

Jesus Teaches About Prayer Luke 11:1-13

by David Servant

Jesus teaches that boldness and expectation are key to effective prayer, and that we should shamelessly ask God for the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Luke 11:5, Luke 11:13, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:26

Topics: "Prayer", "Holy Spirit"

Description

David Servant preaches on the importance of boldness in prayer, emphasizing the need to have faith and persistence when making requests to God. He highlights Jesus' teaching on prayer, using the illustration of a man who shamelessly asked his friend for bread late at night, showcasing the boldness and faith required in prayer. Jesus encourages believers to expect much from God, boldly asking for what they need and not settling for less. Additionally, Jesus teaches that believers, even those who are born again and have the Holy Spirit, should shamelessly ask God for the Holy Spirit to empower them for service and witnessing.

Transcript

Like most teachers, Jesus sometimes repeated to one group what He'd already taught another group. Some of what we read today Jesus taught during His sermon on the mountainside (see Matthew 6-7), so we'll only consider what is new to us.

Teaching about prayer, Jesus used an illustration about a man who was visited late at night by a friend. Unfortunately, he didn't have any food to feed his guest, so he walked to another friend's house to ask if he could borrow three loaves of bread. The problem was that it was midnight, and the friend and his family were already in bed. Naturally, it was a bother for him to get up and give the man three loaves of bread, and he even said so.

If you've been reading from the New Living Translation, the translators have, I believe, taken a little too much liberty at this point in the story. They make it sound as if the man who needed the bread ignored his friend's excuse and continued to knock on his door until he finally got up and gave him what he wanted. But the original Greek actually says that his friend got out of bed and gave him bread because of his shamelessness. That is, he was very bold to make such a request, expecting a favor so late at night. It took a lot of nerve to do what he did, and it showed that he had great faith in the kindness of his friend. His friend felt obligated to live up to what was obviously expected of him, and so he got up and gave the man what he wanted. Even the New Living Translation says that the friend gave the man what he wanted so

his reputation wouldn't be damaged. That is, he wanted the man to continue to think that he was a true friend and a kind person.

Jesus' point is not that we should continually repeat our prayer requests to God so that He'll eventually give us what we want. In fact, Jesus taught during His sermon on the mountainside that we shouldn't continually repeat the same words in prayer, because God knows what we need before we ask (see Matthew 6:7-8). Rather, Jesus was encouraging us to have boldness when we make our requests. People who have faith ask boldly, just like the man in Jesus' story. In everyday life, people who get what they want are people who expect to get what they want. People who expect little get little, and they don't ask, seek or knock. The same thing is true in prayer. People who expect little of God get little from God. But people who expect much of God boldly ask Him for what they want and get it. They have an "I don't take 'no' for an answer" type of attitude, and persist in faith.

To further encourage us in prayer, Jesus used an illustration about children making requests of their fathers. Kids are world-famous for boldly asking their parents for many things. Jesus said that if fathers grant their children what they ask for, how much more will God give His children the Holy Spirit when they ask Him. This indicates that one of the things God expects us to request boldly from Him is the Holy Spirit. And it teaches us that we should shamelessly make our requests to our heavenly Father just as we do with our earthly fathers.

Q. Do born-again Christians who already have the Holy Spirit living inside them have any business asking God for the Holy Spirit?

A. Yes, they do. Jesus' promise that God would give the Holy Spirit was given to people who can call God their heavenly Father. They could only be people who are already born again, otherwise God is not their Father. And people who are born again already have the Holy Spirit living in them because they're born of the Spirit. So, Jesus' promise definitely applies to those who are already born again. The New Testament tells us that God wants to baptize His children in the Holy Spirit in order to empower them for service and witnessing, but they must boldly ask Him.

Q. If you are born again, have you shamelessly asked your heavenly Father for the Holy Spirit?

Application: Are you, like so many people, waiting for opportunity to knock on your door? Or are you, as Jesus encouraged us, boldly knocking on opportunity's door? Are you expecting much from God? Does it show by your bold requests and acts of faith?

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