

Feb 23, 2020



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

◆
Lesson Leaders:
James Haymon

Class Leaders:
Inreach: Pat Hester
Deacon: C M Hester

Ever-Persevering Petitions Luke 11:5-13

Lesson Background and Introduction

There are many misconceptions about prayer among Christians. These erroneous beliefs can become debilitating. Some say that if God knows all, including our needs, we don't need to ask for anything. What can we tell God if He already knows everything? "Nothing!" some say. Therefore, this logic says, prayer is pointless. We don't want to pray wrongly, and we don't want to suffer from prayer paralysis. We also don't want to oversimplify prayer, for it represents a relationship with our heavenly Father. Jesus used two analogies, images we would not expect, to teach us about our prayers to God. First, He spoke of borrowing loaves of bread. Second, He referred to a father providing wholesome food for his child. Sandwiched between is one of Jesus' most profound teachings on prayer in all the Bible: His admonition to ask, seek, and knock without giving up. Jesus ends with a reference to the Holy Spirit, presenting this as the ultimate answer to prayer and the gift of the Father. Just as the unprepared host did not stop knocking or give up his search for bread, so we should not give up on asking God for the things we need. Prayer must be an ongoing conversation with the Lord. Jesus taught the disciples to ask for "daily bread" (Luke 11:3), leaving us to conclude that this request must be done every day. Prayer is a lifetime of activity, not an essay we write and file away forever. Jesus teaches us that we are not abandoned by God. For this reason, we do not need to devise effective prayer strategies on our own. He has given us examples, and He has given us His Holy Spirit. Paul notes the value of this for us when he teaches that even though we are inadequate in our prayer lives, God's Spirit will intercede for us to make up for our weaknesses (Romans 8:26). God not only hears our prayers, He will help us if we let Him. Jesus' encouragement in Luke 11 is to never give up on prayer, no matter how unfruitful it may seem on any given day. The key is that we keep praying. We keep asking God, seeking His will, and knocking on the doors of Heaven with our requests (using James 4:3 as a caution). Few of us would count ourselves as giants in the world of prayer, so we can make this same request: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1)! Jesus was both a master teacher and the greatest prayer of all time. His centuries-old words still guide us in this crucial spiritual matter today.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Persistent Petitioning - Jesus used an illustration to talk about persistent prayer requests to God. An unexpected guest arrives at a neighbor's home at midnight. Unfortunately, the neighbor has no food to prepare for the guest. So, the host goes next door and begins banging on the door of the family next door. The neighbor is reluctant to open it realizing he would be stepping over and disturbing the rest of his family members (probably all sleeping in one room). But the neighbor persists, desperate to get some food for his guest. Finally, because of the host's persistence, the next-door neighbor opens the door and gives the man some bread.

God Welcomes Persistent Pleas - The Lord is never displeased, troubled, or bothered by the number of times His children come before His throne with their petitions. But is it wrong to continually ask God for something? It's incorrect to think that if I keep whining long enough and hard enough, I'm going to wear God down, so He'll eventually give me what I want. The loving heavenly Father meets needs, not all our wants. God longs to talk with those who are sincere, constantly requesting His wisdom and searching His heart. He welcomes the constant rapping on heaven's door.

Good Gifts - Good parents love giving gifts to their children. Only an abusive parent gives a child something harmful or evil. God is better than any earthly parent. Surely, He blesses His children with wonderful gifts. Even when we look at the gift and wonder, the Father knows what to give or not to give. One of His finest gifts is the Holy Spirit who brings us love, peace, patience, joy, and so many other excellent things.

Prayer Struggles - As we look at our laundry list of petitions, we may ask why God arranged things for that person and not me? Why does He say "No" or "Wait"? One thing we need to keep in mind about these constantly asked questions is that God only answers requests according to His will. His answers honor and glorify Him. As James says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). We often want what "honors" us and not the Lord.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Faith connects our weakness to God's strength

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Heavenly Father, give me strength of character and perseverance to serve you better. Help me not to get discouraged when things get tough but to rely on You to see me through

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith
(2 Tim 4:7 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Aug 02, 2016)

New Series: Justice and the Prophets

UNIT: God Requires Justice

NEXT WEEK

A Call to Accountability
(Amos 5:18-24)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Persistent Asking (Luke 11:5-8)

Confident expectation (5-6)

Confident expectation because God is faithful (Heb 3:6)

Confident expectation because we are partakers in God (Heb 3:14)

Confident expectation because of hope in God (Heb 10:23)

Confident expectation because God has armor that will help us stand against Satan (Eph 6:10-13)

Confident expectation knowing that God's faithfulness is true (Rom 3:3-4)

Confident expectation knowing that what God promises, He will be faithful in fulfilling (Heb 10:22-23)

Confident expectation knowing that God is faithful and just (1 John 1:9)

Initial reluctance (7)

God sometimes delays His answers because His timing is not man's timing (Isa 55:8-9)

God sometimes delays His answers to display His faithfulness (Heb 10:23)

God sometimes delays His answers because He is patient (Ps 86:15)

Ultimate response (8)

God responds because He never forsakes those who seek Him (Ps 9:10)

God responds because He will not let us fail (1 Cor 10:13)

God responds because even if I am unfaithful, God will always be faithful (2 Tim 2:13)

God responds because He cannot lie (Heb 6:13-18)

God responds because He cares for me (1 Peter 5:7)

God responds because He promises to be attentive to my prayers (Ps 34:15)

God responds because He takes care of all of His creations (Matt 6:26)

God responds because His goodness will not allow anything else (Ps 27:13)

God responds because He promises justice and protection (Ps 37:5-7)

God responds because He sustains me and does not let me fall (Ps 55:22)

God responds because He asks me to come to Him for and about everything (Phil 4:6)

Persistence is having faith in God (8)

Persistence in faith provides a blessing (Gal 3:9)

Persistence in faith results in nothing being impossible (Matt 17:20)

Persistence in faith provides answered prayers (Matt 21:21-22)

Persistence in faith results in justification (Rom 3:28)

Persistence in faith is a way of life for the Christian (2 Cor 5:7)

Persistence in faith provides an approach to God with freedom and confidence (Eph 3:12)

Persistence in faith results in unity of the Church body (Phil 1:27)

Persistence in faith leads to reconciliation (Col 1:22-23)

Persistence in faith provides spiritual strength (Col 2:6-7)

Persistence in faith is commanded for a Christian (1 Tim 6:11-12)

Persistence in faith pleases God (Heb 11:6)

Persistent Finding (Luke 11:9-13)

Earthly illustration (9-12)

An earthly father has compassion on his children (Ps 103:13)

An earthly father should provide for his relatives (1 Tim 5:8)

An earthly father disciplines only as he knows best (Heb 12:9-10)

An earthly parent may forget family (Isa 49:15)

Heavenly reality (13)

God absolutely knows what we need (Matt 6:30-33)

God, who gave His Son for us, will give us all things (Rom 8:32)

God's future glory for us is glorious (2 Cor 3:9-11)

God will bring about justice for His chosen ones (Luke 18:7)