



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

Kingdom Principles – Part 6

Matthew 7:7-11

Message #21 of 80 – S1051

Sermon given on June 25, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Kingdom Principles – Part 6

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 7**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- We are in the section of the gospel of Matthew referred to as the Sermon on the Mount.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give us ears to hear. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **Kingdom Principles – Part 6**
- Many verses of the Bible are well-known, like the first one we look at today.
- And sadly, many of those well-known verses are misunderstood, misapplied, or misinterpreted.
- Such is the case with our text for this morning.
- I'll read the whole thing and then will break it done.
- **Matthew 7:7-11**
- Our topic for this morning is prayer.
- There are some who take this verse out of its context and presume upon God's love and grace and suggest that if you do enough good works, like giving to their ministry, and keep praying that God will give you anything you want.
- God is not a celestial slot machine – you can't just keep dropping coins in and pulling the handle until you get the jackpot.
- Prayer is not a blank check God gives His people that they can fill in the amount for anything they want.
- We have no idea how miserable we would be if God actually gave you everything you wanted.
- Prayer is an expression of our faith in God.
- James said that faith without works is dead.
- True faith does something.
- One of the key works of true faith is prayer.

- Prayer, in its simplest understanding, is a child of God speaking with their loving Father who is in heaven.
- Jesus has a couple of things to say about prayer.
- **Matthew 7:7**
- Jesus uses three different words to express the idea of prayer; ask, seek, and knock.
- The New Testament was originally written in Greek.
- Greek is very different from English and often words communicate much more than just a definition or meaning. For example:
- ‘ask...seek...knock’ are all in the Imperative.
- That means they are expressed as commands.
- Praying is not something we ought to do, it is something God has commanded us to do.
- As with most of God’s commands to us, it is commanded for our own good.
- They are also in the present tense and active voice.
- This means we should be doing it as a continuing action **1**

Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- This is speaking of persistence in prayer.
- These three words also include ascending intensity and activity.
- To ask implies humility before someone who is able to respond to the prayer.
- To seek involves asking but includes action.
- Not only are they expressing their need but they are doing something to get the help they need.
- Knocking includes asking and activity plus perseverance.
- The main message of verse 7 is that we must be persistent in our prayers to God.
- The next verse is the one we like the most.
- **Matthew 7:8**
- Jesus says God is ready to answer our prayers.
- We find it easy enough to pray when our need is desperate.
- When someone is sick or injured.

- We might pray for diligently when our finances are short, or relationships are difficult.
- The greater our material need, the more likely we are to pray.
- Material needs come and go.
- It is our spiritual needs that never end.
- Unfortunately, we don't feel our spiritual needs like we do the material needs.
- These principles are for people to live in Christ's kingdom – they are kingdom principles.
- Christ's kingdom is spiritual, not material – not yet.
- The spiritual affects the material, but we must give preeminence to the spiritual.
- When we are praying about material things, we are praying for things that are temporary.
- When we pray about spiritual things, we are praying about things that are eternal.
- The material things will not last, and the spiritual will never end.
- When we pray for our health and God answers our prayer, we will be better for a while, but that will not keep us from getting old and eventually dying.
- We can pray and ask God for anything but not everything we pray about is going to move God's heart to action.
- We should pray for those things we know God desires for us and then we can trust that He will respond and maybe throw in those material things He already knows you need.
- God commands us to be holy – how holy?
- To be as holy as He is **1 Peter 1:13-16**.
Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."
- If there was anything we should be asking, seeking, and knocking for, it ought to be that we would be holy.
- Everything else that connects you to God and Christ's kingdom is connected to that.

- We should pray for the things we need.
- But this is an exhortation to examine your needs.
- Is spiritual growth high enough on your prayer list?
- Not only does this principle exhort us to pray with persistence for the spiritual things we need, but it also encourages us to pray with confidence.
- When we are praying for the things we know God wants to give us, like holiness, we can be confident that He will answer this prayer and help us to be holy through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- We can be confident in our prayers for the things God has told us He wants us to have in His Word.
- We can't have that confidence when praying for material things because those things are not promised to us in His Word.
- Like healing – God has not promised to heal us every time we get sick.
- Jesus then gives us a practical example of how God answers prayer.
- **Matthew 7:9-10**
- Here is the key to effective prayer.
- God will give us anything we ask for that is good for us spiritually.
- This is where the 'name it and claim it' or 'prosperity theology' ministries are in error.
- God knows that not all material things are good for us spiritually.
- It may bless us in the material world, but it may be a curse to our spiritual life.
- We should praise God that He doesn't give us everything we ask for.
- God is the only one who knows the spiritual impact of the things we are asking for.
- I might really want that exotic car and even justify how I would use it for God's glory, but He knows things about me that I might not even know about myself.
- Even those things that seem to be good spiritually may not be good for us spiritually.
- Part of praying in faith is trusting that God knows what we do not.
- Jesus closes this principle with an exhortation to trust God.

- **Matthew 7:11**
- Compared with God's holiness and perfection, the very best human on earth is evil.
- Imagine our earthly fathers at their very best and then multiply that by infinity and you might begin to approach the goodness of God as Father.
- God is so good and loves us so much that we can trust Him completely with our needs and cares.
- As believers in Jesus, we are a part of Christ's kingdom.
- Our life goal should be to live in His kingdom in a manner that glorifies God in heaven, blesses people on the earth, and causes faith to grow, ours, other believers, and the lost.
- To accomplish that we must seek to grow in the spiritual principles Jesus lays out for us in the Sermon on the Mount.
- But because these principles are spiritual, we must ask, seek, and knock for spiritual help.
- To do that, we do two things.
- First, we ask, seek, and knock persistently.
- We are to ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking.
- We must constantly and passionately ask God for every spiritual blessing.
- Second, we must ask, seek and knock confidently.
- Jesus says the Father wants to grant the prayers for those things He desires for us.
- Pray knowing that God hears you and is preparing His response.
- At the end of chapter six, as Jesus was telling us not to worry about the things we need (Matt. 6:31-33).
- We should talk to God about the material things we need, like healing, protection, provision, and guidance.
- But it is more important that we are talking to God about these spiritual principles.

- Maybe something like this: Heavenly Father, I know that you know what I need and so, I trust those needs into your powerful loving hands.
- If I have time at the end of this prayer time, I will share my heart with you about my specific needs. In the meantime, I would like to talk to you about my spiritual needs.
- And then you can start praying through these principles as they relate to your spiritual life.
- Like the last two we looked at; worry and a judgmental spirit.
- God, you know that I worry about things I cannot control.
- Please teach me to trust you more.
- Or, Lord, I tend to judge people's hearts and motives, and I know that it is wrong, because only you truly know those things.
- Please help me to see people as you see them.
- Prayer is a powerful tool in the arsenal of spiritual weapons God has given us to live in Christ's kingdom.
- But just like any tool or weapon, it must be used properly.
- God is good wants to do good to and for us.
- All we must do is, in faith, ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking.
- If you do, Jesus says you will be given, you will find, and it will be opened to you.
- Faithfully pray with persistence and confidence. God is listening.
- Let's rejoice in that! Let's pray!