

Keep On Asking

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[0:00] We looked at the first four verses where his disciples asked the Lord to teach them to pray. And these verses we're going to look at this morning, verse 5 through 13, they're going to be a continuation of that.

And we're going to just read all of those verses right now to get us in the context of it. And here's what the Bible says in verse 1 of chapter 11. And it came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

And he said unto them, And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you.

Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth. And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

[1:52] Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Jesus is teaching us a lot about prayer here in these first 13 verses. But he wants to remind us that we don't just pray. We're not going to just repeat some of these words that we heard in the first four verses.

He's giving us a pattern. He's giving us a model. But here's what he's teaching us here this morning. That we need to keep on asking. Because sometimes we pray, God doesn't answer it immediately, and we think, well, I might as well just move on.

Jesus wants us to show that persistent prayer is important in all of our lives. So let's go to him in prayer and ask him to bless the word this morning. Father, thank you for this time to gather.

Thank you for the songs and the reminder of your goodness. Thank you that you have promised to come back again. Lord, I pray that before that happens, that there's somebody here today, even in this service, that doesn't know you as their Savior, Lord, that today would be that day that they come to that saving knowledge of you.

[3:01] Lord, I pray that you'd be with us now as we walk through this text. Lord, that you would quiet our hearts and minds of all the things that are going on in our life. Lord, that you would show us some truths that we can take, we can apply to our lives.

Lord, that you would convict us where need be. Lord, I pray you'd be with me. Lord, I need you. I need your power. I need your strength. Lord, I have nothing to give the hearer this morning. But Lord, we're asking that you would speak to our hearts.

And we would respond when you do. And we ask this in your Son's precious name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. Have you ever sent a text and then immediately started overthinking the text you sent?

Any overthinkers in here? I know we send it. You send the text and you're thinking, maybe I should have just called. But now if I call, then it's going to seem really weird. And you're sitting there and you're kind of watching it.

And then you see the three little dots. You know what I'm talking about. Dot, dot, dot, dot. You're like, okay. They're going to respond. And then nothing. And then you're just like, oh, great.

[4 : 04] Now, I mean, you're overthinking. Now it's in hyperdrive. Now you don't have a clue what's going on. And you're thinking, I knew I shouldn't have sent that. Was it something I said? And you go back and you read the text over and over again.

And you're thinking, well, maybe they're busy. Well, they're not busy. They're ignoring me. They don't like me. Ever been there? And the longer the silence lasts, the worse that it gets.

And then you're laying in bed at 2 in the morning. Should I send another text tomorrow? Or will that seem desperate? You know, and you're kind of playing this all in your mind.

And you think, preacher, what are you talking about? But I think if we really think about it, sometimes I think that's how prayer can feel to us. That we pray.

We know we're supposed to pray. The Lord really, He commands us. He guides us. He gives us the pattern to pray. And so we pray. And we ask some serious things in our life.

[5 : 00] And maybe we're dealing with things. And we're needing guidance in this area. And we're needing help here. And you've got parents. You've got kids. You better be praying. And you're like, Lord, I need you. And it just seems like you're just waiting.

And you're waiting. And you're thinking, is it something I said? Did I not say it right? And when that happens, those questions, just like when you send a text, those questions kind of start to surface in our mind.

Well, did God hear me? Why isn't this getting taken care of? I mean, I was sincere. And I was serious. And I even used Christian words in there. And I heard things that I heard other people pray.

We begin to overthink that. And we may not say it, but we think, does God even love me? I mean, if God loved me, wouldn't He answer my prayer immediately? Wouldn't He give me exactly what I'm asking for?

As we come here into Luke's gospel in chapter number 11, we saw in the opening verses that Jesus taught His disciples to pray.

[6 : 03] They had seen Him pray. The Bible says there in verse 1 that when He was done praying, they were there. And maybe they were in earshot of it. And He was praying maybe audibly to His heavenly Father. And as we mentioned last week, sometimes you've just maybe been around somebody that when they pray, you think, man, they've got a direct line to God.

I want to pray like that. And I think that's kind of how the disciples were thinking. They realized that every time something was coming in Jesus' life, He went to His Father about it. And when He got done praying, they said, teach us to do that.

They didn't ask to learn how to do miracles and draw crowds. No, they began to realize that Jesus' fuel for His mission was His dependence on the Father, and it was found in prayer.

And so what He did there is He didn't give us some words just to repeat. Some call this the Lord's Prayer. I would more label it the model prayer, but it doesn't mean that we are to quote this word for word.

There's nothing wrong with that. But really what Jesus was doing is He was giving us a pattern. And this pattern, as we walked through last week, we're not going to dive back in, but it's an attitude consumed with God.

[7:12] That when we go, we pray to our Father by a relationship, that we understand who He is. And really, it's an attitude that is completely reliant on God.

That's what prayer is. Prayer is a posture of dependence. We are going to our Father because we understand this. We can't do it. We can't do anything.

In fact, Jesus says, without me in John 15, ye can do nothing. We're reminded of that when we pray. And really what He's doing in those first four verses is He is showing us it's not necessarily about the words.

It's about the heart that we have in prayer. That it's a heart that is turned to God. But Jesus knows us. Obviously, He knows us very well. He knows everything.

But He knows that when we begin to pray, especially nowadays, I think humans have always been like this, but we live in an instant society. We want everything when we want it right then, right now.

[8:10] You're going to pull up to a drive-thru. You're going to go to the restaurant today. And you're like, where's my food? They're cooking it. That's a good thing. But we think it should just be instantly ready.

You know, we want things instantaneously. And Jesus knows that just because He's given us the pattern of prayer, that just because we know how to do it, doesn't automatically give us the answers we want when we want it.

So the question we have this morning is, what do you do when you've prayed and nothing happens? What do you do when you pray and it seems like heaven is silent?

What do you do when you pray and it seems like nobody's listening to you? So what Jesus does, He understood the disciples' thought process, and as He gives them the pattern, He goes right into verse number 5.

And He begins to teach, and He wants us to see that verse 1 through 4 and 5 through 13, they're not two separate conversations. It's one lesson on prayer. The first four verses show us how to pray, and verses 5 through 13 show us how to keep praying and why we should keep praying.

[9:19] But before we dive into this text, I want us to see something. What Jesus is not doing in verses 5 through 13 is teaching us how to pressure God and wear Him down so He gives us what we want.

That is not what He's doing. Because we've all been in a place, sometimes as parents, like, I'm just like, I'm just going to give in because I am sick and tired of you asking. I know it's not best parenting, but sometimes you're like, just get out of here.

That's real life parenting, in case you're wondering. Even pastors parent that way sometimes. But what He is doing is He is teaching us how to trust God when answers don't come immediately.

That's really the idea behind this text. Here's what He's showing us, that prayer is not just about a single request. Prayer, really, when it boils down to it, is this. It's that persistent relationship with our faithful, heavenly Father.

That that's what prayer is really doing. It's not just running to God and getting what we want. No, it's really this, getting God. That that's what we should be seeking. That's what we should be searching.

[10:27] That prayer draws us closer to Him. It shows us His heart. And when we see His heart, then it's going to align our life the way that it should be. So the first thing that Jesus shows us is this.

Is that persistent prayer, it reveals what we really believe about God. It reveals how badly we need Him. Persistent prayer, it reveals the seriousness of our request.

That's what He's teaching here in these verses, especially verse 5 through 8. That He's speaking to the same crowd. He's speaking to His disciples that He was addressing on how to pray.

And He begins to tell them a story that they would relate to. And that's what we see there in verse number 5. He says, which of you shall have a friend? And really when you dive into it, this friend doesn't mean just a friend that you have around town.

It would have been a neighbor. It had that idea. And you study the Gospels. You realize some of these times the Jewish people have a hard time with neighbors. Like, well, who's my neighbor?

[11:29] And Jesus is just saying, listen, let's pretend like you have a neighbor. Anybody have a neighbor in here? Yeah. Some of you built way out there so you wouldn't have neighbors. You're like, yeah, I tried that once, not trying it again.

Sometimes you have good neighbors. Sometimes you have bad neighbors. But He begins to speak on this and tells them this story. And He says, listen, okay, pretend like you have a neighbor. And in this culture and in this time period, they were highly dependent on their neighbors.

This would have been something, especially in this situation where this man shows up at a late night needing something. Because there were no grocery stores.

There were no QTs or Buc-ee's. Some of y'all live there. I like those roasted pecans that are warm at Buc-ee's. If you're ever coming back through Denton, just get some for your preacher.

He'll love you forever. There are no 24-hour fast food restaurants that he could just drive through to help this friend. And people at this time especially didn't have stockpiles of food.

[12:32] They're not like us where we go home and we open the fridge and say, there's nothing to eat in here. And it's completely full. No, I mean, when we really think about it, they would work every day just to eat.

Just to live. And when things were hard, they would have depended upon one another. But when Jesus gets this story, he says, okay, well, that's understandable that, yeah, you have a neighbor, you need something.

That's okay. But notice what he says when he shows up at midnight. Absolutely not. My mom told me that nothing good happens after 9 p.m. And the older I'm getting, I think the earlier that's happening in my life.

I'm like, I'm ready to go to bed at 8 o'clock. And what Jesus is saying, he's just showing us this obviously isn't a normal time to visit. Especially here in this day.

No one was up at this time. You know, you can get around town and even if you're out late one time, there's still people moving around. But in this culture, they would have went to bed soon after sunset.

[13:33] They didn't have social media or Netflix just to waste their time and waste their night away. No, they went to bed when the sun went down and they got up with the sun. Some of y'all never seen that before. You didn't know the sun went down and up.

You just thought it was up all the time. But why was he so dead set on being here? Why would he show up at midnight? Because in this culture, hospitality was everything.

It was a big deal that when somebody showed up and at this time, sometimes they would travel because of the heat during the day. So people would travel at night time. And so he would have been coming in and he wouldn't have had any food on his journey.

And he shows up and he's starving and you need to take care of him. So this man's kind of in a bind. He could either be a poor host to his guest or a poor neighbor by waking him up at midnight.

And he said, I'd rather be a poor neighbor. So he shows up. Verse number seven tells us a very predictable response. He goes over to his neighbor's house.

[14:39] Hey, you up? He said, leave me alone. You know, the fact that he even responded, all of you probably have ring doorbells and you're like, I'm absolutely not even going to the door.

You look at your phone like, yep, not talking to him. He's always wanting something. Like he needs to learn where the store is. But that's what he says in verse number seven. And he said from within, trouble me not.

The door's shut. And my children are in bed with me and cannot rise. And in Jewish houses this day, they would have probably had one main room and there was a large mat that's laying there on the floor.

And everybody would have been in there. And don't misunderstand. This man is not being cruel. He's just stating the obvious. Hey, buddy, the timing's not great. We were awake at six o'clock this evening.

Midnight's not a good time to come to my house. He doesn't want to get up. He doesn't want to stir the house. He's not willing to wake them up. I just picture when I read this story, maybe they had a little baby that was crying all night.

[15:39] And now he's finally asleep. Like, you've got to be kidding me. Who's at my house at this time? He's saying, listen, it's not a great time, man. This is not what I want to see.

But I think we've all met people like this. This guy didn't take no for an answer. I imagine when he said, hey, go away. I can't help you. He's like, turn over the van.

I'm glad he left. I'm glad he's not there anymore. Hey, Josiah. Sounds like a good Jewish name, doesn't it? I know you're in there.

I just talked to you. I saw a Walmart grocery deliver bread earlier today. Don't act like you don't have any in there. That's kind of the idea that we see here.

I know it's a silly way to think of it, but that's what's going on. This guy's trying to go, and it just seems like every time he thinks he's done, and maybe he waited five minutes and said, good night, thank goodness he's gone.

[16:39] Like, hey, I really could use those pieces of bread. Like, if you, listen, you go, I'll meet you. Like, just come out the window. Just throw it out the window. Just give me the bread.

Jesus says this in verse 8. Jesus says he didn't give up. He didn't get up out of bed and give him what he needed because he was his friend, because he was his neighbor.

Notice what Jesus says there in verse number 8. Yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. Now, that's not a word that we use all the time.

It's not a word that's probably in your vocabulary. What does it mean? Here's the idea behind importunity. It's shamelessness. It's audacity. It's boldness.

That he was not going to take no for an answer. He knew that he had a dire need. He understood hospitality. He didn't want to be known as the guy that was a poor host.

[17:38] And so he was willing to go to uncomfortable lengths to be that annoying person and just keep knocking and keep knocking and keep knocking. And I think we can picture him outside of the house.

It's not that he's trying to be polite, but he needs something. And it wasn't a one-time thing. He said, hey, man, can I borrow some bread? No. Okay. We'll see you later. That's not what's taking place here.

And here's what Jesus is teaching us here. That persistent prayer reveals how deeply we depend on God and how serious the request that we bring to him is to us.

If it's that important, are we just going to pray one time and forget about it? If it's important enough to bring to the Father, here's what Jesus is reminding. It's important enough to keep asking and keep asking and keep seeking.

The idea is that often the things that we stop praying about the quickest are the things that we are trying to handle ourselves. That's kind of what Jesus is getting to the point of.

[18:43] That we're still trying to manage it. That we think, you know what, I'll see if God answers it, but if not, I'll find a way. If there's a will, there's a way. You know, that's kind of our mindset. Because here's the problem with that.

When persistence in our prayer life fades, it's usually because self-reliance has found its way in. And that's not where we should be relying on. You know who lets me down more than anybody I know?

This guy. You know who's never let me down? Our Father. But yet, you know who I rely on more in my life if I'm just being 100% honest? Me.

And then I say, Lord, can you get me out of this mess? And he's almost, sometimes I think he's like, well, you put yourself in there. You didn't ask me. You just assumed. And so kind of here's a simple heart check from these first three verses.

I don't know the answer, but you do. What do you quit praying about real fast? Maybe there's something in your life right now that you should be praying about, but you didn't get an answer right away, so you thought, well, obviously he didn't hear.

[19:49] He doesn't care. Maybe I can handle it myself. Maybe I can take care of this. Because if we quit praying early, it often reveals that we still think we have a whole bunch of other options.

Maybe you can say, well, I'll just go to the next house. I'll just go here. I'll figure it out. If you're not going to help me inside this house, then I'll go to the, I'll find somebody else that will help me. I think sometimes we treat God like that.

If we don't get it immediately, if it's not an answer to prayer, as soon as we pray it, well, does God even love me? And we may, listen, we may not physically say that, but we live that way.

You know, when my kids want something, they don't stop asking. And I say things like this, if you don't, if you ask one more time, we're never eating ice cream again, which they know is an empty threat.

And that's not, I hope you understand, Jesus is not teaching us to pester God. But he's teaching us, where's our reliance? Because this man had no other option besides his neighbor.

[20:52] And yet, sometimes we view God as an option, not the option. And when we quit praying, it reveals that we're not fully dependent on him.

And it reveals that we still think that we're the ones in control. What Jesus is just reminding us is, instead of quitting, just keep coming back. You don't have to be bold, and you don't have to be, these long-winded prayers.

Sometimes persistent doesn't look like long prayers. It looks like this, Lord, I need you. Because maybe you're walking through a difficult time in life. You don't have all the things to say. And you may just say, Lord, I cannot do this.

Please help me. Maybe that's your prayer every single morning. That's okay. And Lord, I don't know what to do in this situation. God, I'm not giving up. I need your strength.

Persistent prayer doesn't mean just pray harder. No, it just means coming back again and again and again. Listen, I bet we have testimony in this room of a prayer that was answered, and you prayed for it for 5, 10, 15, 20 years.

[21:56] And God answered it. What if you would have just stopped praying? What if you would have just given up? It wasn't that God didn't want to answer that prayer. But here's the beautiful thing.

God knows the perfect timing. Sometimes the prayers that you pray right now, it's not good for you right now. Maybe there's a, sometimes, listen, a no doesn't mean no.

It means there's a better yes sometimes. And here's just the truth. Sometimes we don't even know what we're praying is not good for us. I'm thankful the Lord hasn't answered some of my prayers, and I bet you are too.

You had to sit back and say, Lord, thank you for not answering that prayer. What was I thinking? Now, if we stop here and we stop after these verses, we might think to ourselves, so prayer is about pestering God until he gives in.

No, that's why Jesus moves from this little story into the next few verses, and we see that persistent prayer is met with a promise from God. That God, listen, God wants to answer your prayers.

[23:03] You think, wow, that sounds kind of like health, wealth, and prosperity. But here's the thing sometimes when we persistently, we ask, and we seek, and we knock.

Sometimes when we first go and we pray the prayer, it's not in line with what God has for us. You know what kind of prayer God wants to answer? The one he wants to place in our heart. The more that we go back to God, and the more that we seek him, we realize maybe that prayer I started with wasn't on the right vein, and God is working on our hearts.

And as we ask, and as we seek, and as we knock, God is molding us to the way that he wants us to be. And when we're in line with our Father in heaven, when we're on the same page with him, here's what he's going to say.

Yes. That's what he's teaching us. That's what he's reminding us. That these idea of asking, it's to recognize that you have a very conscious need. Because when we go to the Lord in prayer, it's not because we think we can do it.

No, sometimes we go to the Lord in prayer because we need a quick fix right now. And that's okay. Sometimes you do. Lord, I need you. I don't know what to do in this situation. Maybe you're about to walk into work. Lord, give me the words to say.

[24:10] Maybe you're going to walk into work. You have a strained relationship. I don't know what it is. But sometimes our prayer is just, Lord, I need you. I need you in this situation. To ask, it's humbling.

You know, sometimes people are like, I don't ask anybody for anything. You should ask God for everything. He knows what you need. He knows where he's trying to take you.

And it's coming to God and admitting, Lord, I don't have what I need. I mean, the word ask, it just implies requesting help from someone greater than you.

When he says to seek, it takes it a step farther. Because there's action involved now. It's easy sometimes to express the need. But when we begin to seek, we're pursuing God with effort and intention.

And sometimes it looks different in different ways. We're going to maybe fast. We're going to maybe do certain things. But we're seeking God in every single way. You know, like sometimes we play hide and seek. I played when we were little.

[25:19] And my sister would go hide. I said, let's play hide and seek. And she'd go hide and I just wouldn't look. That's a real fun way. She's like, I'm the best. I'm in here just watching TV. But sometimes that's how we treat prayer.

We ask and then we just leave. Are we seeking God? Are we coming to him over and over? Because sometimes he's showing us that we need to come to him over and over.

Not ourselves. And to knock it, it goes even further. It includes asking plus acting. And it's persevering in this. It pictures this man that we saw earlier standing at the door.

Lord, I know it's Tuesday. I prayed about this yesterday. But I need you still. Lord, I know it's Wednesday. And I prayed the last couple days. But Lord, I still need you. We sing that old song.

Every hour I need thee. That's how much we need the Lord. And Jesus is stacking these words intentionally. And the force of it is strong when you think about it.

[26:21] When you look at it, I know you love English. They're present tense, by the way. I know. I used to hate school. And now it's like I study and it's like all I do is look at verb tenses. It annoys me.

But it's important. Because here's really what Jesus is saying. Keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking. This is not a one and done. Prayer is not a one and done thing.

It's a once in a while event. No, it's a posture of ongoing obedience. That Jesus is painting a picture that when you ask and when you seek and you knock, you're going to find what you're looking for.

Because you know what you're going to find? The Lord. Because prayer is not always just about the answer. It's about knowing him more. Because you know what you're going to realize sometimes when you pray?

You thought you needed an answer and you didn't. You just needed to know him in a better way. You just needed to be closer to him. That your relationship had drifted just a little bit. And it really just kind of begs the question, do I just pray once about something or do I keep praying?

[27:26] You know, we can treat prayer sometimes like voicemail. Call God, leave a message, and then just go on our way and wait for him to respond at one point. That's not what he's saying.

That's not what he's talking about. So maybe instead of saying, well, I already prayed about that. Maybe we need to learn in our heart to say, I'm still praying about that. I'm still seeking the Lord about that.

If something matters enough to pray about, it matters enough to keep bringing it before the Lord. Don't misunderstand. Persistence doesn't mean we're trying to change God's mind.

It means that God is shaping us while we keep going to him. That we're going to be conformed to his image. Prayer is, I think we can get it all mixed up.

We think, well, I'm just trying to get God to bless my plans. No, no. We're trying to get on his plan. We're trying to seek his face. We're trying to see where he would guide us, where he would leave us.

[28:23] Listen, prayer is not some passive waiting game. It's an active trust and a faithful father. That we are actively saying, Lord, I can't do this. I'm just going to keep trusting you.

And that's why you keep praying and you keep praying and you keep praying. And maybe God leads you to do something and to go here and he gives you some answers. But here, keep going back to the Lord.

But maybe you're thinking like I've thought in my life sometimes. Well, okay, what if God answers my prayers and it's not what I want? You ever thought that?

I mean, I think we should just be real honest. Sometimes we don't pray because we don't want the answer. Sometimes we don't pray because we already probably know what the answer is. Because he's given it to us sometimes.

We're thinking, definitely don't want that. Well, that's what we think. So we just decide we're just not going to pray about it. But Jesus knows our heart. He knew the disciples.

[29 : 25] I think, well, I'm definitely not going to pray about that because he's going to make me do that. Not going to do that. So Jesus addresses that fear head on in verses 11 through 13. And here's what he teaches us.

That persistent prayer, it rests in the goodness of the Father. And he gives kind of a weird illustration where you read it and you're thinking, what is he talking about? Scorpions and eggs and snakes and fish.

What in the world? He's just painting a picture that we understand. That he reminds us and he's really shifting our focus. Because I think if we're not careful, we can look at prayer and it's just about the request.

No, no, no. I think it's much more than that. I think it's to show us the character of the one that we're asking. That the more we pray, the more we get to know our Father.

We get to know how he thinks and how he loves and how he guides and how he leads our life. And so he gives this example. He says, if a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will you give him a stone?

[30 : 25] I mean, sometimes as a father you want to. Sometimes you're like, you know what? I need to teach these kids a lesson. Don't act like you've never thought that. But he's showing us, even if we may have thought that.

Even if we thought, man, it's my job to do that. You know, here's what it is. A good father, even an earthly sinful father, gives good gifts to their children. Now, my kids love when I say no.

That was a joke. But I don't say no to make their life miserable. Because sometimes they think, well, Dad, every, you know, I hear this all the time.

I love this line. This is my favorite line. All my friends have that. All my friends get to do that. And I say, really? I'm going to call all your friends' parents and ask, well, not all my friends.

But I say, listen, I'm not their dad. And my job is to be your dad. And I'm going to give you what I feel is best for you.

[31 : 27] Because it's my job to help you grow and to help you learn. And sometimes I say yes. And sometimes I say no. But Jesus is saying, just as an earthly father says yes to their kids and no to their kids, here's what an earthly father does.

Everything that's best for that child's interest. And he says, if you, being evil, being sinful, being human, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more does your heavenly father love you?

Because God's not just a good father. He is a perfect father. That everything that he does is love. And maybe you're here this morning and it feels like God is saying no.

I just want to remind you, he still loves you and he knows what is best for you. That he knows exactly what you need. And here's what he shows us at the end.

That God doesn't just give us gifts. How much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask of him? Here's the beautiful thing. God's not just in the answer business.

[32 : 27] He wants you to have something even better himself. That's what he wants to give you. That's what he wants to have rule and reign in your life because he loves you that much.

But I think that's where we can really struggle. And I think that's where I struggle in my own life is that I trust God's power. I mean, we'll say, you think God can do this and this? Absolutely.

But I think sometimes we wrestle with his goodness. Not that he's not good. But it's not what we would choose. We think, well, God, I know you're powerful and I know you're good.

But, you know, I'm not sure I want that answer. We believe he's going to answer. We're just not always sure we're going to like the answer. So maybe ask yourself, do I trust God's heart even when I don't understand maybe his timing or his purpose?

Because sometimes you might be walking through a valley right now. Maybe the doctor said this and maybe works a mess and you're not sure how it's going to come out. And you're thinking all these things.

[33 : 34] And you're thinking, God, what are you doing? Let me just remind you, he works all things together for good to them that love him, to those who are called according to his purpose. That's not some words on a page. That's a promise from our heavenly father.

That we can rest in his goodness. That he knows what you need. A good father, a heavenly father, never gives the wrong gift. He's never carelessly giving out answers.

He never withholds what is truly good for you. And maybe what is best for you right now is no. Or wait. Or yes. Or take that step.

Or do this. Or go here. Listen, yes, sometimes God answers prayers by changing those circumstances. And it's a beautiful thing. But God also answers prayers by changing us.

I know in my life, I've said, God, I need you to get rid of this. Lord, you know I could do a lot more for you if you would just take care of this situation. And we pray for removal.

[34 : 31] But you know what sometimes God gives us? Peace. And I've seen some of you walk through some very dark valleys. Health and all these. And you know what you found? A peace that passes understanding.

You know where you found that? In your heavenly father. Going to him and going to him. And you prayed, Lord, would this diagnosis not be right? Would this job situation be right? Lord, get rid of this. And he said, no, no.

My strength is made perfect in weakness. Sometimes he gives us strength instead of escape. Sometimes he gives us his presence instead of explanation.

Sometimes I wish God would say, all right, Tyler, here's what's going on. This is going to happen. This is going to happen. This is going to happen. Good? Good. But you know what he says? I'm here. I'll never leave you nor forsake you. You know what?

That's a lot more comforting than all the explanation. Because maybe I can't even handle the explanation. Maybe I don't understand how God's working. But I just want to remind us that when God says no or he says wait, it's not a punishment.

[35 : 30] You know what sometimes God's doing? He's protecting us. Maybe he's preparing you for something. I'd imagine there's people in this room that went through a really hard time at some point in your life.

And you thought, God, why would you let me go through this? And then five years down the road, ten years down the road, you see somebody else going through that same thing. You say, let me tell you what God did for me. You know what?

Everything you go through is not just about you. It might be God's allowing you to do something. He's growing you closer to him so you can walk alongside somebody that's going through the same thing and say, listen, I don't know why.

And I don't know all the answers, but I know this. God is good. And you can make it through this. And he cares about you. It's always for his purposes. And Jesus reminds us in these verses that we're not praying to some reluctant neighbor.

We're praying to a loving, heavenly father that knows exactly what we need before we even ask. So when prayer feels delayed, when answers seem unclear, when heaven feels quiet, Jesus says, just keep asking.

[36 : 36] Just keep coming back. And you're going to find the same good God every single time. In these opening 13 verses of chapter 11, he's showing us to pray with the right heart.

A heart and an attitude that's consumed with him. And he reminds us not to quit when answers delay. See, prayer is not about wearing God down.

It's about drawing closer to him. You know, I love my kids, even when they're getting a little older. I can say it because they're actually visiting Nakona with Brother Doty today.

That's where Kinsey and Elijah are. But I love that even when they get a little older, and don't tell them I use them as an illustration, but they still want to just kind of be with their dad sometimes. And as a dad, that makes me happy.

And I love to spend time with my kids. And the more they get to hang out with me, they learn things about me, and they're like, Dad, you're weird. I'm like, I know. I know. I thought it was cool, but it's just weird.

[37 : 37] Listen, do you spend time with your Heavenly Father? Do you have a desire to know him? How do you do that? Go to him in prayer. He's waiting.

He's wanting. He's there to listen. Maybe you're here today, you know the Lord is your Savior. But your prayer life's not super persistent.

It's kind of hit or miss. Life's pretty good, so I can kind of handle this. No, we're to take every care and cast it on him. He's the burden bearer. Maybe here's what you need to do this week.

Pick one burden, one person, one situation, maybe one answered prayer that you just kind of stop giving up on, and just keep praying. Just keep taking it to the Lord and commit to praying about it every single day this week.

It might not change your situation, but you'll probably know your Father better by next week. Why? Because you spend time with him, and you spend time with him, and you spend time with him.

[38 : 40] Prayer's not about fancy words or long speeches. It's just an honest, open heart to a Father that already knows it. When you're tempted to quit, just remember that he's still there.

Prayer. Maybe you're here today, and maybe you're honest enough to say, well, I don't really pray, and I don't even know if there's a God or he's even listening to me. I try, but it just seems empty-handed.

I want to encourage you. It's not about religious language. It's not about, well, I've got to clean myself up first before I come to God. No, he says, come. Come unto me.

He's inviting you this morning. And Jesus already taught us that when we pray, we say, our Father. And that invitation is there because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross of Calvary. That Jesus came to this earth, and he lived a perfect, sinless life, and he lived for us, and he died on the cross, and he was buried, and he rose again.

Why? So we might have a relationship with that Father. There was a great goal fixed, and sin was the culprit, and the cross built a bridge. And the invitation today is, come unto me, all you that are heavy laden.

[39 : 46] And your prayer might be as simple as, Lord, if you're real, I need you. It might be, Lord, I'm a sinner. Would you forgive me? And the Bible promises he will. Because if you don't have a relationship, if you're not in the family, then prayer's not going to really do much.

You have to start it there. Did you have to go to him and say, Lord, would you forgive me of all my sins? See, the same Father who invites his children to keep praying is inviting you to maybe begin that relationship today.

Either way, as we leave here this morning, we have a moment of invitation. Don't leave deciding if prayer works. Leave here deciding this morning that I'm going to keep praying, that I'm going to keep going to the Father, and I'm going to keep getting to know him more and more each day.

Would you stand with your heads bowed and with your eyes closed? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.