

God Answers Prayer

(Matthew 7:7-11)

Introduction:

1. This morning we covered several Bible principles that relate to prayer in worship.
2. Prayer is an important activity in Christian worship; however, prayer is not limited to worship assemblies.
3. Each Christian is to be devoted to prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
4. Whether we are praying collectively or individually, we need to remember that God answers prayer.
5. This evening we are using the Lord's teaching in Matthew 7:7-11 as the foundation for our lesson.
6. In these verses Jesus encouraged His followers to be persistent in prayer.
7. He encouraged His followers to pray persistently by giving His assurance that God answers prayer.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.7-8) JESUS GAVE HIS ASSURANCE THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYER
 - A. He stated that if we do our part, God will do His part.
 - B. (vs.7) Our responsibilities include "asking," "seeking," and "knocking."
 1. Ask: to make a request of someone greater (Philippians 4:6 -- *"in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"*)
 2. Seek: to look [search] for something in order to find it (like the merchant seeking pearls -- Matthew 13:45-46)
 3. Knock: to continually and persistently knock in order to gain an entrance (like Peter knocking at Mary's gate -- Acts 12:13-16)
 - C. If we ask, seek, and knock, Jesus said that God will give us what we ask, He will cause us to find what we seek, and He will open to us (He repeated this in vs.8).
- II. SOME PEOPLE OBJECT TO THIS BECAUSE GOD DOES NOT ALWAYS GRANT EVERY REQUEST
 - A. The Bible provides examples of requests that God did not grant.
 1. (Matthew 26:36-46) Jesus prayed 3 times for God to spare Him from dying on the cross.
 - a. The Father did not grant His Son's requests.
 - b. Jesus never stopped believing in prayer (Luke 23:46).
 2. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Paul asked the Lord 3 times to remove his thorn in the flesh.
 - a. The Lord did not grant Paul's requests.
 - b. Paul never stopped believing in prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

B. We must remember that there are other conditions for acceptable prayer.

1. For the sake of emphasis, let us be reminded that:
 - a. we must ask "*believing*" (Matthew 21:22)
 - b. we must ask in Jesus' name (John 16:23)
 - c. we must not pray with selfish motives (James 4:3)
 - d. we must be in good standing with God (1 Peter 3:12)
 - e. we must ask according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15).
2. In addition, we must be obedient to God (1 John 3:22).

III. (vs.9-11) JESUS ASKED 3 QUESTIONS TO FURTHER ASSURE US THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

A. (vs.9-10) The first 2 questions are based on the father-son relationship.

1. (vs.9) A father who loves and cares for his son will not give his son a stone if he asks for bread.
2. (vs.10) A father who loves and cares for his son will not give his son a snake if he asks for a fish.

B. (vs.11) Jesus used this reasoning to show that God will give that which is good to His children who make requests of Him (James 1:17).

Conclusion:

1. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus assured His followers that God answers prayer.
2. The fact that God answers prayer should encourage us to pray persistently.
3. Jesus also dealt with persistence in prayer in Luke 18:1-8.
4. What kind of faith do you demonstrate in your prayer life?
5. Let us consider these things as we continue through the new year.