

You Can Count On It

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 August 1995

Preacher: Darrell Johnson

[0 : 00] The more I'm getting to know Jesus, the more I'm realizing that in order to know Him better, I need to get to know His Father. Jesus is self-consciously the Son of the Father.

Jesus lives His whole earthly existence oriented toward the Father. My food, He says, is to do the will of Him who sent me.

I only do what I see my Father do. I only say what I hear my Father say. The more I'm getting to know Jesus as the Son, the more I am discovering and enjoying His passion to reveal the character of the Father.

Jesus really loves His Father. Jesus finds great delight in His Father. And it is Jesus' great desire to explain His Father to us.

To explain His Father to us in such a way that we too will want to love Him, and so that we too will find great delight in Him.

[1 : 23] In the text before us this morning, Jesus teaches us a parable in which He opens up one of the most fundamental dimensions of the character of the Father.

Our text is Luke chapter 11, verses 5 through 8, but we need to read them in the context, verses 1 through 13.

Two years ago, when I first came here, I had the privilege of going to a number of classes, and this is what I taught in each of those classes. But since then, I've learned a whole lot more that I want to share with you this morning.

If you are able, will you stand for the reading of the Word? It came about that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.

Jesus said to them, When you pray, say, Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us, and lead us not into temptation.

[2 : 38] And Jesus said to them, Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.

And from inside he shall answer and say, Do not bother me. The door has already been shut. My children and I are in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything, because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence, and I'll show you that that's not a correct translation, yet because of his persistence, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who seeks finds, and to everyone who knocks it shall be opened.

Now, suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish. He will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he's asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

If you then, being evil... I don't like that part of the text at all. If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

[3 : 59] You may be seated. Lord, these are familiar words to us, and now I pray that in your mercy and grace, you would cause them to come off this page and come alive in our minds, in our spirits, in our hearts, in our wills as never before.

For we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. The disciples could see that what explained Jesus was his relationship to the Father.

And he could see that the key thing to that relationship was Jesus' prayer life. Jesus was always praying. He was always slipping off to be with the Father. And so the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

This is the only thing the disciples are recorded to have asked Jesus to teach them. No one asked him to teach them how to preach or cast out demons or do anything. The only thing they asked him to do is teach us how to pray.

The implication being, Jesus, teach us what you know about the Father. What is it that you know about him that makes you always want to slip away to pray?

[5 : 12] So Jesus gives them this short form of the Lord's Prayer and then teaches them the parable that is recorded in verses 5 through 8. Now clearly, this parable has been given to us, to the disciples at first and then to us, to encourage us in prayer.

This parable is to make us want to pray. Now, the traditional Western way of handling this parable has missed the point.

And it took me living in the Philippines to see this. The traditional approach says two things. It says, first of all, that this parable is about persistence.

That Jesus is teaching us to persist. And the second thing the traditional approach says is that God is not like the man inside the house.

Not like the man inside the house. William Barclay says that a parable is something that is laid alongside something else.

[6 : 16] You lay a parable along something to say that X is like Y. Then Barclay says, this parable is a case in which something is laid along something to say the opposite.

X is not like Y. And he's saying that this parable is laid there so that Jesus can say the Father is not like the man in the house. And I preached many sermons following that lead and I was always uncomfortable when I did.

Because there's nothing in the text to suggest that Jesus is doing that kind of thing here. The problem is that our Western mindset is not able to see what Jesus is doing in this story.

In fact, our Western mindset blinds us to what Jesus is doing in this story. If, however, we had Middle Eastern eyes, Iranian and Iraqi and Lebanese eyes, if we had Asian eyes and ears, we would see what Jesus is doing in this parable and we would find incredible encouragement to pray. Have I baited the hook enough to interest you in going on? I'm going to make five observations that help us understand what Jesus is getting at in this story.

[7 : 32] Five observations. Under the third observation, I have five other points. So, don't get confused. Five observations and then I'm going to elaborate on the third one a little bit.

All ready? First observation. Verses five through eight in the text constitute a question. And no translation brings this out. Clearly, verses five through eight is one long question.

And it has the sense, Jesus begins, which of you? And it has the sense of, can you imagine the following? Can you imagine Mrs. Paws coming to me, Mr. Johnson, late at night on a journey?

Can you imagine me needing to put a meal before her, finding out that I have nothing in the kitchen? Can you imagine me then going to Mr. Pintar, waking him up in the middle of the night and saying, Mr. Pintar, Mrs. Paws has come to my house.

I don't have any bread to put before her. Will you lend me three loaves of bread? Can you imagine Mr. Pintar saying, look, Laurie and I have already gone to bed. We've already closed the door. I'm not going to get up and give you anything.

[8 : 46] Can you imagine that? It's a question. Second observation. In a Middle Eastern or an Asian context, the culturally expected answer is no.

That is impossible to imagine. You can imagine it in a Western context. You can imagine Barry going, yo, dude, what are you doing, man?

Back off. Get the bread down at the 7-Eleven. In an Asian or Middle Eastern context, you can never imagine that. My neighbors are from Iran. And I know that if in the middle of the night, I got up and I said to Mrs. Avani, we're making a cake for our daughter's birthday tomorrow and we didn't have enough sugar.

Would you get up and give us sugar? I know that she would never say, go away, it's late at night. Because of the third observation.

There are some very important cultural dynamics that work behind this story. Two key cultural values for the Middle East and Asia.

[9 : 59] They are hospitality and avoidance of shame. Hospitality and avoidance of shame. Now, there are five dynamics for those cultural truths.

And I'll quickly go through those. First of all, the host, me, I must place before the guest, Mrs. Paz, I must place before her more than she can eat.

We were in the Philippines for four years, as you know. And every time we were invited to a Filipino home, there was more food on that table than all of us in the room could possibly eat. I was the honored guest.

And they would put out all that food, even if they couldn't afford it that week. Obligated to put more food in front of me than I can possibly eat. The corollary of that, by the way, is that then you have to take seconds as the guest.

I learned that pretty quickly, so my first round I took just a little bit. Because I knew I would have to take seconds to honor the person's putting all that food in front of me. Second cultural fact.

[11 : 04] The guest is the guest of the whole village. Mrs. Paz has come to my house. She's a guest of my house, but she's also a guest of Mr. Pintar's house, and she's a guest of every one of your houses.

She's a guest of the entire village. Hospitality now must be extended by the entire village. When I was in the Philippines, people regularly would say to us, how do you like our country?

Not my country. It's always plural. And whatever one person did to me reflected on the whole. Third thing. The bread that I have gone to ask Mr. Pintar for is only the utensils for the meal.

The bread is not the meal. The meal in that time, and even up to our time, is a common meal. It's in a big bowl, like a kind of a big stew. And then there were loaves of bread that everyone passed around, and you broke off a piece of bread, dipped it into the stew, and then ate it.

And then when the loaf came around again, you broke off another piece of bread, dipped it into the stew. So all the poor guy is asking for is the utensils. Fourth fact then is, that means that this man needs to go and get all the other ingredients for the dinner.

[12 : 19] After Mr. Pintar gives me the bread, I've got to go to Mrs. Carruthers and get the carrots. I've got to go on and on and on, and I've got to get everything else to make that meal. Which is why in verse 8, Jesus says, he will give him as much as he needs.

The guy inside the house knows that the man who's asking for the bread needs a whole lot more than bread. Are you with me? And then the last of the cultural dynamics is, the guy inside the house knows everything I just told you.

The guy inside the house knows that I have to put in front of the guest more than she can eat. He knows that she is also his guest and the village guest.

He knows all of that. That leads us then to the fourth observation. The key word is in verse 8, the word that is translated persistence in the text.

You see that there? That Greek word is the word anideon. Anideon. I was preaching this at Mount Hermon Thursday night, and I kept using that word anideon, anideon, and a 12-year-old girl afterwards asked her mother, why did Pastor Daryl keep saying that the man inside the house had anideon?

[13 : 32] That's why he didn't come out of the house. He was going to be ashamed. The Greek word here is anideon.

You've got to say it faster so you don't get that other nuance. And this word is usually translated persistence, or as the NIV has it, boldness. Now, get this.

This is the most important fact I'm passing on to you today. That word did not have that connotation until the third century A.D. Anideon did not mean persistence until the third century A.D.

If you had gotten a hold of a dictionary in the first century, looked up the word anideon, it would not have said persistence. Not until the third century when the Romans and the Greeks were making the dictionary did it have that meaning.

Before the third century, this word anideon means shamelessness. Shamelessness in the sense of avoidance of shame.

[14 : 40] Middle Eastern and Asian cultures are a shamed-based culture. We're a guilt-based culture. Shamed-based. Yes, there are rules and regulations and all of that, but basically it's governed by shame.

Now, not shame in the psychological sense in which we're now using it. Shame in the Western world now means this deep sense that I feel I'm rotten. That's not what it's about. Shame in the

sense of not wanting to lose face.

Not wanting in any way to damage a reputation. Not in any way damaging a name that goes with the face. It's a core value of those cultures.

You'll do anything to avoid shame. Notice how I'm doing this with my face constantly. Those of you who are doing business with China or Japan or Korea are discovering, when you do a negotiation and do business, do not touch your face.

Don't touch your face. Do everything to save face. Literally and figuratively. To save reputation.

[15:44] That came out in the Philippines in some beautiful ways. Two that I can think of right off. One was birthday parties. When you went to a birthday party in the Philippines, our kids had birthday parties, you did not open the gifts during the birthday party. And you didn't open the gifts because what if somebody gives you a gift you don't like?

What happens to your face? Right? Right? So you open the gifts afterwards so you don't have to lose face. Isn't that neat? The other thing is, when we were caught up in the people power revolution in the Philippines, it was clear that Ferdinand Marcos had stolen the election from Cory Aquino.

Clear as a bell. That he had ripped it off. He'd killed a lot of people to do it too. And I, with my Western orientation on justice and all of that stuff, I was just really livid and I was saying to my Filipino friends, what are you going to do about Marcos?

What are you going to do about this guy having ripped it off? And they, you know, they let me rant and rave for a while. And then one of the older Filipinos pulled me aside and said, we will do something, but we have to do something that saves Ferdinand Marcos' face when he's brought down.

That's beautiful. Save face. In this parable, then, Jesus is dealing with that cultural value.

[16:59] Anaidion means avoidance of shame. Are you with me now? Okay, then. If that word means avoidance of shame, why have we in the West regularly translated the word as persistence?

For two reasons. And now I'm coming to the heart of the matter. First is, the Roman and the Greek mind could not grasp this concept of shame. We still can't grasp it. We can't grasp the depth of it. And it's Roman and Greek minds that have translated the Scriptures for the most part. They couldn't grasp this concept of shame. And then the second thing is that the Greek and Roman mind could not see how avoidance of shame applies to the guy who is asking from outside the house. How does this shame stuff apply to somebody who has to go and get some... has a need and is asking for help? Well, this leads to the fifth observation, the key observation.

Anaidion does not apply to the one who is asking. It applies to the one who is being asked. It does not apply to the guy on the outside.

[18:12] It applies to the guy on the inside. Look at verse 8 more carefully. I typed it out for you in six clauses. Verse 8 has six clauses on the white sheet there.

Okay? Notice it. First clause. Even though he will not get up. Second. And he, give him anything. Third. Because he is his friend.

Fourth. Fourth. Yet because of his Anaidion. Fifth. He will get up. Sixth. He will give him as much as he needs.

Six clauses. Do you see that? Go back through that. First clause. Even though he will not get up. Who's the he? Guy inside or guy outside? Inside. And he, give him anything.

Who's the he? Inside or outside? Inside. Right? Inside. Because he is his friend. Who's the he? Inside. Skip four.

[19:15] Five. He will get up. Who's the he? Inside. And he will give him as much as he needs. Who's the he? Inside. Clearly five of those clauses have as a subject the guy inside.

Which would say to me the fourth clause yet because of his Anaidion would apply to the guy inside. All six clauses have the same subject. Even though he will not get up and he give him anything because he is his friend yet because of his Anaidion he'll get up and give him as much as he needs. The quality of avoidance of shame applies to the guy inside. Even if Mr. Pintar hates Mr. Johnson Mr. Pintar will get up and give Mr. Johnson as much as he needs.

You see there's something deeper than friendship. Something deeper in friendship and it is the avoidance of shame. I'm not going to lose face.

I'm not going to ruin reputation. I am not going to damage my name. The guy inside the house will not in any way act he will not act in any way that would allow one of the neighbors to say the next

day did you hear what happened when Johnson went to Pintar last night?

[20 : 39] Did you hear that Johnson received a guest? Wanted to extend hospitality to the guest? Couldn't do it. Went to Mr. Pintar. Did you hear that Mr. Pintar see he'll never do that.

He will never allow himself to be in that position where his name is damaged. Even if he does not like me Jesus says even if he does not like me he is going to get up and give me as much as I need to avoid shame to save his face to bring honor to his village.

Are you with me? Are you with me? Now I'm leading up to the point which is to say then that Jesus' parable is not about the one who is asking but about the one who is being asked which means then this parable is not about us this parable is about his father.

Jesus is saying God the father is like the man in the house. When you pray say father hallowed be thy name.

the father has an idea on the father has avoidance of shame and the father will never ever allow anything to shame his name.

[21 : 59] Or to put it in Old Testament terms and therefore positively the father always acts in ways that honors his name the father will never ever ever bring shame to his name.

What's his name? He's got a whole bunch of them. El Shaddai the powerful one El Rofay the healer on and on and on all kinds of Old Testament names but the name that is above every name is the name Yahweh Y-A-H-W-E-H sometimes rendered Jehovah Yahweh and Yahweh according to Exodus 3 means I am who I am now Hebrew doesn't have any tenses so I am who I am can also be translated I was who I was and I will be who I will be but not in a philosophical sense I've heard sermons on the I am who I am where the preacher shifts voice and says God says I am who I am so don't ask who I am I mean that kind of feeling it's not a philosophical I am who I am but a Hebrew sense and it has this sense I am who I am with you and for you all that I am

I am with you and for you that's what Yahweh means or the way I like to put it my name is I give myself to you I will be your God you will be my people whatever it is that makes me be God I now place with you and for you I give myself to you that is my name father hallowed be thy name Jesus is saying the father will always honor his name he will never shame his name he has gone public with his name he's told the whole world his name in Jesus he has said I am there with you and for you I give myself to you and he does not want to hear a neighbor hear that one of his children went to him at night and asked something from him and was turned away even if he doesn't like us he's going to give it seriously because that's my name and

I will never let it be shamed well the whole Old Testament is built around this concept boot up now to the word name play that through the screen and you'll see all the places where the name comes up Moses understood this this is my favorite example in Exodus chapter 32 remember the Israelites are coming across from Egypt into the promised land across the wilderness I better stay there and they're being disobedient they're being real schmucks and God says to Moses I've had it with those people I'm just going to let them die out here in the desert remember how Moses prays in Exodus 34 climbs up the mountain and he says to Yahweh Yahweh if you do that what are the Egyptians going to think you went public with your name you said

I am there with you and for you if you destroy these people out in the wilderness the Egyptians are going to think you shamed your name God relents and for 40 years endures with those stubborn people giving them manna every day Samuel understood this 1 Samuel 12 22 great verse you can look at again 1 Samuel 12 22 it says for the sake of his great name Yahweh will not reject you for the sake of his great name Yahweh will not reject you you see God's commitment to his name translates into a commitment to us when he brings us into relationship with him when he places his name on us his commitment to his name means he's committed to us my friend John Piper puts it this way it was God's good pleasure to join you to himself in such a way that his name is at stake in your destiny his name is at stake in your destiny what happens to you reflects on his name

[26 : 52] I said I am there with you and for you I give myself to you and what happens to you will reflect on that Piper again God's good pleasure was to possess you in such a way that what becomes of you affects his name well that's security David understood this psalm after psalm psalm 25 verse 11 for your namesake oh Yahweh forgive my sin for it is great for your namesake I would have prayed it for my sake for my sake God forgive my sins no for your great namesake because his great name is I am there with you and for you I give myself to you and David was appealing to that it's in psalm 23 verse 3 he leads me in the paths of righteousness he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his namesake not for my sake

Yah Yah for my sake but principally for his because he said he would do it are you with me this is wonderful assurance in prayer yes the father loves us and I'll do that in the next two weeks out of another parable the father loves us the love of the father is scandalously wonderful it's bigger than any of us have ever known but even if the father did not love us the father has an idea on he has avoidance of shame you can count on it God always hallows his name now that explains the rest of Luke 11 notice verse 9 ask seek knock that's not a call to perseverance perseverance by the way is in Luke 18 so I'm not playing down perseverance but ask seek knock is not a call to perseverance I remember preaching sermons like that you know keep asking keep seeking keep knocking as though you're going to wear

God down that's not Jesus doesn't put it there to to wear God down Jesus says ask seek knock out of assurance ask seek knock because every time you ask and every time you seek and every time you knock something is going to happen ask seek and knock are in the present tense in the Greek which means you have to render it keep asking keep seeking keep knocking why not because you need to be persistence but because of verse 10 which says receive and find receive and find are in the present tense also receiving and finding so you translate those two verses together this way the one who keeps on asking is receiving the one who keeps on seeking is finding to the one who keeps on knocking the door is being open something always happens when we go to the father is what Jesus is saying what happens what's the something that will always happen mother Teresa answers it best we will be expanding our capacity to receive expanding our capacity to receive what to receive God thus verse 13 Jesus referenced to the Holy Spirit will not the father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him the Holy Spirit is the embodiment of the relationship between God the son and God the father the Holy Spirit is the embodiment of the love between the father and the son the Holy Spirit is the embodiment of the joy and the vitality and the dynamic between the father and the son the father and the son have told the world that they will gladly give the Holy Spirit to those who ask and the father will never ever ever allow it to happen that someone goes and asks for more of him and is turned away can you imagine can you imagine me going to God the father and saying God I want more of you and hearing from the throne of heaven go away never never even if he is angry with me he has an idea and he blew that real big he has avoidance of shame and he will give me as much of himself as I need this is that good news even if he doesn't like me at the moment if I come and say father this depression over my leg is not fun

[32 : 34] I need you to give me your joy he hasn't turned me down once in 35 days because he said this is my name I give myself to you and he doesn't want any of you to find out that he turned me down what do you need from God this morning what do you need wisdom power experiencing his love maybe you've never even really ever experienced God inside you he wants to fill you maybe you want a fresh and filling of the Holy Spirit ask just ask ask just ask just ask just ask just ask just ask just ask just ask just ask