

## Focus On Truth: The Power of Positioned Prayer

### Matthew 7:7-12

CIT: Jesus is teaching that his disciples should pray to the good father persistently and expectantly knowing that he only gives good gifts to those who are his.

CIS: Believers today should position themselves for prayer by being in relationship with the father.

Before we start, I would like everyone to bow with me. Raise your hand if you have something you are asking God for today. **\*\*Pray\*\***

Good morning church! It is an honor to be able to preach the word to you this morning! As you can probably tell, this morning may look a little different and maybe younger! Today is our youth takeover sunday! We are excited to give you a little glimpse into what is happening in our student ministry here at Northshore Church!

First off, if you don't know who I am, My name is Dallas Guidry. My wife and I have been coming to Northshore since March of this year after I was hired to lead the student ministry! We have a beautiful baby boy who is the life of the party, and we have loved being a part of the Northshore Church family these last 5 months! Since I have been here we have already seen the lord do amazing things in our student ministry! We took 41 people to summer camp back in June and have seen 9 students baptized! Last Sunday we had 40 students at our Sunday night service, and just yesterday we had 55 people at our back to school party!

I say these things not to be boastful about anything we are doing, but to simply say how exciting it is to be a part of what God is doing here on the Northshore in the next generation! I believe we are seeing these things happen as a result of God's people faithfully praying, and I expect God to continue to move in our church through the faithful persistent prayers of its members!

Speaking of prayer, that is what I want us to think about today as we dive into our Focus on Truth series finishing the closing sections of the Sermon on the Mount. I have recently been through a sermon on the mount series in my previous church, and this is how we described the theme of the sermon on the mount.

**"The Sermon on the Mount is not merely a new set of rules given by Jesus that disciples are called to live by, but rather Kingdom virtues that disciples are to, by the power of the Holy Spirit, increasingly embody."**

As we study the greatest sermon ever by the greatest preacher ever, let us remember these words of Christ are quite literally him imparting his life to us; to live and embody his character for a lost and dying world to witness

So Let us dive into the word together this morning!

**Read Matt 7: 7-12**

Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7:9 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

Matthew 7:10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

Matthew 7:11 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 good gifts to those who ask him!

Matthew 7:12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The title of today's message is "The Power of Positioned Prayer." Originally I wanted to title it "Be Careful what you pray for." but decided against that idea for a couple reasons. But what I want us to see today is three truths about prayer that reveal the power of being rightly positioned with God when we pray

Truth #1: Disciples Should Pray Persistently **Vs. 7**

Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

As we have studied the sermon on the mount, we have seen the command of prayer, the expectation of prayer and even the model of prayer. Prayer is a big deal to Jesus, which is why he teaches so much on it when imparting this Christ Life to his disciples! If Jesus takes prayer so seriously, then we should too! H.B Charles writes this in his book "It happens after prayer",

**"Prayer is arguably the most objective measurement of our dependence on God. Think of it this way. The things you pray for are the things you trust God to handle, and the things you neglect to pray for are the things you trust you can handle on your own. Can you see why God commands us to pray? Prayer reflects our confidence in the heavenly father to care for our needs."**

Prayer is essential to live the Christ-like life, and Jesus teaches here that prayer should be persistent. And he uses three Key words to do it. Ask, Seek, and Knock. These three words in Greek are all in the present active tense meaning they could be translated as “Ask and keep on asking, Seek and keep on seeking, Knock and keep on knocking” Jesus is trying to communicate an active prayer life of us depending on God!

The Gospel of Luke also contains this same message of Jesus but also has a parable attached to it, so look with me at **Luke 11:5-8**

Luke 11:5 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;

Luke 11:6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’

Luke 11:7 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.’

Luke 11:8 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.

Has anyone here ever been around someone that asks way too many questions? If you haven't, come and volunteer in student ministry, I would love to give you that experience.. Or have you ever been watching a movie or a show with someone who hasn't been paying attention and they are constantly asking questions about the plot that they would have known if they were paying attention? I know I'm that way when my wife is watching The bachelor. This is similar to the type of persistence that Jesus is talking about here.

But why are we to be persistent? Jesus says it is because we know our Father in heaven is able to answer our prayers. This leads to the next truth. Not only should Disciples pray persistently, but disciples should pray expectantly.

Truth #2 Disciples Should Pray Expectantly **Vs. 8**

Matthew 7:8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

As we continue in our passage, we see that believers can approach God with expectant prayer knowing that he is the ultimate provider of good gifts, yet want to dispel a common misconception of what this means.

Some people preach and teach a theology that says you can name and claim whatever you want and if you have strong enough faith then god will provide it for you because he wants you to be healthy, wealthy and happy. This is not what we see supported in this text or in scripture as a whole!

God's word teaches that we can approach his throne with confidence and ask whatever we wish according to HIS will and he will always provide. Let's look at some other scriptures pertaining to this.

John 15:7 "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you"

Psalms 37:3-5 "Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act."

The idea of God giving us the desires of our heart in this passage isn't saying that he will give us the evil or selfish things we desire as long as we keep our check list of commands in order. He is saying that if we delight in the Lord, our desires will be conformed to his desires!

It's like that old Rolling Stones Song "You can't always get what you want!"

However, God is able to do all things and will always provide every good gift according to his will and we can take it to the bank!

God is also not a God who seeks to deprive or deceive his children, look with me back in [Matt 7:9-10](#)

Matthew 7:9 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?"

Matthew 7:10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

He uses the image of a stone and a serpent. This is because in Israel there are actually stones that look like a loaf of bread and fish that have heads like snakes. The imagery Jesus is trying to get across is "who would do such a thing unless they were playing a cruel joke?" Jesus describes God as a good father who only gives good gifts to his children. This echos what Jesus just said previously in [Matt 6:33](#)

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

This leads me to our final and probably most important truth for today: Disciples should be positioned in prayer. The persistence and expectancy of our prayer means nothing if our hearts are not positioned in a right relationship with God.

### Truth #3 Disciple Should Be Positioned In Prayer Vs. 11-12

Matthew 7:11 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 good gifts to those who ask him!

Matthew 7:12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Why do I mean when I say positioned prayer? When we look overall at the context of the sermon on the mount, we see the distinction Jesus makes between believers and non believers. He calls non believers hypocrites and dogs in the passages just preceding our text today, and as we will see over the next few weeks, Jesus teaches that the way to eternal life is found through the narrow hard way and built on the solid foundation of his life.

So what is the position we should be in to have powerful prayer? It is a position of being in a right relationship with God. Persistent and expectant prayer is useless if we are not positioned in the family of God!

Looking back at the John 15 passage we see that there is a crucial distinction that describes believers as those who are abiding In Christ! And that's where the power of prayer comes from.

I want us to see two ways that we are positioned for powerful prayer:

#### Way #1: Salvation

2 Corinthians 5:16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[b] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation

We are positioned for powerful prayer when we repent of our sins, place our faith and trust in Christ Jesus and allow him to make us new creations. This is salvation, this is adoption into the family of God. This is what puts us in the house with God and gives us direct communication with him! Heb 4:14-16 says,

Hebrews 4:14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We can approach the throne of God in prayer with confidence because the new great high priest and mediator we have in Jesus

Way #2: Sanctification: We are positioned for powerful prayer when we are walking in holiness and are living like Christ. Sanctification is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ here on earth, or like I said earlier, increasingly embodying the virtues of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit living inside us.

Mark 8: 34-35 says,

Mark 8:34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Mark 8:35 For whoever would save his life [d] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

Christ calls us to abandon our desires and put on his. We are to take up our cross. We are to take up the life of Christ and fully embody him and then we will start to see our prayers become powerful!

A buddy of mine in a preaching mentorship group I am in mentioned this one morning when we were meeting. Talking about Christ-centered preaching, he said "Jesus is not some rabbit that you pull out of a hat at the end of a sermon and say 'wow he was there the whole time'" the same could be said about living a Christ-centered life

or having christ-centered prayers. He's there at all times! You can't ignore him until he's convenient for you!

Application:

- Repent and believe in Christ. Be positioned in the family of God
- Pursue Holiness and sanctification. Becoming like Jesus helps us to pray like Jesus.
- Pray persistently and expectantly knowing that God will answer and that he is the only good father who will always give good and perfect gifts to his children.
- Take the lord's supper today in reverence of what God has done for you to position you with him in Christ.