ¹¹ Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit; serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer. ¹³ Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. ¹⁸ If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

*¹⁹ Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, **Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay**, says the Lord. ²⁰ But*

If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

For in so doing

you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.

²¹ Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good. (CSB)