

The Friend At Midnight - Luke 11:5-10

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you, Josh and team. Did you enjoy that this morning church? It's good to be here, amen. It's good to be forgiven. Amen. Well, happy Labor Day to you. I am the token holiday preacher, so if there's a holiday, I'm usually up to preach. I think Scott already has me out for Christmas. Is that true? Yeah, I think so. Before we get into our study this morning, in two weeks, we start our discipleship groups, our Sunday morning discipleship at 9 a.m. We have four courses that we're offering this fall. I'll be doing a study on apologetics and I've got some others that will be helping me with that.

We've got a study in the book of Hebrews. We've got an Old Testament survey class for those that are ready to take it to the next level and do a little bit more reading and homework. Then we've also got a class for parents of preteens and teens. We've got different offerings. I hope that you'll take advantage of that time, not only to be equipped as a soldier, but because it's a way for you to get out of sitting next to one another and into some smaller groups where you're going to be yoking yourselves with others.

One of the things we're going to be doing this year in our groups, we're going to begin each class with a time of prayer, corporate prayer, 10 to 15 minutes just praying together.

That's actually shaped what I'm going to be preaching on this morning because if you didn't notice, Pastor Scott called in Audible when it was his turn to preach and picked a different parable. I figured if it's good for the goose, so we're going to be in Luke 11 verses 5.

It says to 10, but I'm going to sneak us down to 13 this morning. We're going to be looking at a different parable and hopefully it will encourage us, particularly in this area of prayer. One last thing before we dive in, we're also reading right now a biography on Johnny Cash. Greg Laurie did a biography on Johnny Cash. We're doing that for our Dead Theologian Society, our book club. We're going to meet on October 20th to discuss it. The intent behind this book is Johnny Cash with such a train wreck of a life in so many ways. He said, I hope that this book will be something that will encourage you and bless you and it might be something that you could pass on to someone who you think needs it. Frankly, I hope that you would give it to an unbelieving friend. We're here to make disciples. We're on mission and let's be about God's business. Go ahead and turn open to Luke 11. Let me pray for our time and then we will look at our study this morning together. Let's pray.

[3 : 3 0] Give ear to our words, O Lord, and consider our groaning. Give attention to the sound of our cry, our King and our God. For to you alone do we pray. O Lord, in the morning, you hear our voices. In the morning, we prepare a sacrifice for you and watch. Lord, we want to be an expectant people, a people that believe that our God hears us and responds. Father, would you increase our expectations this morning? Our zeal to talk to you, to pour out our hearts to you. Holy Spirit, would you do a work in each of our lives? We need spiritual work done this morning. We need your work. And so we submit ourselves to your words. Would you tell us something that we need to receive this morning? And might we respond with yes? We love you, Lord. We want to be a thankful people because we are a forgiven people. And so Jesus is to you that we praise, that we adore and that we pray. Would you speak to us now through your word this morning? And it's in your name alone, we say, Amen. Jesus began his ministry with 40 days of fasting and prayer. He ended his ministry by staying up all night in the garden and praying. When Jesus cleansed the leopard, he prayed. Before choosing the 12, he prayed. At the transfiguration, he prayed. At Lazarus tomb, he prayed. On the cross, he prayed. Often Jesus withdrew to lonely places in order to pray. Jesus was a man of prayer. And I would argue that we are most like our Savior when we pray as well. And so we have at four some opportunities. We have a prayer gathering every Sunday morning, 8am. There's a Saturday night one online. And as we move into this fall, we're going to begin a pattern of praying in

our smaller discipleship groups. And if I could just speak candidly, which I typically don't have a problem with, one of the things that I love about serving at 4th and serving with Scott is that he's a man of prayer. And that's iron sharpening for me. And it's a gift to our church. Well, I believe that today's parable is going to help us. It's going to help each one of us. I believe that there is a resource here to increase our zeal in prayer. And I believe that the Lord is going to help us today. I spent a week in this parable. I have been blessed. I needed this parable and the help that the Lord provides for us in the way of prayer. It's real. It's real. How many

of here want to grow in their prayer life? Raise your hand. How many feel like, man, I want to be better? Yeah. How many don't know, I'm not going to ask that question.

Yeah, all of us. Blaze Pascal in the 17th century, he said, he said this, he said, all of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone. And we are a distracted people. I'm a distracted man. And it's far easier to always have something going on, whether it be on your phone or in your ears. And we often squeeze God's ear, his heart out of the frontals of our mind. Well, Luke 11, little context here, Jesus is speaking to his disciples. He's just finished giving them a blueprint for how to pray. If you look at 11 versus one through four, and then he launches into a story on the subject.

So he gives them instruction. And then he's like, let me tell you a story. So let's, let's listen to it together versus five through eight. This parable is the friend at midnight. And I said to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him. And he will answer from within, do not bother me. It's exactly how he said it, by the way, the door is now shut and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend yet because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs. Hmm. You know, on the surface, this looks like a, like a fairly straightforward parable in terms of what it's telling us about prayer, right? Just be persistent. Just keep asking until God finally relents and answers. But I don't believe that's what Jesus is trying to teach us here, church. And I want us to be reminded that Jesus is a storyteller unlike any. He is the best. And if you recall what Kierkegaard said of the parables, that they are a form of indirect communication intended to deceive the here unto or into the truth.

Often the stories of Jesus shock us into truth and truth comes to us often not through the front door. Take for instance, in Luke 14, 26, where Jesus says, Hey, if anyone does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple. What? I mean, that is an arresting statement. Well, Jesus is doing something in similar fashion here. And for us to understand this parable correctly, we have to determine first is Jesus striving here to make a comparison or a contrast. And it will shape how we read and interpret the story. And I believe many wrongly view this story as a comparative parable. This is not a comparison parable. Jesus has a lot of those, right? Heaven is like a banquet, like a great banquet. The kingdom is like a growing seed. [11:52] It's like a mustard seed, as Eric preached last week. Those are comparison parables. This story is not like that. In fact, I believe that Jesus is making a massive contrast in this parable in order to revitalize our zeal and enjoyment in prayer. Well, let's dive in. Who are the characters that we meet here? We've got two friends. They are neighbors.

Let's assume we are to identify with the one who has the request. And I think that's probably a good thing for us to do since Jesus actually inserts us into the story. Look at verses 5 and 6 again. And he said to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves. For a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him. So here's the request. Friend number one goes to friend number two, his neighbor, and he asked him for some extra food due to some visitors that have shown up from out of town at his house. And essentially what's happening here is this friend is asking for help from his neighbor at the worst possible time. What time is it?

It's midnight. So worst time to ask for help. See, I think this is how children punished their parents for having them. You know that hour when you feel like as a parent you're off duty. It's like 1130 and your kid comes and says, hey, I really want to talk about something, dad. I'm just like, really? Really? Yeah. Are you sure? Yeah. Yeah. I'm off duty.

No. As a parent you're never off duty. Many of you have children that are no longer living in your home and you're not off duty. It never happens. Well, it's midnight. And what this actually tells us is that these guests that show up at this friend's house, they're unannounced.

You love unannounced visitors? Ladies, how many of you love when the doorbell rings and it's guests that you didn't invite over? And you know if you open the door, like the entire charade of you being neat and tidy is like, it's gone. Right? And you have a choice. Well, within this culture, folks, they often travel that night. Why? Because it's hot. And this is before the age of mass communication. So this is how it often went. It was often a surprise. So the question we have to ask, is this an important request? Is this an important request at this neighbor that we have for our other neighbor to come and borrow some food?

[15:22] Yes. This is a very important request because recall, this culture is not like ours. This is the me culture, the I culture, my truth, my way. I'm going to self-assualize. This culture is very different. It's driven by shame. It's driven by honor in a way that's not really true of our nation. And so in this day, if you didn't supply food or lodging to a guest, it would be a massive embarrassment. It would reflect poorly on you and quite possibly the surrounding community. And I think some of you have experienced this in other cultures.

Maybe you've taken a short-term trip somewhere and you've experienced hospitality in a way that you've never experienced here. You've been to a country where it was maybe impoverished and yet they put out a spread for you. And you were so embarrassed because you know how easy it is for you to afford food here in America and they're giving you a feast. And it's probably a feast that they have saved up for a number of days, maybe a month. Who knows? And it's their very best. And it's a way that they wouldn't eat normally. And that's the culture that we're dealing with here. But we don't understand that. We're a culture that's busy. We're a culture that's important. We need our me time. Our show is on. The ball game that we've been waiting an entire week is on. And yet the values here I think are in order, valuing people. Well, how does this sleeping friend, friend number two, respond to the, hey, hey, are you awake? Hey, how does he respond? Well, look at verse 1. And he will answer him from within. Do not bother me. The door is shut. And my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. So do you have the scene here?

And in this culture, homes would have been opened during the day. And folks would have experienced the community of the neighborhood. And when that short door is shut, like, it's like, don't bother them until it's daytime. And in these homes, they probably be very small one room, family sleeps in the same area together. And problem is if, if your neighbor wakes up to help you, what's going to happen? Everybody wakes up. The kids wake up. You know how this is, young moms or young dads, you get your kid down and then you're like trying to like quietly exit. Okay, they're asleep. And you're almost out and then you pull in the door and it's like, and you're like, no. Well, this neighbor doesn't want to have anything to do with his friend. He's like, you know what, baby's asleep, just leave, just sleep.

I mean, I, how many of you love your sleep? You love it. Don't lie. All of you, right? And if you're sleep deprived, it's awful. Young moms, some of you, I don't know why you're even here this morning. You're just like barely making it through. You're just like, I want sleep. I just want to sleep. And you have like no intention. I am not getting up for my friend. That's what you have going on here. I have to tell the story and it will relate or maybe not, but I'm still going to tell it. Because this is what goes through our mind.

Why are you bothering me? We had an occasion about a couple months ago where a tree fell on a power line and set our property on fire and it was midnight and there's a lot of like field grass. It's burning. I get the family up. I call 911 and then I tell Clara. I was like, Clara, call Dan, our neighbor. And I'm busy doing stuff and, and then she's like, how'd you get a hold of him? Like, I didn't think we had his number. I'm like, man, my daughter is so ingenious. She's so smart. Well, busily about 10 minutes go by and all of a sudden, like, you know, I mean, we've got the whole neighborhood up now, run around and then all of a sudden this little red convertible like speeds into my driveway and it's Dan and Melissa Iverson. And I'm like, why are they here? But they just show up and they're like, hey, we're here to help. I'm like, great, grab a shovel. They go off. Well, it turns out, my daughter called the wrong Dan. And I don't know why Dan was at my house at midnight, but he was there and it was like, great. I, I, and, and since then I've been able to like, what were you thinking, Dan? Because Clara, hey, uh, Melissa are fields on fire and my dad said he needs Dan's help. And I can just imagine it's midnight, Dan's in bed, he's tucked and I don't know how you sleep down. I imagine like silk, you know, pajamas and like a little mask on your head. And I just sort of imagined that's how, you know, and it's like, I can just imagine Melissa going, Hey, Jay's fields on fire and he needs your help. I'm just going to imagine dangling. What? I am not a fireman. I live 10 minutes

away. Why is he calling me? What am I going to do? And that's exactly kind of the conversation. [21 : 33] What am I going to do? But bless his heart. He's like, okay, there's a fire. It's midnight. Jay needs my help. I'm going to go help. So he shows up. Thank you, Dan. That's a friend right there. Um, but that's the kind of odd request this is like, what is going on? Why are you bothering me? Well, Dan got up, but this guy doesn't. Um, and so what does friend number two do then? What do you do? Well, let's see. Look at verse eight. I tell you, though, he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, but because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs. So friendship isn't enough to get this neighbor out of bed, right? Like friendship has its limits. And we all know that our friend calls us and Hey, can you help me move this weekend? No, I mean, friendship has its limits. We all know that. Only way you're getting me to help is if you incentivize somehow, right?

You going to feed me? Okay. Okay. What else is in it for me? You know, um, but this neighbor, this, this individual, us in this story, what do we do here? Our friends not helping. We up the pressure. How do you interpret what's going on here? How do we interpret what's taking place? Um, what does it mean to be impudent? Like some understand what's going on here as this man is just being persistent with his request as though that's a good thing.

Just be persistent, keep asking, keep asking, you know, and it's like, if you just keep, you know, bugging your friend, he'll, he'll answer, but, but that's not the word impudence here. Like this is not a good thing because this word, in fact, it's a negative word.

It actually means shamelessness. It's a negative term. And we can't look at other uses of this term in the Bible because this is the only time that it is used in the Bible. So commentators, theologians have had a challenge on this passage over the centuries. How do we interpret this?

Is that a good thing? Is it a bad thing? And I'm proposing to us that it is actually a bad thing based upon the record of how this word is used in ancient literature. In the first four centuries, there's a catalog of this word being used 258 times. In every sense, the term is used negatively. And what it really means is a definition, a lack of sensitivity to what is proper. Josephus used it to describe people during the Roman siege of Jerusalem who had to eat leather and withered grass saying, but why tell of this shameless resort impudence to eat articles of food induced by famine, inanimate articles of food induced by famine? And then Josephus goes on to talk about a mom actually having to eat her young, which is unthinkable. This is a negative term. And so what do we have going on here? This isn't persistence. We have friend number one essentially doing what they're making a scene.

[25 : 19] They're throwing a fit. This is rude behavior. It's bad behavior because this individual is so desperate. The cultural imperatives of their day are driving them to this to creating a ruckus in order to get what they want. And it works. It's like a child who sits down in the grocery store until the parent purchases the right cereal or whatever it happens to be. That's what friend number one is doing. That's what you're doing. Your friend number one. Now, as we consider this parable, then we have really two options of how to interpret the story. Is it a comparison? Or is it a contrast? Let's first consider it hypothetically as a comparison parable for a moment. If this is how we are to approach God and how God responds in prayer, then what truth do we walk away with? Well, the truth we walk away with is keep bugging God until He finally says yes. And if you beg hard enough in prayer, if you negotiate, use the right words, enough emotion, if you throw a fit, then you'll get

God's attention. See, in this parable, is friend number two interested in meeting the needs of friend number one? No. See, God's not really interested in answering your prayers.

You have to convince him that you really want it. Sometimes you have to guilt him into it because he's so reluctant to respond. And that's really a horrible view of prayer, isn't it? Like the Bob Wiley approach to prayer. You've seen that film, What About Bob? Who's just, if you haven't, that's your homework this weekend. No, your pastor's not telling you to watch a movie. I did, but don't. And this character is just annoying. I need, I need, I need, I need, and he needs the help of this psychologist, Richard Dreyfus, who then becomes a very ugly picture of God, who just finally relents. Fine, fine. But I don't think that's what this parable is teaching us. See, I think this is a contrast parable, which is our second option. And I think that's actually the way that we're to take this parable, that God is unlike this sleepy friend. This hesitant friend doesn't want to help. And

I, I believe that this is the correct interpretation because we have an indication of this at the end of this section in verse 13. There's some things that are revealed about God prior to 13. And I don't know why necessarily Jesus does it this way, but he, he like shares this parable. It's like a

cliffhanger. And he doesn't give the answer really until finally 13, where he gives us a phrase that gives us a hint as to how we're all were to interpret this, this story in verse 13, he says this, if you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father, the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? And I want us to focus on this phrase, how much more? This is our argument from the lesser to the greater. God is much better than the character that he is being contrasted with. Of course, in 13, it's he's being compared to earthly father, but it, it ties in contextually with this entire section and with this parable. God is better than the character he's being contrasted with. It doesn't require us begging, throwing a fit for him to respond. In fact, if even a sleepy neighbor will respond to a rude friend, how much more will God respond when we simply ask? That's the point. Have confidence that he hears you the first time you ask. See, I believe this parable destroys our biggest deterrent to prayer, which is this false idea that God is not listening. He's not really listening.

What you're doing is just a mental exercise. In fact, the object of prayer doesn't matter, it's just the act of catharsis. And yet what Jesus is saying, no, no, no, I am, I'm going to answer a request better than anyone. This challenges this notion that God's not listening, that the prayer is bogus, that we just pray and it hits the ceiling and that's it. And then we kind of lose steam like why am I praying? Ask, ask. God loves us to ask him for things.

[31 : 11] He loves when we ask him for help. And Jesus, when he taught us to pray, there's a guiding principle here. So don't take this and go, man, I know the car I'm going to ask him for when Jay closes the service. No, here's your guiding principle. Make God-centered, God-glorifying requests. Make Gospel-centered joy spreading requests. Jesus says in Luke 11, 2, and he said to them, when you pray, say, Father, how would it be your name? Your kingdom come.

How would it be your name? You know that God is referred to in James 117 as the giver of all good gifts? The father of lights. Why is he called the father of lights? Because those are just general graces that he's given to everyone, whether you love them or not.

You got the sun, you got the moon, the stars. Everybody on planet earth receives those gifts. He's the father of lights. Some of, we love those gifts. I mean, the sun was a little bit hot this summer, but we still love it. How would be your name? You are the gift giver.

God is the gift giver, and he loves when we thank him. He loves that. Don't call creation mother nature. Don't do it. It's an offense to God. It's his creation. It's his stuff.

This parable is not teaching us persistence in prayer. It's teaching us faith in prayer. It's calling us not to beg in prayer, but it's calling us to boldness in prayer. And I'm not saying that you don't need to be persistent, but that's not the lesson from this parable.

[33 : 13] Ask. God loves it when we ask. So this parable is about confidence in a God that actually answers prayer. And I believe that this parable is an invitation to us, an invitation to a lifestyle of prayer enjoyment. And I want us to erase for a moment that we have heard this passage of Scripture, and I want you to now listen with knowledge that God is not a begrudging friend asleep with his door bolted. Listen to what he says in verses 9 and 10.

Luke 11, 9 and 10, he says, And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and the one who knocks, it will be opened. Friends, God does not need to be coerced to answer any prayers. In fact, he loves to answer prayers. Did you know that?

I was thinking to myself this week, what are some things that I love? Like in the course of the day, what are some things that Jay loves? I kind of create a list, I'm not going to share all of them, but a few of the things on that list that made the list. It was like, man, I love a quiet morning with a hot cup of coffee. Bible, gravity chair, little sunshine, not the best. It's good. I love sitting on my tractor and moving dirt. Even if I don't need to move it, I just want to scoop up a bunch of dirt and move it somewhere. I just love that. I love hearing my family laugh. Every family member has a distinct laugh, and I love hearing them laugh. Caleb and Samara, I think the first time we heard Caleb laugh, it was like, that's a good laugh. You got a good laugh, brother. Yeah. I love that. Do you understand what's on the top of God's list each day? You know what he loves? He loves to answer your prayers. He loves to hear from his kids. He delights in that. He is so unlike any of us. You don't have to convince him, cajole him, beg him, get all emotional so that he sees that you really mean it. He knows your heart. He loves to answer your prayers. And what's so great about this parable, God, Jesus, he then reveals, hey, I'm like your dad. Look at verses 11 and 12. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, he will instead, will instead of a fish give him a serpent, or if he asks

for an egg, will give him a scorpion. Now, some of us, I think, have a rather skewed view of God, as though he's always angry with us. And we have somehow never measured up. And that's actually true.

Not that he's always angry with us, but you haven't measured up. I haven't measured up. Even Pastor Scott has not measured up. That's why we took communion. See, Christ measured up. So that, that we don't need to take that job. Christ did it for us. In fact, and God's anger is not directed at us. Where did God direct his anger? The full wrath of the father was directed upon who? Not you, his son. Really? Yeah, that's why it's so good to be in Christ.

[37 : 46] Amen. That's why it's so good to be in Christ. Amen. It's so good to be forgiven. See, God is not about giving us a snake if we ask for a fish or a scorpion if we ask for an egg, right? God's not like handing you a sandwich and then hiding a bunch of nails in it to see, oh, I'm going to trick this. I'm going to trick them. God's best. It doesn't always align, I think, with what we envision as our best. I mean, it didn't for Paul. He gave me this thorn. I've asked three times, you said no, then you said no, then you said no, and I was like, okay, he means it. But God responds and God will act what is in best interest for his bride. He's our father. Let me ask dads here. How many of you love to provide for your families? You like, yeah, I mean, okay, because like, I think your families are looking at you right now. I just, I kind of made an awkward moment and I'm sorry. Privately in your heart, think about this, man, how many you love? You love to provide for your families. You love to provide for your kids. And you even love to give them more than what they need. Dads love to do this. That's what's in a dad's heart. I'm a gift giver. All right.

My kids are all wearing hand-me-downs, but you know what I bought them for Christmas one year? A baby grand piano. Yeah, we're eating top ramen, but man, we got a baby grand piano. Come on, give it up for dad. So, he was like, oh, I just want to bless them with this extravagant thing. I mean, since then I sold it, but you know, they had it for a little bit. Well, I traded it in for a smaller, but that's what dads love. That's what's in our heart and that's what's in the heart of God for you, his kid. So, believe that God is Father. He's Father. So, ask him. You know what God also loves to do as Father? He loves to carry the heavy luggage in life. He loves that. He delights in that. He tells us to do that, to give it to him. 1 Peter 5. Do we have that verse? 6 and 7 says, humble yourselves, which is what prayer is. Okay, okay, I don't have it. I'll ask, right? Like, fine, I'll ask God. I can't do this on my own. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Cast. Cast your anxieties upon the Lord. What does it mean to cast? This word is used twice in the New Testament.

It's also used in Luke 19, which Bible is always a good place to go when you're trying to understand the Bible. And it says here, and they brought it to Jesus and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they said, Jesus on it. Throwing, cast, that's the same word. Okay? Epi, rippedo.

Okay? Epi upon, rippedo to throw to hurl. So this word, it's very cool. And you'll remember it because think of a baseball letter, rippedo, right? You're hurling this thing. And what does it mean to cast burdens on Jesus? Well, it's like you're taking in here, it's like taking blankets and you're putting them on a beast of burden. So that this beast of burden can carry those. So you put whatever you have and you, and you, you hurl it upon the one that can handle it. Yesterday, I spent a little bit of time unloading our vehicle with 30, I bought 30 bags of mulch at Home Depot. Like they only had, I don't know, I was like, how many can I fit in the car? I was kind of a test of like, how many can I squeeze? And so I was like, okay, I bet I could do 30. And I fit them. It was pretty, pretty cool. I mean, I was scraping. But I get home and I'm like, I'm just gonna put them, I'm gonna put them just down by the garden. Julie's in the garden. She's like, well, actually, can you put them here? Like, I can put them there. But to put them there, I had to take them and hurl them over the fence, like the deer, you know, prison fence, and, and get them over into the garden. That's what I did. Because I'm a dad. And I provide. And so I was a sweaty mess by the, by the end of it, but I hurled these bags of mulch into the garden. And I just want us to imagine for a moment, if I decided, you know what, I'm going to pick up two of those bags, and I'm just going to go about the rest of my day. Oh, this is feeling really good. Walking around with a couple bags of mulch. Now it's getting kind of heavy. Well, that's this picture, church. Some of you are doing that every day. You're walking around with these two bags of mulch and Cossain, I want to provide. I want to carry that. Would you hurl that on to my back? It's like on the to the beast of burden. So you don't have to, you don't have to carry them. And here's what's amazing. You're only really helpful about what 12 hours

a day. Because the rest of it, you're sleeping what I mean, well, you're not sleeping 12 hours, but break it down however you want. Regardless, God doesn't sleep. He's always at work. And so when we, when we talk to him and we give him our burdens, it's not, it's not a mental gymnastic we're doing. Right, saying God, I'm, I'm struggling here. We don't have finances for this, or there's a health need going on, or there's a massive break in my relationship with one of my kids, or, and I need your help, help. Trust that God is going to help that he's doing things behind the scenes. And he does scripture. We have all these stories, you know, oh, look at that. There's a ram in the thicket. Oh, Jehovah Jireh, things were happening behind the scenes. And God is at work.

[44 : 51] And he loves to answer those requests. And maybe this morning, you're still here going, I'm kind of a doubter. I know, Jay, you're kind of trying to amp us up to pray more, but I'm still struggling. And I would suggest this morning, if you're struggling on this front, often what we need is a friend. And I would suggest you find a brother, sister, who you know, praise and spend some time together and pray with them and let them encourage you in prayer. And I think one of the huge graces of fourth is that we actually have people here that pray. I know it sounds kind of odd, doesn't it? Like I'm saying something that should be like in church, people should be prayers. But I don't know that every church has people that actually pray and believe it. But we have folks here that do that that do pray, and they do believe that God answers. And I know personally that God is a prayer answering God. I know this. We spent three years, Julie and myself praying for Caleb and Samara before we even knew them. And I don't know why the Lord had us pray for three years. It wasn't this begging, conjoling. It was like, as, as the Lord brought the burden, we prayed. And I would say, okay, I got to know as the

Lord brings the burden, pray about it. Right? Sort of like walking on like, you know, the edge of a creek, you're walking in, you notice a rock. Well, you take that rock, you pick it up, you talk to the Lord about it, and then you can put it back down. So prayer kind of works. As you see, as, as the Lord burdens you with something, okay, God, I'm going to talk to you about this and I'm just going to carry on. But I know that the Lord answered prayers. And I've told the story before. But the Lord answered in such a remarkable way. We were at the point where it's like, God, we're at our limit. We don't know what to do. We can't do anything. And in fact, we have taken us to the end of ourselves where, if you're going to bring the twins into our life, it's going to be from you. That's going to be all you, your credit, your glory, your story. And he did. Which is why I have the verse Psalm 126, three, like inked on my arm. I'll show you. I'm sorry, Pat, I know you hate my tattoos, but it's, it's, it's biblical. And it's in that herrick, which is what they speak in Ethiopia. And it says, the Lord has done great things for us. And we're glad. God answers prayer. God answers prayer, church. And if you're struggling, spend some time with those that pray. And like I said, I'm blessed and our staff is blessed because Scott knows how to pray. And he believes that the Lord hears. And it's a grace in my life and is a grace for our church. Lord, we love you. We're so thankful that you are compared to our father. But you're perfect. And you delight to hear from us. Or you are, you are unlike that begrudging neighbor. Even he was willing to respond to a rude friend.

But how much more will you respond to your kids when we ask? So Lord, let us approach you with confidence that you are ready to dispense mercy and grace and our time of need. And Lord, you go even beyond that. Father, if there's things that are on the hearts of your people this morning, and maybe it's a burden that they're carrying. Lord, would you remind them that you know?

[49 : 05] Maybe they're struggling because they want to be married or they need a job. Or they're struggling with health, discouragement, addiction. Father, would you refresh them in their confidence, in their courage to talk to you about these things? To ask for you to help. And Lord, as you speak, that we would be quick to respond, that we would not be lazy in terms of your conviction of spirit, but we would act as you direct. Lord, thank you that you are the one that is guiding our lives.

We're blessed. We're blessed. It's in your name, Jesus. Amen.