

Title: IS THAT YOU KNOCKING? LUKE 11:1 – 13
(Chatham, NJ; 07/28/13, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Jesus not only teaches his disciples to pray, but he also invites them to pray with great persistence.

Purpose: To teach what things we should pray about and to remind us that God wants to hear from us.

Introduction:

1. Jesus prayed often, Luke 5:16.
2. By retiring to “desolate places” he took his own advice and went where he could “close the door” and pray to God in secret, Mt. 6:6.
3. He assured the disciples that God rewards those who pray.
4. Prayer is one of the four pillars of the early church’s activities, Acts 2:42.
5. In Luke 11 the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray.
6. He obliges but tells them more than just “say what’s on your heart,” or “just talk to God.”
7. Furthermore he demands persistence.

I. Three Theories about the Lord’s Prayer, Luke 11:1-4

- A. Memorize and repeat
 1. Say the words exactly as given
 2. Repeat them as often as you pray
 3. The more you repeat them, the more effective the prayer
 4. Memorization not the worst idea
- B. Never repeat verbatim
 1. Too much like “heaping up empty phrases,” Mt. 6:7-8
 2. Our words should be meaningful, from the heart
 3. Rote memory gets in the way of spontaneous talk with God
 4. Yet most people repeat a lot of the same phrases when they pray
- C. A model of what we should pray about
 1. The fact is that Jesus gives us this prayer
 2. They are matters of importance to the disciple
 - “Hallowed be your name” – begin with addressing God in praise and recognition of his holiness
 - “Your kingdom come” – though it has come, it still needs to spread; it hasn’t yet conquered all people; pray for them
 - “Give us our daily bread” – recognize with thanksgiving the source of life
 - “Forgive our sins” – never forget the need for grace
 - “As we forgive others” – a key element of the second commandment
 - “Lead us not into temptation” – strengthen us against the ways of the world and the inclinations to sin that are still in our own hearts
 3. Matthew adds a few phrases, but the model is the same

II. Three Questions Raised by the Story of the Persistent Neighbor, 11:5-13

- A. Did people in the first century pray much?
 1. I suspect they were much like us: prayed more during moments of crisis
 2. Anna, Luke 2:37, was probably an exception
 3. There were regular hours of prayer at the Temple and the early disciples participated, Acts 3:1
- B. How much does God encourage prayer?

1. This is the essence of the story
2. Someone must feed his visitors
3. He implores his neighbor (friend) to give him food
4. Time and inconvenience complicate the request; the person persists; the neighbor gives in
5. He does so to get the person off his back, not because of friendship, 8
6. Evil earthly fathers not as good as Heavenly Father, 11-13, yet they give good things
7. God not swayed by inconvenience but by his goodness
8. The nature of God provides the power to the story

C. How persistent is your prayer life?

1. The story raises this question
2. It exhibits the model of persistence
3. Yet if the neighbor is God, He invites us to persist

III. Three-Fold Exhortation and Its Promises, 9-10

A. Ask and it will be given

1. James 4:2-3, you must ask if you want to receive
2. Be bold enough to ask God for what you want
3. Remember who your are asking
4. Remember the promise

B. Seek and you'll find

1. What do we seek on our journey toward the heavenly city
2. Salvation? Hope? Personal needs?
3. Do we lay them at our Father's feet
4. The search is not in vain

C. Knock, the door will open

1. Direct allusion to the story
2. Persistence does not demand God's attention; it demonstrates our faith
3. Is that you knocking on God's door???

Conclusion:

1. What keeps you from praying?
2. Are you convinced that God wants to hear from you?
3. Are you afraid of the answers?
4. The Lord's Prayer directs our thoughts, but our own attitude determines the results.
5. "...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints," Ephesians 6:18.