

Asking and Receiving

by T.M. Anderson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience and childlike faith in prayer, and teaches that God's answer to our prayers is based on His love for us.

Scripture: Psalm 34:17, Matthew 7:7, Luke 11:10-11, John 16:24, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:16, 1 John 5:14

Topics: "Prayer Power", "Faith And Persistence"

Description

T.M. Anderson preaches on the power of prayer, emphasizing that every child of God has the right to pray and receive from the Father. Jesus teaches us to ask with faith, knowing that our heavenly Father, who loves us more than any earthly father, will give good gifts to His children. Prayer is a two-way communication where our asking is met with the Father's giving, and it is essential for us to persist in prayer, believing that every sincere request will be answered.

Transcript

"... Every one that asketh receiveth ..."--Luke 11:10.

When our Lord uttered these immortal words He gave to every child of God the inalienable right to pray. He impressed His disciples with this fact by asking them some pertinent questions: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"--v. 11-13.

If the father loves his son it would be utterly inconsistent with his nature to give his child a stone, or a snake, or a stinging scorpion instead of bread. The father's answer to his son's request will be granted according to the measure of his love for his child. It is the most natural thing in all the world for a father to listen to the requests of his family. When Jesus said, "... Any of you that is a father ," he compares a man's love for his children to God's love for His children. He asks us to look up from our earthly fathers, and calculate how much more the heavenly Father will be moved to give good gifts to His children. Jesus is teaching us to understand that as much as God's goodness exceeds the goodness of mortal man, so much greater is our assurance that He will grant our childlike petitions.

Every child of God from the youngest to the oldest has a right to ask the Father for the bread of life. Every child, irrespective of age, sex, or race, can come boldly to the throne of grace, and find grace to help in time of need. There are no underprivileged children in God's family. The crippled, the weak, and the sick children have a right to ask the heavenly Father for the living bread from heaven.

The Saviour would have us perceive the imperishable truth that, "... Every one that asketh receiveth ..." It is utterly unthinkable that our loving Father would ignore our earnest petitions. He will not remain silent and unmoved when His own children are weeping before Him in earnest petitions.

A missionary was telling about the sufferings endured while a prisoner during the war. He said that the crying of his starving family caused him to suffer more than all the cruel and barbarous treatment received at the hands of the savage and inhuman guards. When we understand how this godly man was moved by the constant crying of his famishing family, we can comprehend how our heavenly Father can be moved to answer the unceasing prayers of His family. It was not possible for the faithful missionary to grant the urgent requests of his children, but it is possible for our heavenly Father to grant the requests of His children.

Jesus teaches us that prayer has a human side and a divine side. The human side is the asking, and the divine side is the giving. The two halves which make up the whole of prayer are the asking and the receiving. Our asking and the Father's answering belong to each other. Our requests on earth and the Father's answer in heaven are meant for each other. If we believe that the Father has made an ample provision for the needs of His children, then we must also believe that He will surely give them all good gifts according to the promise.

Jesus teaches us to come to Him day by day to receive the bread of life to sustain us in this world. He wills day by day to do for us what we ask in simple faith.

When the Master said, "... Every one that asketh receiveth ...," He stressed the fact that we are not to rest without an answer to our petitions. He is saying that it is the Father's will, and the rule of His house to grant the requests of His believing children.

When no answer is received we are often disposed to say that it is not the will of God to give us the answer. We will find it much easier to yield to our own false reasoning about the answer to prayer than it is to shake off our lethargy and seek God until the answer is obtained. There are so many persons who rest content without the distinct experience of answered prayer. This distressing fact reveals the serious deterioration of Christian life in these last days. These unhappy souls pray daily, they ask many things, and devoutly hope that some of their prayers will be answered. They apparently do not know that it is the norm of spiritual life to receive definite answers to prayer. They obviously do not know that the heavenly Father wills day by day to do for us what we ask in faith.

We must take the words of Jesus just as they were spoken. We must not allow human reasoning to weaken the force of His teachings about our asking and receiving. We owe it to ourselves to take sufficient time while praying, to listen to His voice, and believe the truth that "Every one that asketh receiveth."

We should not make our many failures of the past the measure of our faith for the present. We must hold fast the assuring fact that the effectual fervent prayer of God's obedient child availeth much.

The son's request for bread is based on his relationship to the father. It is by virtue of this relationship that the son has the inalienable right to expect his father to answer his requests. When Jesus speaks of the son asking bread of his father, He is speaking of an obedient son. The son that finds no pleasure in obedience to his father and presumes that he can still ask and receive what he desires will certainly be disappointed. A son who loves and honors his father will find it is the father's good pleasure to answer his daily requests.

Consistent living on the part of God's people is the condition for obtaining the answer to prayer. God's precepts requiring obedience in our living, and His promises relating to our praying are inseparable.

We can certainly count on God's fulfilling His promise to answer prayer when we obey His sovereign will in all things. We should take time to meditate on the tenderness and love the heavenly Father has for His obedient children.

Much of our difficulty in praying is removed when we think on the happy relationship existing between an obedient child and a loving heavenly Father. When He sees His child with sincere purpose and steady will seeking diligently in everything to be and live as a child, then our prayers will prevail with Him as the prayer of an obedient child.

It requires considerable time to comprehend fully the teachings of Jesus regarding the inherent principles of effectual praying. If God's people will take sufficient time to meditate on the essentials of prevailing prayer, they will be rewarded richly for the hours spent in the school of Christ. When once we grasp the gracious truth contained in the words of Jesus, and take a firm hold on the promises relating to prayer, we will then realize the meaning of His words, "... Every one that asketh receiveth

We firmly believe that the Master stated the truth when He said, "... Every one that asketh receiveth ..." Nevertheless we are confronted frequently with the startling and disconcerting fact that we do not always receive definite answer to our prayers. We find it exceedingly difficult to reconcile these disturbing facts with the explicit statement of Jesus regarding the answer to our prayers.

When we consider the Master's teachings about prayer, we must not strive to make them conform to our wishful thinking regarding the answer to our prayers. It is possible for us to set our heart on obtaining something we greatly desire for our own personal gratification, and then express our keen disappointment because the request was not granted.

The answer to our perplexing questions about prayer will be found when we study the Master's words about the son asking for bread. We are fully aware that the son cannot live without bread; he must have it or perish. However, there are many things the son may ask which are not as important to life as food. He may ask his father for money, or fine clothing, or toys. The father may consider it wise to give his son these good gifts; and again he might deem it best for the son's own good to withhold these things

requested; but when the child asks for food it is a different matter of life, because food is a necessity.

There are many good gifts which our heavenly Father may deem it wise to bestow upon us, such as good health, prosperity, and financial security. If He wills to withhold these things we must submit to His sovereign will without complaint. Perfect health, prosperity, and earthly goods are not essential to life in this world. Our relationship to God does not depend on these creature comforts. These things cannot impart to us the moral strength we need to cope with the trials incident to life in this evil world. It requires the "Bread of life" to give the spiritual strength to sustain us in these last days. We are fully assured that our Father will give us the living bread from heaven to keep us strong in faith, undaunted in courage, and invincible in hope.

The grand climax of our Lord's discourse on prayer was reached when He disclosed the Father's promise to give the Holy Spirit to His praying children. He would have us understand that our urgent requests for the bread from heaven are answered by the Father's gift of the Spirit.

He is teaching us that the Spirit is given to the children of God for the express purpose of sustaining and satisfying life. Our incessant demands for spiritual food are supplied by the indwelling Spirit. Our daily prayer should be, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." The answer from heaven is, "... Every one that asketh receiveth ..."

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