

Matthew 7:7-11

Humility & Confidence in Prayer

How many of you are familiar with escape rooms?

This is a new thing that popped up a few years ago. Escape rooms first started as a video game you could get on your phone but now they have real buildings that have multiple rooms that can be ordinary all the way to weird, creepy and extravagant.

Escape rooms go something like this. You, and maybe a few others, enter a room and the only way to exit the room you must find all the clues within the room that will lead you to a key or a way of unlocking the door.

It is challenging and takes a lot of searching, thought and working together to figure out how all the clues work together to find how to exit within the allotted time. As with anything you do, the more rooms you experience the more understanding you have of how clues can work together to create a path to freedom.

In a way, this is what Jesus is introducing to us this morning. There are many, many things that Jesus wants to reveal to His followers. Jesus calls these things the mysteries of heaven or the keys of understanding the kingdom of heaven. But this heavenly kingdom knowledge and understanding only comes by asking, seeking and knocking upon heavens doors for insight and revelation.

Look back at **Matthew 6:33**, “**Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.**”

Seeking an understanding of how God’s kingdom operates on earth and in your life is the key to freedom, the key to escape all the anxiety created by this life. Not every question is going to be answered, certainly

not answered in the way and in the timing we would like, but a deeper understanding of how the Kingdom of God operates and what Jesus did on the cross for you will give you great peace, joy and build your trust and faith in God and His plan.

Let's pick up our study of Jesus' teachings as found in Matthew.

Matthew 7:7-11, “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 who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 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? 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!”

As we think about this prayer we think about how much our God cares for us. Ask, seek, know and what will occur? You will receive, find or the doors will be opened for you.

God wants you to know how things. Now as we think about this particular teaching from Jesus, one of the things we need to realize is this.

1. Asking, seeking and knocking comes on the heels of Jesus' kingdom teachings

There are so many possible interpretations of what this passage means but I believe that after Jesus teaches how a disciple handles themselves concerning judging others, anxiety, worry, purity, love and many other things, He realizes that His disciples might be a little bit overwhelmed.

So what does He do? He tells them that they only need to go on a journey of seeking, asking and knocking on heaven's door.

Ask, seek and knock at the door for what?

2. Kingdom power, blessings, protection & provision from the hand of God

Jesus wants to show us how we can be empowered by the Holy Spirit not to be anxious, not to be judgmental, how to be loving and forgiving in our relationships with others. He teaches us about these things in chapters 5, 6 & 7 and then He says, come to Me, ask of Me, knock at My door and I will lead you.

As I was studying for this sermon I was drawn into a lesson from the Psalms that teaches us exactly what Jesus was saying when He says ask, seek and knock.

If you have been following the Wednesday night Facebook broadcast you will be familiar with this teachings as it is from Psalm 25.

David of David and Goliath fame is struggling with a number of things in his life. He is the king of Israel and, as God describes him, a man after God's own heart. Let's read and see if we can learn from the things David is going through.

Look with me at verse 1 of Psalms 25.

Psalm 25:1, "To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul."

This first verse is a really telling lead-in to this Psalm. By David saying he lifts up his soul to God, he is saying that he is lifting up everything he is and everything he may become to the Lord. He is putting all of his trust in the plans and changes the Lord has for him.

Your soul is that place where you live. It is your personality, your decision making place, the place where your emotions reside. It is the core of your being. I think when David says I lift up my soul to you, he

is saying God, You do what you want in my life and in my heart. Kind of a total commitment thing.

It is this kind of surrender that David speaks of throughout this Psalm.

Vs. 2-3 O my God, in You I trust.. Do not let me be ashamed; Do not let my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none of those who wait for You will be ashamed; Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed.”

David kind of goes back and forth in these verses. I trust you. Do not let me be ashamed, none of those who wait for you will be ashamed. Maybe he is calling out for God’s strength not to be ashamed, not to be ashamed by his behavior in sight of God.

The other great truth David tells us here is that

3. Those who wait for the Lord will never be ashamed.

That is hard to do at times isn’t it. Wait for the Lord to move.

So many times we see the problem out in front of us and we want to jump in and fix it. Or we want go ahead and move in the solution we have in our mind. Sometimes that works. Sometimes we have been given the experience and wisdom to do the right thing. But sometimes, when we are a little unsure or hesitant I think these are the times we should wait upon the Lord because He may have a different solution or a different timing for whatever it is that we are facing.

This is happening with me right now in a small way. I have one of my cars for sale and I was hoping someone would jump right on it and it would be sold within a day after posting it. I think we all have that hope of a quick sale, a quick solution.

But that was not happening. Of course I already had a lot of plans of where the money of the sale of the car was going to go and for me, it is into the next car project. But if I am not patient and allow some time to go by, I could easily lower the price and miss out on someone coming along and buying it for the price I am asking for it.

That might happen anyway but at least I know I have been patient and haven't made any quick decisions. It is those quick decisions that we regret isn't it? They cost us. On impulse we invest or buy something or do something and then it turns around and bites us. That is one of the reasons I think God would have us wait on Him. To protect us and then maybe provide an avenue we didn't even know about to bless us with.

David continues.

Vs. 4, “Make me know Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day.”

David is really striving for God to take over His life. To change the way he does life. To allow God to lead him. He admits that God is His salvation meaning two things.

4. David knows his own leaning towards sin and he knows that it is only God that can save him

This is a great prayer for all of us isn't it? We all know our tendency towards sin in its many different forms. Pride, lust, greed, selfishness, critical spirit and the list is long. That is just my list! How about yours? We are certainly like David that we need salvation from ourselves in various ways don't we?

Vs. 6, “Remember, O Lord, Your compassion and Your lovingkindness, for they have been from of old.”

I am not sure of David's motives, reminding God of His compassion and lovingkindness. I don't think God needs to be reminded of who He is. Maybe David is reminding himself of who God is. Maybe he gains strength by giving God praise for being such a compassionate and loving God.

Vs. 7, Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your lovingkindness remember me, for Your goodness sake, O Lord.”

Here I think David is wrestling with something we wrestle with but we don't have to. I think we can all look back upon our lives and see areas where we didn't live up to God's standards. Areas in our life where we slipped, where we strayed or drifted away from God for a season. But we are in a unique position that David was not. We have Jesus.

5. We are covered by the blood of the Lamb and our past sins are forgotten as far as the east is from the west.

They are no longer remembered by God.

God takes us as we are and moves us into a new future. The past pages of our life cannot re-written but the new ones have yet to written and that is what God cares about. Who are you now, in this minute.

Are you seeking me now, allowing Me to take you on the paths I have laid out for you? I don't care about your yesterdays, I care about your tomorrows. This is the way I believe God thinks.

Look at Vs. 8-9, “Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice and He teaches the humble in His way.”

It takes great humility to allow the Lord to guide our steps doesn't it?

I am spending time with a young man who has surrendered his life to the Lord but he really doesn't fully understand what that means yet. I think sometimes the church makes following Jesus a little more difficult than it needs to be.

To follow Jesus means to begin to learn of Him and His ways. To spend time in His scriptures and seek to understand what He was all about. The gospels, Matthew, Mark Luke and John are full of the words and actions of Jesus. It doesn't take very much time reading through the gospels to get a sense of who Jesus is and what He expects of those individuals who want to follow Him.

But here is...

6. One thing that is a must to follow Jesus, Humility

It takes a humble heart that says I need you Jesus and that avails itself to Him and His teachings. It takes a heart that wants to set it own way of doing life aside and allowing Jesus to set the course. Humility is a must.

The promise is He will instruct the sinners. He teaches the humble.
How?

The work Jesus wants to do in our hearts is not something we can figure out and plan. But we can show up to where the process takes place. Back to His word. The more time we spend in God's word, specifically the gospels, the more direct teachings we get from Jesus.

To be truthful, until we have a grasp of the message of Jesus there is limited value to moving on into the rest of the Bible. This is, I believe, the starting point for all Christians.

If you want to experience the blessings of a right relationship with Jesus, spend time in the gospels until God says okay, move on.

Lead me, teach me, show me your compassion and Your lovingkindness.
This is the call of a humble heart that God hears and answers.

This is the call of Jesus. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to then and will dine with them and they with Me.

Our opening the door of our heart to Jesus is called humility.

Praying, asking, seeking and knocking, this is humility. When you do this then your Father who is in heaven will give to those who ask Him.

In closing I wanted to show you this picture.

Guess what happened a week ago? My car was sold for what I was hoping to get out of it. I didn't need to do anything but wait upon the Lord.

He is a good God who will not only answer your prayers for strength purity and Christ-likeness, but He also enjoys giving us some of the desires of our hearts. He is a good, good God, Amen?

Let's pray.