Effective Praying!

A message delivered to
MAYER COMMUNITY CHURCH

January 31, 1999

TITLE: Effective Praying!

TEXT: Luke 11:5-13

THEME: Prayer

THRUST: Per/consistency in Prayer!

INTRODUCTION:

Two weeks ago several illustrations were given about our need to be persistent, to in effect never give up!

This morning I want to speak with you from one of the parables of Jesus that puts the concept of persistence into the context of our prayer lives; and, in so doing help to prepare our hearts for our time of fellowship and celebration before His table. Remember, a parable is a short story that reveals a moral or spiritual principle.

During one of the times that Jesus and His disciples were discussing issues of Jesus' ministry, the question was asked as to why He so often spoke in parables. He answered, in effect saying "because this was a good way to keep God's mysteries from those individuals who did't have a heart for God." So, while *parables* are earthly stories with heavenly meanings, they are also a means by which God maintains the integrity of His ways.

Hopefully, everyone here has a heart for God and is hungering for the deep things of God, things that, according to Scripture, will only be revealed by the Holy Spirit working within us. With that in mind, let's look at the parable Luke records after Jesus' teaching on prayer.

Luke 11:5-13

There are several truths that I want to point out this morning
from this particular passage — a partial picture if you will.

I. The Parable *Illustrates* the Place of *Persistency* in Our Prayers.

· Our covenant relationship *is* the *root* for the *confidence* in our request.

v.5 "Suppose one of you shall have a *friend*, and shall go to him at midnight and say '*friend*' ...."

What the *friendship* did,
what the *relationship* did was provide the means
for the first individual to approach the second.

Jesus said to His disciples,
"I call you no more servants, but friends...." —Jn 15:15

Abraham, the father of faith

was called the friend of God! —James 2:23

It is important that we understand this,
because too often we come to God
with a sense of expectation
but with the wrong basis.

That works in the opposite also,
there are times we don't come to God
because we don't feel worthy!

Our *relationship* grants us *certain* ***rights***
but does not guarantee us *specific* ***results***
according to what we dictate.

Because of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ,
we can have confidence in our approach to Him.

Heb 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come ***boldly*** to the throne of grace, in order that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (NKJ)

That word *boldly* means outspoken, bluntness,
and by implication *confidence*.

· Our covenant relationship is *not* the reason for the ***response to*** the request.

v.8 "I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs!"

"If shameless persistence can obtain a boon from a neighbor, then certainly earnest prayer will receive our Father's answer."

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
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It's not the *relationship* that generates the response, but the depths of the requirement or the revealed need of the individual. That is not to say that the relationship isn't important, in this parable, the one individual approached the other because of their friendship.

Many come to God with a "wish list" of things that they want Him to do for them and they base their expectations of provision on their *relationship*, or on the basis of their *behavior* in that relationship, rather than on the fact of their *need*.

"It's not by works of righteousness that we have done but according to His mercy that He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and *renewing of the Holy Ghost*!" —Titus 3:5f

James 5:19 "... The effective prayer of a righteous person can accomplish much."

II. The Parable *Illuminates* the Place of *Consistency* in Our Prayers for the Holy Spirit.

This is where the walls go up.
This is where the lines are drawn.
One group states that the Holy Spirit is given *once*
and that is at conversion.
Another group states that the Holy Spirit is given *twice*
once at conversion and *again* (in fulness) at baptism
Still another group concedes the *theory* of the second
while maintaining the *theology* of the first,
the difference being not in receiving more of the H.S.
but of Him receiving more of you!
Meanwhile, the new convert looks on ...
Where does he stand? Generally, alone,
at least until one or the other gets hold of him
then he is swayed ....
What's right? Who's wrong?
May I suggest all of them?
The only one who's right is Jesus!
In fact, according to **v.9** we are commanded to ask!
It is an imperative!
v.9 *Ask~! ... seek~! ... knock~!*
(Make a commitment to a long-term way of doing something.)
Three times over we are told to
keep on exercising our rights before His throne..
There is the persistent exercise until we receive our request,
that was demonstrated in **v.8**
v.9ff demonstrate *consistency* in our exercise
because of our need
v.10 emphasizes God's willingness to meet our need.
"For ***everyone***..."
Phil 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (NKJ)
May we say that the degree of our realized need
is revealed in our *consistency* or lack of it?
Vs.1-4 are Luke's account of the *Model Prayer*

v.3 "Give~! us each day our daily bread...."
v.5 The need is for *bread*!
v.8 The need that is met is *bread*!
v.11 The need of the son is for *bread*!
v.11 If we as human beings, with all our shortcomings
and our tendency towards fleshly living
will meet the consistent needs of our children
with exactly what they need.
It stands to reason that God will too!
What does the Holy Spirit do?
He reveals Jesus ... Jesus, the Bread of Life!
He reveals the meaning of the Word
He breaks the bread for us
so that our eyes are opened, and we see Jesus!
2 Cor 4:16 Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
Lam 3:22-23 Because of the LORD's great mercy we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. **23** They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (NIV)

As we come to the Lord's table
let us come in obedience
let us come in recognition of our need for His Holy Spirit
to break the bread of life to us.

Communion Celebration

Hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness* Thomas O. Chisholm ~1923

1
"Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Refrain
"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!

2
Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

3
Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!