

Prayer Week

Ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you

January 16, 2011

Scripture Reading - Matthew 7:7-11

For those expecting to start the new Isaiah series today I want to apologize...

Nothing is more encouraging to our faith and our prayer life than answered prayer

- That's why I shared lot's of stories of answered prayer during prayer week
 - o Stories from the Bible
 - Daniel (Daniel 2)
 - Elijah (James 5)
 - The early church (Acts 12)
 - o Stories from the church today
 - Fresh Wind Fresh Fire
 - South Korea
 - o Stories from our church
 - My friend who miraculously healed in mid-October
 - *How will you respond to tragedy?* (October 17)
 - Bert's answer to prayer
 - Two more from this past week
 - R's prayer for patience
 - My prayer for P

Nothing is more discouraging to our faith and prayer life than unanswered prayer

- For most of us, our primary form of prayer is petition. Though we know we should be praising God, thanking God, and confessing our sins to God in prayer as well, we spend most of our time asking Him for things in hopes that He'll give them to us. This is especially true when our backs are against the wall.
 - o Trouble with Mr. Kakageby

- Unfortunately, when God doesn't answer our prayers (or at least answer in the way we want Him to) it can really throw us for a loop, especially when our back is against the wall. When God doesn't come through for us, it is easy to feel abandoned and unloved by Him and to begin to question His goodness and perhaps even His existence.
- As we seek to become more and more a praying church in 2011 and to pray BIG prayers to God, I don't want this to happen to us. That's why I preached a sermon called *When God Answers No* on April 11th of last year, and that's why I'm preaching this sermon today.

Four important things to keep in mind when our prayers go unanswered

1) God's will is always done

- Genesis 1:1 (ESV)**
¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
- Colossians 1:16-17 (ESV)**
¹⁶ ...all things were created through him...¹⁷ ...in him all things hold together.
- Job 42:2 (ESV)**
² "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
- Psalms 135:6 (ESV)**
⁶ Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.
- Matthew 10:29 (NIV)**
²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.
- Ephesians 1:11 (ESV)**
¹¹ ...him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

2) God's will for His children is always good

- Romans 8:28 (NIV)**
²⁸ And we know that in all things God works *for the*

good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

b. **Psalms 84:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. *No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.*

c. **Matthew 7:7-11 (ESV)**

⁷ "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 the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ *If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

3) God always says yes to His children when their will aligns with His

a. **John 15:7 (ESV)**

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

b. **John 14:13-14 (ESV)**

¹³ Whatever you ask ~~in my name~~ (that is consistent with my will), this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything ~~in my name~~ (that is consistent with my will), I will do it.

- i. "Praying in Jesus' name means praying in a way consistent with His character *and His will* (a person' name in the ancient world represented what the person was like)..." (ESV Study Bible p. 2053)

c. **Matthew 7:7-11 (ESV)**

⁷ "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 the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?

¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

d. **James 4:1-4 (ESV)**

¹ What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

e. **2 Chronicles 7:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

f. **Mark 11:22-24 (ESV)**

²² And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

4) When God says no, His children can always trust Him

a. **Matthew 6:9-10 (NIV)**

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray: "'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, *your will be done* on earth as it is in heaven.

b. **Daniel 3:16-18 (ESV)**

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need

to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

c. **2 Samuel 12:20-23 (ESV)**

²⁰ Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped...²² He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' ²³ But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

d. **2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (ESV)**

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

e. **Matthew 26:39-44 (ESV)**

³⁹ ..."My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."...⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."...⁴⁴...he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.

f. "Trust God" the main theme of Faith like Potatoes

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

