

The Open Door

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: 10 December 2006

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor

- [0 : 0 0] It would be good if you would keep your Bibles open to Matthew chapter 7 on page 6. We're looking at verses 7 through 12.
- And I would like to apologize in advance for all those who came in the expectation that our rector would preach on Noah's Ark this morning. Unfortunately, he really is just too sick and has been assigned to bed.
- So I've been asked to stand in his place. We're going to make a little excursion over to Matthew 7. And I'm calling this sermon, The Open Door. It's a very famous teaching from Jesus.
- Ask and it will be given you. Seek and you will find. And this wonderful teaching to us about the nature of our Heavenly Father who loves and cares for us.
- We gather in this season of preparation. We prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus amongst us. The Son of God taking human flesh. And today we celebrate baptism.
- [1 : 0 1] Three very important people being baptized into the Christian family. And it's always very encouraging when we gather as a Christian family to celebrate baptism.
- Because together we're marking the beginning of something wonderful. The beginning of something challenging and rewarding. The beginning formally of someone's walk in the Christian faith.
- And so today these families and Kevin supporters have come forward for baptism. And it is wonderful.
- We participate together. This is a service for the whole Christian family. We participate as a body together. Declarations are made. Promises are vowed.
- Including that which we make together. That we will support these families. That will support Kevin. In their Christian journeys. A journey that is going to stretch forth from this moment.
- [2 : 0 0] And which is going to have to be lived out. And developed. And cultivated. Every day. In their lives. As it does in ours. Our lives as Christians need to integrate the values of Jesus.
- The truth about God. All of which we need to walk out. Every day. Of our lives. And we need to grow in it. And for that to happen in our lives.
- There needs to be some very serious prioritizing and focusing. And wonderfully. Jesus lays out those priorities for us. And gives us this focus. In these words. Which are meant to deeply and marvelously encourage us all.
- I've just got two things I want to say to you. The first is the door is open. Ask. Seek. And knock. Very famous words there from verse 7. That we know very well.
- But do you hear how emphatic Jesus is? He says ask. And it will be given you. Seek. And you will find. Knock.
- [3 : 0 2] And the door will be opened. Everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks the door. Will be opened. Now Jesus is speaking to the crowd here.

To ordinary people. Who have been neglected by their spiritual leaders. Written off. Regarded as the bottom of the heap spiritually. With no hope. And it is to them.

That Jesus says. Ask. And it will be given you. Seek. And you will find. The door is open to you. He is talking about prayer.

He is talking about the whole of our Christian life together. And he is saying the door is open to you. The door is open. Ask. Seek. Knock.

There are present imperatives. These are things we are to continuously to do. So it is more than just about prayer. It is about our whole life in the kingdom of God. And to these ordinary people.

[4 : 01] Jesus is saying the door is open. And to all of us gathered here this morning. He says. The door is open. Ask. Seek.

Knock. Come on in. And receive. At the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness. For they will be filled. And in Jesus teaching on prayer.

He teaches us to pray. Our father in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Or again in his teaching on anxiety. Jesus antidote to worry.

Is to seek first his kingdom. And his righteousness. And all these things will be yours as well. I think we tend to focus on the. All these things will be yours as well part.

[4 : 56] And not always. The seek first his kingdom. And righteousness part. But you see what Jesus is opening up for us. Do you see what he is offering to us. It's life in the kingdom.

It's life lived in relationship with the living God. Speaking to the crowd. To a people who have been neglected by their spiritual leaders. Who have been told they have no worth. It is to them that Jesus says.

God is on the move. And you can be part of it. The door is open to you. To participate in God's plans and purposes for the world. God is working in human lives.

And he can work in yours too. So ask. Seek. Knock. The door is open. You don't have to pass an exam.

You don't have to make the right donation. Or wear the right clothes. You don't have to be the right person. The door is open. And the door my friends is open for you. And for me.

[5 : 56] For us to come before the living God with the whole of our lives. With all of our needs. With our beings. If you are not a Christian here today. These words are for you an invitation.

Come. Find. The door is open. It's for you. You see. We are meant to be a people who actively seek God.

Who focus our lives on him. Who call out to him. Cry out to him. Receive from him. The wonderful things he wants to give us. And the thing is.

If you are asking and seeking and knocking at the door. Then what does that say about where your focus is? Where is the focus of your life? Where is Jesus focusing our attention in this teaching?

He is focusing it on God. He is focusing it on the kingdom of God. The attention of our hearts needs to be upward directed. We need to be seeking him. And Jesus' wonderful promise.

[6 : 54] Is that if you seek him. You will find him. He is there. You know. I think much of the time. We live. We. In our lives. We actually expect God to be obsessed with us.

To be focused on us. Now Jesus isn't saying that our needs are not important. Actually he is saying God has infinitely more in store for you. Than you can possibly imagine.

Our society is in many ways obsessed with many things. Especially at this time of year. Isn't it? We are all rushing around. Very busily. I was at Costco. A couple of weeks ago. Getting ready for Christmas.

Because they were ready at Costco. And we kind of ate our way all around the place. I felt very sick afterwards. It's just this constant hum of busyness and going.

We need to be people who come before him. Daily. In constant prayer. The focus of our lives. Needs to be God. And the building of his kingdom. This is what Jesus has been telling us in these chapters.

[7 : 55] Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Let your kingdom come. Because it is there that we will find meaning.

It is there that we will be fulfilled. It is there that we will find purpose. Now it doesn't mean that we all have to go into full time Christian ministry.

And give up outside interests. There's nothing wrong with having lots of outside interests in our lives. Besides church. The other day my son said to me. When I grow up. I want to be a surgeon.

Or a man who picks up dinosaur bones. Or a warrior. So I said. A warrior? Why? And he said. Well because I'm so good at sword fighting. So I get to see him sword fighting his way through life.

My son has many interests in his life. He loves soccer. And he loves science. He loves languages. Unfortunately his English is kind of ropey. But well. He'll make. Work it out somehow. He skis like a devil.

[8 : 54] And loves Lego and trains. But my desire and prayer for him. Is that as he grows up. He does not see Sunday school. Which is for him. His main contact with church.

And then youth group. And being in the Christian body. As optional extras. To be balanced. Along with everything else. My prayer for him. Is that he will see his relationship with God.

And his relationships with God's people. To be the governing relationship. Around which he orients everything else. That he will orient his life around the living God.

Asking. Seeking. Knocking. And that's what Eli's and Liam's parents need to raise their children to do. That's what Kevin. You've got to do.

That's what we all have to do. Orient ourselves around the living God. Asking. Seeking. Knocking. Your kingdom come.

[9 : 54] Your will be done. See that is going to involve choices. That is going to involve decisions. For all of us. But you see when we begin to orient our lives that way.

When we have the living God as the focus. When we are living life in his kingdom. Then the choices and the decisions we make begin to look different. Our lives begin to look different. It was a terrible amount of worry in so many of our lives.

We set ourselves such high goals. And it begins with your grade point average. I remember being obsessed with my grade point average. And I was constantly working it out. And if I got a good mark on this test.

It would be this. And if I didn't do that. It's a terrible worry. Because if you don't get the right grade point average. You're not going to get in the right university. And your life is going to be ruined. And it's funny isn't it? As you get older and older.

Those goals just keep coming. The tensions are still there. The things we need to achieve. The stress. You might be living your life under great stress. You might be 16 and under stress.

[10 : 54] Or 36 or 56. Under terrible stress. Do you think that's how we're meant to live? Do you think Jesus wants that for us? But Jesus says ask.

Seek. Knock. Knock. Knock. Seek first his kingdom. And his righteousness. And all these things will be yours as well. That's got to be the disk operating system.

For all of our lives. We need to orient our lives around the kingdom of God. Because that is where God is. That is what God is doing. That is where we will all find fulfillment.

Purpose. And answered prayer. That is where God's purpose for your life will be accomplished. For Eli. For Liam.

For you Kevin. For all of us. It will be. It will be. But let us allow it to be so. You see.

[11 : 56] Jesus wants to free us. The door is open. So ask. God. God. But the second thing which follows on from that. Is that we have a father who loves us.

And this is just a wonderful teaching. That Jesus gives us. He's telling us that we have a heavenly father. Who cares for us. Who knows our needs. Who wants good for us.

It's a major theme. In this section of Matthew's gospel. The sermon on the mount. Jesus talks. There's 17 references. To God as father. In these chapters. He stresses to us.

That we have a heavenly father. Who loves us. Who knows our needs. And who is able to meet them. And Jesus encourages us. To be able to come to him.

To ask him to meet our needs. Both spiritual and physical. He said. When you pray. Go into your room. Close the door. And pray to your father who is unseen.

[12 : 52] And your father who knows what you need. Before you ask. Will meet your needs. Or give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins. And the emphasis in our passage this morning.

Is that we have a heavenly father. Who wants to give us good things. And look at the comparison Jesus makes. Between our earthly fathers. And our heavenly fathers.

He says. Or what man among you. Verse 9. If his son asks him for a bread. Will give him a stone. Or if he asks for a fish. Will give him a serpent. If you then who are evil. Know how to give good gifts.

To your children. How much more. Will your father who is in heaven. Give good things. To those who ask him. I mean look at his view of humanity here.

It's you who are evil. And of course that's right. Isn't it? I love my children very much. I love to take care of them. But I'm a sinful human being. And yet sinner though I am. There is this instinct.

[13 : 50] In all of us. Who are parents. To care for our children. To clothe them. To love them. To nurture them. To feed them. And the contrast of course. Is from the lesser to the greater.

If you who are sinful do all that. How much more. Is your heavenly father going to do? And the answer is. Infinitely more. He wants to take care of our lives.

He wants to take care of us. And he does so. With good things. What is your view of God? Do you see God as remote.

And uncaring? Do you feel that God has been fundamentally. Not interested in your life. And in your worries. Or your concerns. Do you see God as impassive.

As cold. But that is not the biblical view of God. And that is not what Jesus is teaching us. He is teaching us. That we have a heavenly father. Who cares for us. And wants to pour.

- [14 : 49] Good things into our lives. And I don't mean the prosperity gospel. By the way. That doesn't mean cars. And trips to Barbados. It means something infinitely more. Infinitely greater.
- But just as we all need to orient our lives. Around the kingdom of God. And be asking. And seeking. And knocking. So too. We need to grasp. This fundamental truth.
- For ourselves. It's really very simple. You need. To grasp this truth. For yourself. You need to let this truth.
- Penetrate into your heart. And what a difference. It makes to all of us. How we live our lives. How we live through the good times.
- And the bad times. When we know this. Do you know. Do you believe. In your heart. That you are being cared for.
- [15 : 49] By a heavenly father. See it is that love. That Eli and Liam. Need to be raised in. It is that love. That Kevin needs to stay in. It is that love.
- We all need to grow in. And do you see. How your life looks different. When you grasp. This truth. In your heart. It means that. You are not alone.
- That the universe. Is not hostile. And dark. It means that your life. Is not random. And purposeless. It means you are not. A victim of circumstances.
- You have a heavenly father. Who loves you. And wants good for you. So don't be afraid. Don't be stressed out. About everything. Let him bless you.
- Let him shape your life. Let him guide you. Because he loves you. And so as I conclude. Today we celebrated baptism.
- [16 : 51] We are preparing for the celebration of Christmas. And in all of these. We see a love. That reaches into our lives. To heal. And to save.
- In Jesus. The kingdom of God. The power of God almighty. Intersects with our lives. Touches us. And calls us to him.
- The awesome. Amazing. And wonderful thing. Is not only that God loves you. But that whoever you are. The door is open to you. If we will but ask.
- If we will but seek. He will be found. He will. Big imposible. Big ■■■■■.akers auld.■■ bowis■ ■■■■ to■■■■ where we tell you.
- Friends. Thank you. Let's go. God bless you. Tell to you. How are you going to be the best? I'll be the best. So, I'll, I'll talk to you. If you want to see now. God bless you. God bless you.
- [17 : 50] Father blue. God bless you. I'll■ I'll be back to you. God bless you. Father, I'll call you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.