

Ask. Seek. Knock.

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[0 : 00] Alright, if you have your Bible with you, you can open it up to the Gospel of Luke. We're in chapter 11. Two weeks ago we started this chapter.

The first four verses are Jesus teaching his disciples how to pray. Let me just read the first verse of chapter 11 again for us. One day Jesus was praying in a certain place.

When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.

And then what follows is the Lord's Prayer. And we talked about the prayer and how we can use it as a guide in our own prayers.

And we looked at each of the lines of the prayer. But now we come to verse 5. Then Jesus said to them, and Jesus tells his disciples a sort of parable just on the heels of this.

[1 : 07] This is all kind of happening on one occasion, in one moment. He teaches them the Lord's Prayer and then he gives them this sort of parable in verses 5 to 8.

Then Jesus said to them, Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, Friend, lend me three loaves of bread.

A friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him. And suppose the one inside answers, Don't bother me.

The door is already locked and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything. I tell you, Even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, Yet because of your shameful audacity, He will surely get up And give you as much as you need.

Now, I'm calling this a sort of parable, Because it's not quite like many of Jesus' other parables. It starts with this hypothetical situation.

[2 : 18] Suppose you have a friend, And you go to him and you say, And suppose the one inside answers. If we go with an even more literal translation of this, We discover that Jesus gives this whole scenario actually in the form of a question.

Another good translation puts it this way, Which of you has a friend, And will go to him at midnight and say to him? So it's a hypothetical situation, But it's directed right at the disciples.

I like the way one commentator put it. It's as though Jesus is saying, Which of you has the nerve To wake up the neighbor And his family At midnight for bread?

And so Jesus really personalizes it. He's looking into the disciples' eyes As he asks them this.

Would you do that To a friend of yours? What if it was a really good cause?

Already Jesus has got us thinking. Now let's look at this hypothetical situation. What are the key details here? First, we notice the relationship between you and the other guy.

[3 : 36] Friends. Suppose you have a friend. And you say to him, Friend. Friend. Next, let's think about the request. The request is for three loaves of bread.

How many of you have ever gone over to the neighbor's house To ask for an ingredient that you are missing? It's critical to have it. Or else the whole process is ruined.

We do that sometimes. But then here's the critical detail. Would you go to your friend's house at midnight? And make a request like this?

The timing of this request Is really what makes for the tension In this whole interaction. When's the last time that you went to a friend's house In the middle of the night?

To ask for something that you needed? We all kind of just know, don't we? That that's something you shouldn't do. I mean, your friend and his family could be sleeping.

[4 : 42] Maybe you've had that situation before Where you're sort of passing by a friend's house And it's late in the evening And you don't know if they're still awake But you kind of peer in the window To see if the lights are still on Or if they're awake in their living room And maybe if they are,

you might Stop in and say hi But even then, it's not usually midnight.

By that time Most people are in bed Most nights of the week And so you wouldn't just go over there And start knocking on the door Unless It was an emergency Well, in the scenario that Jesus gives It doesn't really seem like an emergency Especially Not to us Verse 6 A friend of mine on a journey has come to me And I have no food to offer him So it seems that we've got some unexpected company Just arrived from a long journey And there's some important context That we need to remember here I mean, Jesus tells this story Over 2,000 years ago So They didn't have cell phones back then They couldn't just text or call An hour before they arrive They didn't have vehicles back then Much of the travel was on foot

People would spend entire days Just walking on the road To get where they needed to go And by the end of the day They were truly quite exhausted Hungry And tired This was all before the days of electricity And the light bulb Travel at night was more dangerous Because of bandits and thieves So you tried to get as far as you could in a day And you didn't know exactly How far you'd get each day You couldn't just tell your friend by mail Weeks in advance Yeah, I'll be there on that day You tried to get there before sundown Because at night Everything just shut down And went dark And of course This is before the days of Superstore And Tim Hortons being open 24 hours a day And so we kind of feel the plight of this host He says I have no food to offer him They also didn't have fridges and freezers back then

Packed with all the goodies that they bought at Costco Their homes were small By the end of the day As a family You could quite conceivably Have almost nothing left on the shelf The bread basket be empty And it's midnight There is no other way To get food The only way Is to go Knocking On the door Of the neighbor And then on top of all of that We should know that in this culture Hospitality Was deeply valued Providing for the needs of others Was extremely important Our culture has kind of lost some of that today I mean we scarcely Go over to each other's houses for dinner anymore Many look at those in need of hospitality And think You know That's not my problem And so with those things in mind

Maybe we can A little more appreciate the dilemma Posed by Jesus' question It's kind of a no-win situation You have to either let this friend go hungry After a long day of travel Which is a deep disappointment to him Or you have to disturb another friend of yours In the middle of the night And possibly his whole family To get some bread Either way One of your friends Is going to be Feeling irritable And so what would you do?

[8 : 45] And then To make matters worse Jesus adds on To the hypothetical situation You go over You knock on the door But things Don't go How you hope Verse 7 And suppose the one inside Answers Don't bother me The door's already locked And my children and I are in bed I can't get up and give you anything Well that's not the response That you were hoping for Again we need to remember A little bit of what things were like Back then People lived in small houses If you were poor It was just a one room house And in the Middle East Where the climate is different Of course they were far less worried About insulation And heat loss And triple pane windows And weather stripping On every crack of the door So a man knocking at the door Could quite easily wake up

Everyone in the house And the conversation Really could be had From the guy in his bed To the guy just outside the door In these small and simple homes It was common for family To sleep all together On mats On the floor If you've ever Stayed with your family In a hotel room And had someone come Knock on the door After lights are already out And everybody is asleep That's maybe a similar feeling You know Even getting up To go to the door Could disturb everybody else Not only that But this guy wants me To go and find something For him In my house In the dark And rummaging around Am I going to have to Light up a little lantern To see I'm probably going to Wake the whole family So the word Bother Really does capture it

Don't bother me And maybe If you're like me You can almost hear The words of an exhausted parent At the end of the day here My children and I Are in bed I finally got them all Wrangled into their beds They're asleep now The last thing I want to do Is wake them all up Banging around in the kitchen I can't Give you Anything Go away So we've got a friend Who's somewhat desperate For some bread And we've got a grumpy parent Who has just been woken up By a knock on the door And he isn't willing To get out of bed And yet the last words Of this story Are somewhat surprising Verse 8 Jesus says I tell you Even though he will not Get up and give you The bread Because of friendship Yet because of your Shameless audacity He will surely get up

And give you as much As you need So at the end of all this Jesus says that the man Asking for the bread Is going to get it Not because They're friends But because of the asker's Shameless audacity Now we have to stop And talk about that Phrase or that word For a minute here It's actually apparently A difficult word To translate It's used only once In the whole Bible Some translations say Persistence But the way the word Was often used In the time that this Was written It had this element Of being shameless It meant not caring About what is proper Or about the good Opinion of others To be described With this word Was usually a negative Thing It meant that you Were rude Or inconsiderate And there might Have even been Almost an element Of sort of Boldness Or persistence To it as well And that's where This parable starts To maybe get A little bit confusing We're kind of Left wondering What's the main Point of this here Was the man Doing the right thing Waking up His friend And possibly His friend's Whole family To get this bread For his guest Was he justified In disturbing them To get what he Needed For his company Is persistence Really the point Here Maybe you've heard This parable That Jesus tells In Luke 18 The parable Of the persistent Widow Which is similar To this one That one certainly Is about being Persistent And continuing To pray But in this parable There's not really That repetition That keeping on

[13:49] Knocking or asking He's kind of Initially refused But then The guy gives him What he Wants soon after Kent Hughes A preacher And pastor In his sermon On this passage He said Shamelessness Generally does not Describe a good Quality But it can be Bad or good Depending on The circumstances If there are Good reasons To feel shame Shamelessness Is a bad thing But if one's Cause is good Shameless Insistence Is good Hughes suggests That because Hospitality was So deeply Valued in their Culture It was truly A noble And worthy Reason to Shamelessly Knock on the Door Of his friend At midnight Asking for Bread He wasn't

Doing it Just for Himself He was Doing this For another Who was in Need He was doing Something that Ordinarily you Would feel Ashamed of But he had a Noble reason There are some Moments in life Where we ought To be Shameless And of course Jesus is not Saying that Sometimes it's Appropriate to Sin Rather he's Commending this Man for Shamelessly doing What was Considered wrong Or what would Have been Frowned upon He sort of Risked his Friendship Going against What was Proper To help Provide for Someone's Need And I think There does seem To be a sort Of courage Or boldness Required here You have to Be willing Sometimes to Offend Or disrupt Or disturb In order to Do the right Thing And it would

Seem that the Man in his Bed Recognized that Too He recognized That his Friend was Doing the Wrong thing Of knocking On his Door at That time But for The right Reason And so he Decides to Get up After all And give Him what He asked For as Much as He needed But maybe What's kind Of perplexing About this Parable Is What's the Meaning of It What are we To learn From it Look at What follows This parable Jesus goes On in Verse 9 He says So I say To you Ask And it Will be Given to You Seek And you Will find Knock And the Door Will be Open to You For everyone Who asks Receives The one Who seeks Finds And to The one Who Knocks The door Will be Opened Jesus continues

He says Which of You fathers If your Son asks For a Fish Will give Him a Snake Instead Or if He asks For an Egg Will give Him a Scorpion If you Then Though you Are evil Know how To give Good gifts To your Children How much More will Your father In heaven Give the Holy spirit To those Who ask Him So how Does that Fit with This parable That we Have just Heard We're kind Of used To deciphering The parables Of Jesus By figuring Out who The characters In the Parable Represent So by Now we've Probably all Figured out That this Parable is Not about Ethics Really Or about Hospitality Or about Just being Bold and Doing the Right thing This parable Is about Prayer That's what

Jesus was Talking about Before it And that's What he Continues to Say After it The man Asking for Bread Is an Example Of how We should Ask God For our Daily bread But then Comes the Question Are we To liken God To a Grumpy Man Just woken Up from His sleep Who is Reluctant To give Us Anything Unless We have The shameless Audacity To knock On the Door That's Where This Gets Perplexing We Wonder Why Did Jesus Say It Like That Not Only That But Jesus Very Clearly In Verses 11 To 13 As We Just Read Cast God In A Very Different Light He Casts Him In The Light Of Being Our Heavenly Father Who Is Good And Loves To give Good Gifts To His Children When They Ask And So What's Going On Here

[18:54] Well Jesus Is A Masterful Teacher And When You're Teaching Someone Your Goal Is Not Just To Say The True Things That's Part Of It But Your Goal Is Also To Get People Thinking

About What Is True And I Think That's Part Of The Purpose Of This Little Parable He's Still Talking About Prayer He Just Taught Them To Say Father Give Us Our Daily Bread And Now What's This Parable About It's About Asking For Bread!

Jesus Is Telling Us Through The Parable How We Should Ask But He's Also Throwing This Twist Into The Story On Purpose Because The Person Being Asked For Bread Is This Grumpy Man Just Woken Up From His Slumber Who's Reluctant To Give Anything Yet Does So Because Well I Have To It's The Right Thing To Do It'll Get That Guy To Leave Me Alone And Besides It Is A Good Cause And So I Think The Point Here Is To Get Us Thinking Is That How God Is When We Come To Him With Our Requests Is He Like That Grumpy Man Just Woken Up From His Slumber Reluctant To Give Us Anything But He Does Because He Kind Of Has To Because It's The Right Thing To Do Well God According To

Jesus In These Next Verses Is Exactly The Opposite Of That And So This Parable Really Does Two Things First It Encourages Us To Come To God Shamelessly With Our Requests With Boldness At Any Time And Second This Parable Gives Us This Sort Of Clever Contrast To Help Us Realize That God Is Not Inconvenienced By Our Requests He Is Not Disturbed By Our Asking And He's Not Reluctant And Barely Willing To Give Us The Things That We Ask For Ourselves Or For Others Sometimes We Get It Into Our Hearts And Minds That God Doesn't Really Want To Answer Our Prayers That He's Reluctant That He's Begrudging To Give Us What We're Asking For We Get It In Our

Minds This Idea That God Is Stingy That He Has Everything That We Need But He My My If even the grumpy man just woken up from his sleep, who's reluctant to give anything, will still get up and give the bread asked for, how much more will God, our Heavenly Father, who is not grumpy and who never sleeps or slumbers, how much more will He be willing to provide each day's needed bread when we ask?

We get a similar sort of logic when we come to verses 11 to 13. Another statement of the sort of lesser to the greater.

[22 : 49] He says, which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

Of course, the answer is nobody would do that. If you then, says Jesus, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Jesus basically is saying that even sinful, even evil men give good gifts to their children when their children ask of them. And so how much more then will God, who is not evil but good, who is generous, who is gracious, how much more will He give us the things that we ask for, that we need? Again, I think Jesus is challenging this lie that we sometimes embrace. We embrace the idea that God is just like us. That He is like sinful men.

That He is sometimes cruel. That He is reluctant to give when we ask. And maybe even that sometimes He gives us bad things instead of good things.

[24 : 09] Either to teach us a lesson or to just get us off His back. But no, says Jesus, your Heavenly Father is not evil like you.

I sort of chuckle every time I read this. Jesus just called His disciples evil. He says, if you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children.

And just as a side note, Jesus never minimizes our sinfulness. We are not all basically good. We are all evil.

We are all sinners. He speaks the truth. But that's not His main point. His main point is that your Heavenly Father is not like you. He is truly good.

God is not like you. How much more then will He give to you generously the good things that you ask for? And even more, God will give you His own Spirit.

[25 : 16] The Holy Spirit. If you ask Him. And so God is not just good and kind, but He is exceedingly generous.

As we read 13, we might think it odd that Jesus just sort of ends with this statement about the Holy Spirit. There's another occasion where Jesus taught using similar words.

We hear it in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 7, verse 11. There He says, That happened earlier.

That was a different moment when Jesus said that. That was the first time we hear that from Jesus' lips. But then here on this later occasion in Luke 11, with His disciples, Jesus changes the teaching slightly and He takes out the word good things and He puts in Holy Spirit.

He says, How much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Instead of just repeating what He said the first time, Jesus just sort of fills in the blank with one of God's greatest gifts ever.

[26 : 37] And He goes right to the top. He is willing, He is eager to give His own Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

This shows us just how not stingy God is. Just how generous He is. It shows us how lavish and gracious He is.

He wants to go far beyond the giving of our daily bread. He desires to give Himself to us. His own Spirit to live in us and with us.

He is not only good, He is not only kind, He is exceedingly gracious and generous. And if you think about it, if He is willing to give us His own Holy Spirit, would He withhold the little things in life that we ask for?

The things that we need. And so what's Jesus' point in all this? How does He want us to respond? Well, Jesus, this is one of my favorite passages for this, He tells us His main point, gives it to us as clear as day in verses 9 and 10.

[28 : 03] So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks, receives. The one who seeks, finds. And to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

This is His main point. This is to be our response. Ask your Heavenly Father, and it will be given to you. Just like the man in the parable who came to ask for bread, come, knock on the door of your Heavenly Father when you are in need.

Come with boldness. Come shamelessly. He will open the door to you. Because He's not some grumpy man who's just woken up from His slumber and is reluctant to give anything.

And only does so because He has to. Ask, and it will be given to you. Because He's not like us. He is a good and exceedingly generous Father.

[29 : 16] He's willing to give us His very self, His own spirit. And so ask, and expect to receive. For everyone who asks, receives.

Said Jesus. One of the things that we often do, and they did it in the Bible times as well, when we really want to drive a point home to people, we repeat ourselves.

We say it twice. Maybe even three times. Well here, Jesus says it six times in a row. I mean, think about that. It's the same thing.

Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. He who seeks, finds.

And to him who knocks, the door will be opened. He says six times. We can't miss it. We should not be timid or afraid to come to God each day and just ask for the things that we need.

[30 : 23] To ask for forgiveness of our sins. To ask for Him to lead us not into temptation. We have such a strong invitation from Him to do this.

Even to knock on His door at any time. Even in the middle of the night. If you're here this morning and you're not a follower of Jesus, the first things to ask for are these things that Jesus has been talking about.

Look up to back back up to verse four. Here's one of the first things we ask God for as we start our relationship with Him. Forgive us our sins.

And He does. He is merciful. He is eager to forgive us. And then by the time we get to the end of this teaching from Jesus, ask and He will give you the Holy Spirit.

one of the greatest gifts of all. Have you asked Him for His Holy Spirit? We read about this in other places in the Bible.

[31 : 39] God is eager to put His own Spirit in you. He is eager to live with you. And the Bible tells us and it's true we could give testimony to it this morning.

your life will be changed forever. For the better. Ask God for His Holy Spirit.

He delights to give Himself to those who ask. Many of you here are already children of God. You've done this. You have received Jesus.

You've believed in His name. The Spirit lives in you. And so if that's you this morning I want to just encourage you. Let these words of Jesus stir you to ask and to ask more and to keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking on God's door for everything and anything in life. there is a promise here for us and the promise is that He will open the door.

[32 : 55] He will give. It's in our nature to try and do it all ourselves. We're all sinners and so we all try to be independent from God.

but I wonder how many of the pressures and stresses in our lives would be alleviated if we simply threw up our hands and said Father I don't have what it takes.

I don't know how to handle this. Would you help me with this? Sometimes we just look at life through the lens of what we have.

How much is in the bank account? How close is the vehicle to another whopper of a maintenance bill? How impossible or difficult the relationship has been that's in front of us?

How challenging the job that we feel stuck with and we despair. we feel stressed we become anxious like the man in the story we have a big need in front of us but there's nothing to meet it with.

[34 : 21] I have no food to offer him. have you knocked on the door of your heavenly father and asked him to provide?

This is just a hypothetical example but you know maybe I'm thinking and worrying and anxious I need to save up forty thousand dollars for a new car and yet all along I can just take that request to the Lord.

Lord would you provide me with a new vehicle and he's he's already got a plan to give me a like new used one that only costs fifteen thousand bucks and the help that I need to save that up so that I have it just as the car comes for sale.

but meanwhile if I don't leave that request with him I'm carrying around the number the weight of forty thousand even though it will never be needed and God will supply.

How much of our stress and anxiety is us looking at life and fretting about what we don't have because we aren't trusting in what God has promised us to do for us when we knock on the door.

[35 : 46] Or maybe I'm worried about this difficult relationship in my life. Just doesn't seem to be getting better and I've asked God to do something about it to fix it and I've been worrying and I'm stressing.

If I could just talk to this person if I could just say this to them and say that but maybe God knows that even if that conversation were to happen right now today that underlying issue in the relationship would not be mended.

Maybe there's something greater that needs to happen yet in our hearts but also in theirs before things can be mended and maybe God is even as we've been asking actively working in their heart in their life and in ours.

to answer our prayers. Just because the answer hasn't come yet let's not stop waiting expectantly for it.

For everyone who asks receives. That's the promise. promise. Are we trusting in the Lord's promise when we pray?

[37 : 07] Are we waiting for the answers to our prayers? Be encouraged. God is good. He is exceedingly generous and he hasn't forgotten about the things that we have asked him for.

Lord Jesus I pray that you would work in us now.

That you would stir our hearts to a deeper trust in you. Take the burdens that we feel. The anxiety. The worries and the fears. Take them off our hearts.

you have all that we need. And we can face each day with a sense of rest because of that.

Thank you for this awesome invitation to come and ask for whatever we need. In your name we pray. Amen.