

Readings

Scripture

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If 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!
- Matthew 7:7-11 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

Nothing is better adapted to excite us to prayer than a full conviction that we shall be heard.

- John Calvin,
*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists,
Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Volume 1* (p. 351)

We pray for daily bread not because we fear we will starve otherwise (since millions get their daily bread without ever praying for it or saying grace before meals) but because we know that ultimately it comes from God and because as his children it is appropriate regularly to acknowledge our physical dependence on him. We pray for forgiveness and deliverance, however, because these gifts are given only in answer to prayer, and because without them we would be lost. So prayer is not unnecessary.

- John Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* (p. 188)

We shall never really understand the wonder of His grace until, seeking mercy like beggars before a judge, we discover that he wants us to be His sons and daughters.

- Sinclair Ferguson, *Kingdom Life in a Fallen World* (p. 207)

Sermon Outline

The Good Gift
Matthew 7:7-11

And His Disciples Came to Him
Brad Anderson

Our Father in heaven promises to give good gifts to his children... (Matthew 7:9-11)

**How do we reconcile this when what we receive
is not something we regard as good?**

Ask, knowing that it will be given to you... (Matthew 7:7-8)

- What ensues when we ask and don't receive?

Seek, knowing what you will find... (Matthew 7:7-8)

- What ensues when we seek and can't find what we are looking for?

Knock, knowing that the door will be opened... (Matthew 7:7-8)

- What ensues when we knock and the door remains closed?

Reflection Questions (*taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- What is the best gift you have ever given or received? What made it a good gift? Was it a birthday or Christmas present? Was it a surprise? If you were the one who gave the gift, how were you able to decide what to give? If you were the one receiving the gift, what did it say about how well the other person knew you or your need?
- What is Jesus stressing about God in verses 7-11? How is this teaching to encourage his disciples? What is the guiding principle of prayer here?
- What promises do you observe in verses 7-11?
- Luke 11:5-13 is a parallel passage with Matthew 7:7-11. How are they similar and different? What does Jesus say will be the gift given as a result of our asking and through the goodness of his character? (Look at Luke 11:13)
- James 4:1-10 makes some summary statements related to the Sermon on the Mount. As you read James 4:1-10, what stands out to you related to prayer and asking? How does James center our asking on our true neediness? How does the phrase, "You do not have, because you do not ask." apply to our passage in Matthew 7:7-11?
- How have God's promises motivated you to pray over the years? Where do you sense God is leading you to ask, seek and knock? For what?