

Sermon on the Mount
Lesson #19
“Kingdom Responsibilities”
Explore Kingdom Possibilities III

Matthew 7:7-11

Scripture: Matthew 5:20 *“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

Introduction:

My dad and I took our boys to Colorado camping and there the most unexpected thing happened. Late one night when the campfire had died down, I saw my dad over by the truck just standing there like he was going to be there a while. So I went over to him and saw that he was starring at the sky.

As I got closer I looked up also and saw perhaps the greatest thing my eyes had ever seen. We were so far from town that the Verizon man couldn't get a signal....literally. And with no city lights anywhere around the heavens lit up in all their splendor. The Milky way was right over head and I felt as if I could reach out and touch it.

We never spoke a word, but starred at the majestic creation of God for more than a couple of hours. And each night of our camping trip we both looked forward to doing it again.

I couldn't help but think of our efforts to explore space...we sent Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin in Apollo 11 to the moon and now we are planning to go to Mars. We explore the depths of the ocean, we climb mountains and our chemists diligently search for cures to age old health problems.

Our middle name should be possibility. The United States of Possibility America. This type of thinking has grown our country to be the most productive nation that has ever existed.

Transitional Statement:

Church, in some ways, we have failed in our efforts regarding kingdom business. In many cases we have become complacent. We have dreamed to small. We have sough to little. I would like to propose today that God can work through us in mighty ways....or His work can be limited by our lack of effort.

I. Ask, Seek and Knock

Matthew 7:7-8

*"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8
"For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."*

- A. First of all we must remember that God is over all things. He sits above the circle of the earth watching all things (Isa 40:22). The last few chapters of Job make it very clear that God sees and knows about everything that happens on this earth. Nothing is shielded from His eyes. He knows each one of us individually, and He knows what we need and even what we don't need.
 - 1. I'm really glad about this because most of the time I don't know what I need, and sometimes am tempted to think that nobody else knows what I need.
 - 2. But that's not true...God is always there.
- B. So understanding how intimately involved God is in each of our lives....I just can't help but to wonder here why God just doesn't figure out what we need and give it to us.
 - 1. You know that is what parents do with babies. Babies can't think or reason for themselves so the parents make their decisions for them.
 - 2. And a big part of what Jesus is doing in this sermon is trying to help His disciples and us today to mature spiritually in Him.
- C. And a big part of Christian maturity is connected to the effort that we make.
 - 1. Jesus is telling us:
 - a. If we want somethingwe need to ask for it
 - b. If we want to find something.....we must search for it
 - c. If we want doors opened.....we must knock
 - d. Sadly enough many Christians today want a spoon feed religion, where they don't really have to participate in any way.
 - 2. Jesus is telling us that God, even though He knows our real needs, He wants us to become aware of our own needs... in Him.
 - a. He wants us to be willing participants in His will and our destiny
- D. Think for a minute about how much we can grow spiritually if:
 - 1. We learn to faithfully engage God in prayer **asking** about our needs and desires.

- a. Now when I say faithfully, it naturally brings up the other side of the coin....some prayers are not centered around faithful consideration of God and His plan and will in our lives.
 - 1) Some folks seem to think that prayer is like a big spiritual bank in the sky....you pull up, and put your request in little air tube and in a few minutes your desire comes back to you.
 - a) This lack of faith makes God out to be some spiritual teller in the sky...there to fulfill our every little want and desire.
 - b) Some people approach God only for handouts.
 - 2) **Prayer is about God's will**
- b. What if we learn to ask God what He wants in our lives.
 - 1) What if we made prayer more than a one sided phone conversation and picked up His word and listened to Him more.
 - 2) What if we trusted that His answers are always right and true
 - 3) Not only that, what if we were to examine each of His answers with the thought in mind of knowing Him and His will more and not just what we are going to get or be denied.
- c. If we understood more about faithful asking in our prayer:
 - 1) We would understand more clearly the words of Jesus in John 14:13 that says: "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do..."
 - a) If you jumped right to getting every little desire of your heart if you ask using Jesus' name...you have completely missed the intention of Jesus.
 - b) The jewel of this verse is found in the phrase "*in My name*", because in the Greek it means by My authority.

-When you think of Jesus' authority in the New Testament...one passage comes screaming off the page....Matthew 28:18-20. In this passage Jesus connects the total package of His authority to the salvation of men's souls.
 - c) So when our asking is coupled with God's intention...He will give us each request

- d. When asking is right the peace that surpasses all understanding will beat out the worry and anxieties of this life and guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus Philippians 4:6-7
- e. You might say...hey, this takes a lot of effort...Yes !

- 1) Relationship takes effort.

- 2) And God's eternal plan is not a matter of happenstance...but a matter of urgent effort, played out each day in our lives.

2. Secondly think about how much we could grow spiritually if we became real **seekers** of God and His will.

- a. My grandpa loved to tell one particular story about his dad. They were sitting in church one day and the preacher spouted off some stuff that didn't jive with the scripture, so my great grandfather went up to him after church and told him that what he was saying didn't match the scriptures. The preacher (named Brother Outlaw) looked at my great grandfather in the eye and simply said.... "you have to know what side your bread is buttered on". So began a quest of sorts that lead my great grandfather to church after church seeking the truth. Apparently they even went to bible debates which were much more common in those days. Then finally they ended up at the Tenth and Rockford Church of Christ in Tulsa where the sweet words of truth from scripture ended his quest.

- b. The view of many Christians today is that since they have found the Lord...no more seeking is needed.

- 1) But Jesus here points to an ongoing activity

- 2) A continual seeking of God's direction in our lives.

- a) Jeremiah 10:23 says:

- "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps."*

- c. To what ends will you go to find the Lord's way in your life?

- 1) We live in a lazy culture which seems to avoid anything difficult.

- 2) But God wants us to earnestly seek after Him and His will.

- a) Moses reminded the children of Israel that seeking is something that is to happen with all the heart. Deut 4:29

- b) And Paul says in Col 3:23

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,”

c) Isaiah reminds Israel of a great truth, ...that they must seek Lord while He may be found.... Isa 55:6

-Implicit with this statement is that we can wait to late.

d. What if we seek with all our hearts to know God and be transformed into His imagine....and give up trying to shape Him into our image.

1) How many more souls could the authority of Christ reach through us?

3. And thirdly, think about how much we could grow spiritually if we **knocked** on the doors of opportunity instead of just waiting for them to open.

a. Seemingly our Christian method of understanding God’s will in our lives has simply dwindled down to *“if the door is open it must be God’s will”*

1) Don’t get me wrong open doors might reflect God’s will

a. But God directs us to search for His will through the transformation of our minds, so that we will be able to know what the will of God is in our lives
Romans 12:1-2

b. God wants us to be explorers of His will.

1) He wants us to scope out kingdom potential

2) To boldly go where no man has gone before.....

c. The Apostle Paul was constantly looking for kingdom opportunity

1) On many occasions God opened the door for him

a) In Athens God gave him opportunity on Mars Hill

2) Sometimes God closed the door...He prevented Paul through the Holy Spirit, from going to Asia...Acts 16:6

4. And this *“asking, seeking and knocking”* are an every day continual thing.

a. Ask, seek and knock are all present tense Greek verbs, which points to the continual need for them in our lives.

5. Needless to say the context is quite clear...sometimes we have not because we ask not, and we don't find because we aren't looking and doors remained closed because we never knock.

II. For an example Jesus explains that earthly fathers know how to take care of their sons

Matthew 7:9-10

9"Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10"Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?"

- A. Here Jesus is pointing out that when our children ask us for the most basic of necessities...particularly food, that we provide for them.
 1. If anyone of our kids came to us with a rumbling belly and tell us that they were hungry, we wouldn't give them a rock and tell them to go play and be quite.
 - a. Because a rock can't fill an empty belly
 - b. And a rock in this case is completely opposite of the child's needs
 2. Or if our kids said they were hungry...we certainly wouldn't give them a snake, would we? Whether the snake here is alive or dead it still represents danger.
 - a. And it actually adds to their problem at hand.

B. Now Jesus brings home the point in verse 11

11 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

1. *"If you then, being evil,..."*
 - a. It seems that this is in context of a comparison against God
 - b. In-others-words if you with your limited view and understanding of all things both in the physical and spiritual realm....can give good gifts.
 - 1) How much more can God give good gifts?

C. I think here that Jesus is telling us to tie off to an anchor that is steadfast and sure.

1. An anchor of trust in God.
 - a. Trust that He knows all things
 - b. A trust that He is working out all things according to His eternal will

D. The psalmist says in 84:11

*11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD gives grace and glory;
No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.*

E. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:28

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

F. And 2 Peter 1:3 tells us basically that God supplies all of our needs.

Conclusion:

By way of conclusion, what kind of effort have you make for God's kingdom?

Are you an explorer of God's kingdom?

Are you engaged in the kingdomor trying to ride the side line?

Is God's mighty work being played out in your life....or limited?

And finally are you living your life trusting that God knows what you need and don't need...and will you trust in Him?