

## Sunday Service Sermons

**27 June 2021**

Prayer is for Real

I watched the movie "Heaven is for Real" not long ago.

Today we will be thinking about Prayer being for real.

We, as a congregation, and as individuals, agree that Prayer is for Real and most important.

How many of us are able to Pray without ceasing?

Living in a constant state of prayer.

Living with the line open between us and God.

One of my internet connections often asks if I want it to remain connected.

With God I want to remain connected.

The primary factor is that God is for Real.

And He wants to be connected with us on a constant, consistent basis.

It is easy to be close to God.

Just like being close to a person.

Spend time.

How close you feel to God is directly related to the amount of time you spend with Him.

Then read the Bible.

He reveals himself in the Bible.

The Bible is much more than words.

As God is the Word the Bible brings The Word to us.

It is impossible for us to realize our full potential without God guiding us to that potential.

Text: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you will find; knock and it shall be opened unto you" *Matt. 7:7*

Full text for today is *Matthew 7:7-11* where Jesus is teaching the people who have gathered to see him.

Jesus is teaching here that God is a good Father who will provide the needs of His people.

If you can be good parents just think how much better of a parent God can be for his resources are unlimited.

Your heavenly Father will give you what you need if you will only ask him.

The last thought is most interesting: "So n everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets".

Then Jesus goes on to say, in essence, yes I know it is hard to be good, that is why not everyone will be in heaven.

Is Jesus saying: God is good and will provide for you, now go and do the same for others?

Could be!

And you will only be Gods person if you are constant in prayer.

Prayer is as much a part of life as breath itself.

Jesus is telling those listening to him that prayer is for real!

Ask, and you will have, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened unto you.

In this section of scripture Jesus offers a pattern, a promise and a proof.

The pattern is asking, seeking and knocking.

People loved the teachings of Jesus but they did not ask for teaching they asked for prayer instruction.

They wanted to be close to God as they saw Jesus being so close to God.

Jesus is the supreme authority on prayer for his whole life was bathed in the spirit of prayer.

He knows what can be accomplished, and he knows the power it can exercise.

He is giving his followers a pattern to follow.

The Sermon on the mount outlined the pattern to be followed.

First, ask which means that we acknowledge our need and admit our own helplessness.

Each of us has times in which we find ourselves asking God for what we need.

We are actually like the blind man on the corner who asks someone to help him cross the street.

Though he asks he offers nothing in return.

True prayer is always offered in this spirit.

Prayer can never be ours if we, like the Pharisee compliment ourselves and criticize others.

Prayer has nothing to do with personal merit or promise of doing better in the future.

Real prayer is couched in the words of the publican who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner".

Therefore asking means that we acknowledge our need.

Asking means that we address ourselves to a person.

In our prayers we are addressing a personal God who hears and cares.

Certainly Jesus was saying that god is always approachable.

He is present with his ears open and his hands extended.

Asking also means that we can pray specifically.

Paul said, "Let your requests be made known to God".

Ours is not to filter out our requests before offering them to God, but like a little child, we are to open our hearts to God.

He is a good and loving Father who will answer those requests that he knows are best for us.

And he will answer them in such a way as to fulfill his will.

To pray is to seek God's will.

Many times we do not know what God's will is, so we simply let our request be made know and ask God to grant it only according to his will.

In such a spirit we can pray with confidence, knowing that if we pray according to God's will, he will hear us.

Ask then seek. Seeking conveys the concept of effort.

In His model prayer Jesus is not telling us to pray and do nothing.

Rather, he is telling us that we should ask God to give us the opportunity to earn our daily bread.

Like the farmer we need to ask for the opportunity to prepare the ground, plant the seed, cultivate the crops and tend the plants.

In praying "Thy kingdom come", we are praying that we will become so committed in the matter of personal soul winning and building up one another that God's kingdom will be hastened.

To pray is to knock which carries with it the concept of effort plus persistence.

The example is the man knocking at his neighbor's door in the night so he could feed his newly arrived guests.

Jesus taught that we are always to pray and not lose heart.

We may allow lack of understanding or disappointment or bitterness to cause us to give up.

How long must we keep on praying?

Until the answer comes.

Jesus also offers the promise that if we ask, we will receive and if we really seek, we will find; and if we continue to knock, the door will be opened to us.

These verbs, ask, seek and knock, are present imperative.

Which means we are to keep on asking, seeking and knocking and never be discouraged in prayer.

God promises that he will always answer our prayers.

In his way, not ours which is the best way.

He alone is perfect and his love, understanding and wisdom is perfect toward us.

The question becomes, to whom is the promise made?

It is a promise made to followers of Christ who are sincere enough to keep on asking, seeking and knocking. Prayer is for real when the pattern is followed and the promise is accepted.

In verses 9, 10, and 11 proof is offered.

Here Jesus used the analogy of a father kindly responding to the request of his son.

Then he drove home the point that if we as frail, sinful human beings desire to answer our children's requests, our heavenly Father surely desires to answer the

requests we bring to him

Proof that prayer is for real is found in the God to whom we pray.

It is found in his nature, his resources, his wisdom and his love.

Prayer can become real in our life if we follow simple steps.

First, decide what your need is and get it clearly focused in your mind.

Second, in light of what Scripture teaches, determine if your desire is right.

Third, put your request in writing.

This will clarify your thinking.

As you talk to God, get in such a place or such a state of mind that other things will not distract you.

Remember that you are talking to God and not to a human being.

Share with God what you will do as his instrument to help bring about the answer to your own prayer.

Answered prayer is more often a cooperative effort between a person and God than simply unilateral action on the part of God.

When your prayer is finished, never forget to be grateful to God and express the gratitude through thanksgiving.

Be willing to accept God's answer, whatever it may be, remembering that God's will is always best.

When you have taken these steps, you will discover through the pattern the promise, and the proof Christ offers that prayer is for real!