

“Someone’s Knocking at the Door!”**1. Intro:**

- 1.1. We continue on the topic of **prayer**.
- 1.2. A tale is told about a small town that had historically been “dry,” but then a local businessman decided to build a **tavern**. A group of Christians from a local church were concerned and planned an all-night prayer meeting to ask God to intervene. It just so happened that shortly thereafter lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. The owner of the bar sued the church, claiming that the prayers of the congregation were responsible, but the church hired a lawyer to argue in court that they were not responsible. The presiding judge, after his initial review of the case, stated that “no matter how this case comes out, one thing is clear. **The tavern owner believes in prayer and the Christians do not.**”¹
- 1.3. Paul McCartney sang: (Wings at the Speed of Sound; 1976; “Let ‘Em In”):

Someone's knocking at the door, Somebody's ringing the bell
 Do me a favor, Open the door, and let them in
 Sister Suzie, brother John, Martin Luther, Phil and Don,
 Brother Michael, auntie Gin, Open the door and let them in

2. KNOCK AT MIDNIGHT! (5-8)

- 2.1. **BACKGROUND!**
- 2.2. **Houses** in Israel, especially in rural areas, were small, consisting of 1 room used as sitting room, dining room, & bedroom.
 - 2.2.1. A house had **1 door**, which was left open through the day.
 - 2.2.2. In the evening they would close the door & slide a **wooden bar** through the rings on the door & wall to keep out intruders.
 - 2.2.3. **Mats** were spread out & were used as **beds** on which the family slept all in a row. - In such circumstances it was rather **difficult** to get up in the dark & do just about anything.
- 2.3. **WHAT IT DOESN’T MEAN!**
- 2.4. It really isn’t teaching to be persistence in prayer (we’ll talk later about if ch. 18 means that)
- 2.5. The issue really is the word “**persistence**” here. (8)
 - 2.5.1. **Persistence** = Impudence, shamelessness, boldness. [only here in NT]
 - 2.5.2. The neighbor was **ashamed** not to help his friend, for he knew that, if he **violated the social code**, he would be the target of abuse throughout the whole village.²

¹ Why Christians Sin, J. K. Johnston, Discovery House, 1992, p. 129

² Warren Wiersbe; Windows on the Parables; pg.73.

- 2.6. God is not being **compared** to the sleeping neighbor!
- 2.6.1. He is a God who **never sleeps!**
 - 2.6.2. He is a God whose **door is never shut!**
 - 2.6.3. He is a God who is **never put out** to help, in time of need!
 - 2.6.4. He is a God who **never sleeps!**
- 2.7. Instead, God is being **contrasted** to this neighbor.
- 2.7.1. He is saying, “If a sleeping neighbor, on the basis of **friendship & social etiquette**, will meet the needs of a friend, **how much more** will your Father in heaven meet the needs of His own children!”
- 2.8. WHAT IT DOES MEAN!**
- 2.9. Jesus clearly applies the Jewish rule of **contrasts**.³
- 2.9.1. This is called a **parabolic contrast** – All that the friend was, God is not; & the friend’s answer stands in sharp contrast to the answer of God.
- 2.10. God is a **loving Father** not a **grouchy neighbor**. He gives us what we need. He neither sleeps nor slumbers. He doesn’t become irritated when we ask for help.
- 2.10.1. James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives **generously to all without finding fault**, and it will be given to him”.
- 2.11. After the **parabolic contrast** He then gives a **parabolic comparison**!

3. A.S.K.! (9-13)

- 3.1. WHAT IT DOESN’T MEAN!**
- 3.2. It doesn’t teach us to keep **beating & hammering** on God’s door until he answers.
 - 3.3. It doesn’t teach us to keep trying until you overcome God’s **unwillingness to act**.
 - 3.4. It doesn’t teach us God plays **hard to get**.
 - 3.5. It doesn’t teach us our goal is to **coerce** an **unwilling God** to answer.
- 3.6. WHAT IT DOES MEAN!**
- 3.7. Here now is the story of the Father & the child to illustrate **what God is!!!**
- 3.7.1. The 1st man/neighbor would not **give**; did not want to be **troubled**; but finally did give to **avoid trouble**.
 - 3.7.2. The 2nd man/father said to his son, “**just ask & you’ll obtain; seek & you’ll locate; knock & I’ll open the access for you.**”
- 3.8. This is a story about **friendship**(5) that shifts to **sonship**(11)!
- 3.8.1. True prayer is not based on our **friendship** w/God, but on the fact that we are the **children of God**.
 - 3.8.2. A father meets the needs of his children **not to avoid shame, but to express love!** ☺
- 3.9. Doesn’t “**ask, seek, & knock**” speak of **continual action** in the Greek?
- 3.9.1. Yes! We should always be asking, seeking, & knocking.

³ This rule, called **Kal Wa-homer** (from less important to more important), was 1 of the 7 hermeneutical rules complied by Rabbi Hillel.

- 3.9.1.1. Our faith needs to be active, not passive.
- 3.9.2. **Asking** = Implies humility & an awareness of need!
- 3.9.3. **Seeking** = Is Asking + Acting!
- 3.9.4. **Knocking** = Is Asking + Acting + Persevering!
 - 3.9.4.1. **Example:** [Asking] “Honey, have you seen my keys?” [Seeking] “Honey are you sure you haven’t seen them?” as you search diligently for them.” [Knocking] You now go door to door throughout your house knocking on the kid’s doors, “kids have you see my keys?”
- 3.9.5. **To remember the order: A.S.K. (acrostic)**
- 3.10. **Ok, so what does it mean by “ask, seek, knock” then?**
 - 3.10.1. Is He not encouraging persistence in prayer?
Yes! But it’s tied to **sonship**(vs.11 “if a son...”).
 - 3.10.2. See, it’s not trying to twist God’s arm to get what we want.
It means keeping in **close communion** with the Father, knowing His will, & asking Him to perform His will.
 - 3.10.3. **Note:** It’s command/promise; command/promise; command/promise!
- 3.11. **Stone...serpent...scorpion** – (often found inside the house, so not random thoughts here)
 - 3.11.1. **Now, I do have one friend who put his glass eye in his son’s cereal bowl!** 😊
 - 3.11.2. **No father** is going to give a small child a **sharp knife** or a **loaded gun**, no matter how much the child begs.
 - 3.11.3. **No mother** is going to give her pre-teen the keys to the car for a joyride, or her toddler freedom to play in the medicine cabinet.
 - 3.11.3.1. Thus, God will not put some things in our hands, until he 1st prepares our hearts.
- 3.12. **Bread...fish...egg** –
 - 3.12.1. What also is special is when we ask for **stones**, He doesn’t give us one, when He knows we need **bread**!
 - 3.12.1.1. **Our heavenly Father knows how to give far better than we know how to ask!**
 - 3.12.2. We might think, “I asked God for something, & He did not give it to me.” We should rather say, “I wanted something I did not need, so my Father knew best not to give it to me.”
- 3.13. **PRAY FOR THE BEST BLESSING! (13)**
- 3.14. **Give the Holy Spirit** –
 - 3.14.1. Matthew’s account “**how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**” Mt.7:11
 - 3.14.2. The Holy Spirit is the **best & highest gift** for humanity, for regeneration & for all its life.

- 3.14.2.1. In receiving Him, receiving the filling/refilling/overflowing of the Spirit; the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the spirit.
- 3.14.2.2. Oh how we need the Spirit to help us: build character, guide our conduct, & empower us for service!
- 3.15. Of course you should pray for material things, health, finances, but this isn't the highest form of praying.
- 3.15.1. We must not stay on that level! Graduate to the highest level of praying, asking for the blessings of the Spirit of God that result in Christian Character & conduct that glorify the Lord.
- 3.15.2. Examples from Paul: (Phil.1:9-11; Eph.1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col.1:9-12)
- 3.15.3. He prays about love, discernment, maturity, obedience, faith, power...these are all blessings that only the H.S.
- 3.16. How much more...he doesn't tell us how much more, He just lets our imagination run loose for awhile.
- 3.16.1. When we ask for bread, maybe we're thinking about a little dinner roll. When actually he's baking up some *fresh cinnamon pull apart bread*. [like Schotz Bakery]
- 3.16.2. Believe me, we are not wringing gifts from an unwilling God, but going to One who knows our needs better than we know them ourselves, & whose heart towards us is the heart of generous love.⁴
- 3.16.3. If persistence conquered selfishness, what will not pity do? Griffith Thomas
- 3.16.4. Greatest Giver, gives highest gift, & shows largest generosity!
- 3.17. (Teaching of the Rabbis, Taanit, 8a) "Only that man's prayer is answered who lifts his hands w/his heart in them!"
- 3.18. When we rely upon organization, we get what organization can do;
When we rely upon education, we get what education can do;
When we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do;
When we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do. [A. C. Dixon]
- 3.19. The greatest blessing of prayer is not in receiving the answer, but in being the kind of person God can trust with the answer!
- 3.19.1. The most important part of our lives is the part that only God sees. The hidden life of prayer is the secret of an open life of victory!⁵
- 3.20. When You Pray, Remember...
The Love of God that wants the best for us.
The Wisdom of God that knows what is best for us.
The Power of God that can accomplish it.⁶

⁴ William Barclay.

⁵ Warren Wiersbe; Windows on the Parables; pg.76.

⁶ William Barclay, quoted in *Prodigals and Those Who Love Them*, Ruth Bell Graham, 1991, Focus on the Family Publishing, p. 100