

## Praying with Persistence Matthew 7:7-11

### Intro: Things that blow my mind:

A) Earth Spinning 67,000 mph right now through space - Gravity holds everything in place. - Mind blowing

B) Air travel - a 747 full of passengers and fuel at take off - weighs over 900,000 lbs

1) Equivalent to 35 double decker buses - takes off

C) NASA space craft travels between 17K and 25K mph to get into space

D) **Mind blowing trivia** - Mrs. Piggy and Yoda were voiced by the same person Frank OZ

E) One more: Mind blowing trivia There are no children left on earth who were born in the 20th century.

1) Everyone born in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is now officially an adult. Isn't that depressing?

### Here is the Biggest mind blowing Fact in the world today: Ready for this:

A) The God who made the Universe has made a way for us to live in relationship with him - really know him

B) When we talk to him he hears us and has a heart to respond - boom!

C) Today we are beginning a two part series on prayer - leading into our week of prayer and fasting

D) This is a powerful week every year for our church: Theme: Presence

### Over the course of 5 days: Gather 3 times a day to pray together and seek the Lord together as a church family.

A) Morning 6:45am - noon - Evening 7pm - 1 hour of prayer

B) During those 5 days we want to encourage you to fast in some way

C) One meal a day - or two meals - or for the full five days - or every other day.

1) The key is to use the time that you would normally be eating to pray

D) More about fasting next week.

### Today we are going to talk about persistence in prayer - which the theme of many of Jesus teachings on prayer.

<sup>7</sup> "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

<sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup> Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup> 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!

### Now this is a passage that often gets used out of context -

A) If you just ask in faith believing - God will grant you your desire!

B) But it is important to realize that this text is part of the famous teaching of Jesus called the sermon on the MT.

C) The theme of the Sermon on the MT is Kingdom living -

D) It is meant to help align our hearts with Jesus as our King

1) And our mindset to live as people committed to his Kingdom

### E) Begins in Matthew 5:3 Poor in Spirit - gateway into Kingdom living - **utter dependency upon the King and his resources**

### So the text before us today is not a carte blanche for our material desires.

A) Rather, it tells us how to pray for the character of the kingdom in our lives.

B) The goal of Kingdom living is Christlikeness!!

C) One of the famous Bible verses of all time is - Romans 8:28

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. Romans 8:28

A) Question what is the good that all things are working together toward in the life of those who love God?

B) That question is answered in the next verse:

<sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son." Romans 8:29

C) That is the goal of Kingdom living - make us more like Jesus.

D) That is what we need to understand as we consider this text today - and this idea of persistent prayer

1) The context is bringing our hearts before the Lord and aligning ourselves with his Kingdom mindset

E) Living for King Jesus in the Kingdom of this world

Now another thing that is a key to understanding Jesus teaching on prayer is this: - He wants us to always approach God as a Father

A) Turn back a page to chapter 6 - <sup>9</sup> In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father ..... Such a Radical concept introducing

B) God is your Father your daddy

C) Jesus used this same analogy in the preceding verses - when you pray go into the secret place -

1) your father who sees in secret - meet you there

With this language Jesus is telling us something about prayer that is important to understand.

A) Prayer is primarily a private thing - it is an intimate thing -

Aa) Your Father invites you to come into His presence. - BE WITH HIM.

B) But he also wants us to understand - this is just any father - hey pops

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name - greatly revere

C) Realize this: If Believer - The almighty God is your father

1) Not a believer - he is your creator and wants to be your father

Now some of you have a hard time with this because you had such a strained relationship with your earthly father dad.

A) Maybe Your earthly dad was quick to anger, or inattentive, or absent in your life.

B) For those of you whom that is your story: -

1) Can I encourage you to stop seeing your Heavenly Father through the lens of your earthly one

2) and instead start evaluating your earthly father by your Heavenly one.

C) Maybe your earthly dad didn't care and looked at you more as a nuisance.

D) Your Heavenly Father can't stop thinking about you, he dances over you constantly with singing,

1) and knows when a single hair falls from your head.

E) Your earthly father may have been self-absorbed,

F) but your Heavenly Father was so into you that he absorbed your pain on the cross

1) to spare you the eternal consequences of your sinful choices.

It is that heavenly father who invites you to come boldly and unashamedly into HIS presence

A) I've always loved this picture of John F. Kennedy.

B) Here he is, sitting at this desk in the OVAL office with some paper in his hand probably deciding the fate of the free world.

C) And there is his son John Jr. is peeking out from below—with a totally different relationship to the man in the chair than anyone else.

1) "That's not the ruler of the free world. That's dad. ...And I need some Cheerios."

So Jesus introduces this idea of God as father in Matthew 6 -

A) Jesus repeats this theme in many of his teachings on Prayer

**B)Here in Chapter 7 Comparison:** If you earthly dads being evil (in comparison to God)

**C)If you know how to give good gifts to your kids how much more will your heavenly father give what is good to those who ask.**

**D)So let's consider the invitation:**

**7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**

**A)Ask – seek – Knock – CHS - Faith asks, hope seeks, and love knocks.**

**B)Consider each one of these words: learn some Greek - Ask - aiteo – ITEO**

**1)means to ask for with urgency, a desperation.**

**C)Ask speaks of calling out with an urgency expecting that he is listening –**

**1) You Call expecting an answer!**

**When I call my wife – I call expecting her to answer! Because – I am the one calling right. - When my name pops up on her phone. - Answer**

**A)Listen: When she calls me 99.9% of the time I will answer**

**B)If I am in an appointment – she calls I am answering..**

**1)I don't do that for just anyone.**

**C)But I do that for my wife! – I expect that she would do the same when I call.**

**But you know what – not the case!**

**A)I call – and I get her VM – nice VM – cheerful greeting Hi this is Denise – sorry.....**

**B)But I don't want her VM – or a nice pre-generated text – Love you can't talk right now.**

**1)But sometimes – that is exactly what I get**

**C)Can you tell – bugs me!**

**Jesus saying: You can pray asking and expect a God on the other line. Not VM – not dead air.**

**A)Reception is always good!**

**B)There was a Jewish Rabbi - visiting his friend the Priest in Rome at the Vatican God phone –**

**C)The Rabbi - noticed that there on the priest desk were two phones - Black phone - and a Red phone. -**

**D)Why two phones**

**1)The black one is our local land line - the Red one is what we call the God phone - Direct line to God**

**E)But we only use it in emergencies the rates are really high - \$100 a minute.**

**A few months later the Priest was in Israel visiting his friend the Rabbi in Jerusalem.**

**A)As he was in the Rabbi's office he noticed that the rabbi also had two phones on his desk - black one and a blue one.**

**B)Asked why two phones- Like in your country the black phone is for our normal landline**

**1)The Blue phone is our God phone.**

**C)The Priest asked - is it expensive to use - the Rabbi responded -**

**1)No it is free - you see here in Jerusalem HEAVEN is a LOCAL CALL ☺**

**D)GUESS WHAT - for you who know Jesus -**

**1)Heaven is always a local call to talk to God - take advantage and ask - draw near**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Word Seek (zeteo) ZAtteo means to attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching,**

**A)Seeking is asking plus acting**

**B)It implies an earnest petitioning coupled with an active endeavoring to fulfill needs.**

**C)Seeking implies you are looking for something of great value!**

**D)Begg the question Do we prioritize prayer? DO we consider the time you spend with God – GREAT VALUE?**

**Knock (krouo Crew/O ) means to rap or strike at a door for entrance**

**A)No one knocks on a door once – RIGHT? - You knock several times**

**B)The three words that Jesus uses here are meant to convey an attitude of growing intensity**

C)Each one is stronger than the previous word - the intensity is growing as well as the persistence.

**D)The persistence is underscored by the fact that all 3 words are in the present imperative.**

1)Keep on Asking – Keep on seeking  
.....Knocking

**He is calling for a lifestyle of persistent prayer!**

A)That stands in sharp contrast to the flash-in-the-pan style of Christianity so popular in our day - easy beliefism - blab it grab it - name it claim it

B)Kingdom citizens persist in desiring that the character, ambitions, attitudes, and behavior that Jesus called for are being worked into in our lives.

C)So here is the question that I want to finish our time with today by answering -

D)Why does Jesus want us to be persistent in prayer?

3 Answers to that question

**#1 It acknowledges our dependency - We are so prone toward our independence - Josiah - I can do it**

A)Smile - ok - watch him struggle - after 15-20minutes he comes to the end of himself -

B)Popi can you help me - Sure buddy - been waiting for you to ask

C)God is waiting for some of you to come to the end of yourselves - ask

**D)The more we come the more it communicates our dependency**

E)I like what Pastor J.D. Greer had to say about this: “The Core of effective prayer is desperation not discipline.”

**Prayer is not merely a discipline it is coming to God in desperation - Lord I can't make it without you!**

A)Greer went on to say - **Never pray for longer than 20 minutes, at a time, but never go more longer than 20 minutes without praying**

B)I think that indicates a healthier attitude toward God than **the person that prays for an hour out of self-discipline**

1)but then charges throughout the day not thinking much about their need of the power of God.

**#2 It reminds us to look to God ask our father - Jesus gave 2 illustrations about persistence in prayer**

A)In Luke 11 he told the story about a man who wakes his neighbor up at midnight - **wanted bread - unexpected guest.**

B)His friend told him to go away - the family was sleeping and he didn't want to wake him.

C)But the guy who wanted the bread kept knocking on the door until his friend finally got out of bed -

1)to give him bread

**D)Jesus made it clear the guy who was sleeping didn't get up because he was the man's friend -**

E)More so annoyed by his persistence - wanted the guy to go away.

1)Jesus followed up that story - this same teaching on persistent prayer

**Then Jesus told another story in Luke 18 - this time it was a selfish Judge**

A)Poor widow who comes to him for a specific need.

B)At first the judge was not interested in helping the poor widow.

C)But she was persistent and relentless - kept coming and wasn't going to stop until she got an answer.

D)Once again the Selfish Judge - obliged her just to get her out of his hair

E)Jesus began that story in Luke 18 about the widow and the selfish judge with this statement - **“Men ought always to pray and not lose heart.”**

**The point that Jesus is making in both of those stories is this:**

A)God is not a sleeping friend - and he is not a selfish Judge -

B)He is a loving father - he is into you. He is for you.

**C)Come to Him as your Daddy - come to him with a child like faith**

D)Love this quote from Winston Churchill

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity, an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

E)It is the believer who has that Childlike faith that is the optimist – **they see the opportunity in every difficulty –**

1)because they see God factored into the equation.

**Psalm 46:1 The Lord is a very present help in time of trouble**

A)He is never bothered when we come to him **Lord I need help again – that is ok –**

B))Sometimes I can be exasperated by Josiah -

1)such a negotiator - Actually

C)He is never like: Rob again – man that guy is a pest – or man he is so needy!

1) **He is not bothered by our REPITION !**

D)But he wants more for our relationship with him than simply being the guy who – responds to needs

1)He is all about relationship – He wants that relationship to build.

**E)So He wants us to keep coming – builds on the relationship with Him – more we communicate**

1)More we wait upon Him!

**#3 Persistence in prayer realigns our heart with his heart - Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4**

A)This doesn't mean that as I delight in the Lord - he gives me whatever I want

B)It means that as I delight in him - my desires actually change - his desires become my desires.

C)The more I come before the Lord and just spend time in his presence the more my desires start to get shaped into His desires.

D)The more time I spend with him - the more my heart and mind get realigned with his kingdom

E)His desires become my desires - there is this shift that happens in my ambitions - my desires - my priorities

1)Things I used to think were so important - are not important any more

**In the process of drawing near to him we are becoming like him - heart transformation**

A)The things that matter most to my heavenly father are the things that end up matter most to me.

B)Precious church can I encourage you and me - 2023 - **Lets be a people of persistent prayer -**

**C)Knowing - God is using it to teach us to be dependent upon him**

1)He is drawing us into a deeper intimacy with him as our father

D)He is seeking to align our hearts with his heart

1)What breaks his heart - break ours -

E)Lets not lose heart in seeking him - especially as we pray for friends and family who are lost.

**George Mueller, who wrote one of the most influential books on prayer.**

A)Mueller tells a story about committing to pray for the salvation of 5 young men, every single day.

B)He prayed for 18 months before the 1st one was converted. He says, “I thanked God, and pressed on.”

C)He prayed every day for 5 more years before the 2nd one was converted, and another 6 years before the 3rd.

D)36 years later, he wrote that the last 2 were still not converted, “but I hope in God, I pray on, and look for the answer.

**E)They are not converted yet, but they will be.”**

**F)Then, in 1897, 52 years after he started praying, the final two were brought to faith. But it was a few years after Mueller died.**