



Luke 11:5–12

5 Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, “Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.” 7 And suppose the one inside answers, “Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.” 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up

and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[e] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. 9 'So I say to you: ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 'Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

Reflection

(Today's reflection is given by Craig Tubman)

I wonder what is your view of God? How do you understand his character?

It is in fact a more complex question than even as Christians we care to think. For it is not uncommon for us to project all sorts of things onto the character of God. Things that we don't even know we are projecting. Things from our past, fears that we hold from our own earthly fathers, frustrations and pressures we absorbed from our mothers. When we come to reflect upon the most powerful being and his character, there are often all sorts of things from our

own story that we can unhelpfully project onto our perception of God's character.

We can have the angry father view of God. We can hold a view of a God who rejects, frustrates and always makes us feel unworthy. We can view God as a cosmic Santa - who we try and be good for in return for gifts. We can view God as simply distant and distracted. We can hold a view of God as meek and mild - loving but not powerful.

We're very good at projecting all sorts of things onto the character of God.

But as we find ourselves following Jesus to Jerusalem in Luke's Gospel we learn many things about following him and the Fatherly God Jesus reveals to us. Some

things may well be surprising.

Yesterday we read of Jesus teaching on prayer – in fact his invitation to pray to God as ‘father’ was revolutionary. And today Jesus encourages us to be bold in asking things from our heavenly father because he is a God who loves to give good things.

In the first image today, Jesus provides the picture of a persistent door knocker, who eventually gets more than what he asked for. Jesus then encourages us to “ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you”. He then concludes with an observation that even if we as broken humans know how to give good things, how much more will God, who is perfect, know how to give good things.

This whole section from Jesus is an encouragement for you and I to see that through faith in the Son we come into God's family and he is the heavenly father who is on our side! He wants our good and he will give us good things! Jesus has just given us a framework for prayer and now he is encouraging us to actually use it!

Think & Pray

It's a great day to reflect on your own prayer life. What's your conversation with God like? This sort of question is often trailed by a deep sense of guilt but let's not take that approach today. I'm sure none of us feel like we pray as much as we could. But the fact is there is no quota of prayers with God. You've never fallen short or exceed-

ed the number required, because our walk with him is a relational experience not a 'to do list'. What Jesus reminds us of today is that God is a God who likes to give good things, he is on your side and Jesus invites you to pray with persistence and to ask things of God.

You may be thinking, do I just ask anything of God? Well, on one level, yes! You can bring all thoughts and feelings and requests to God in prayer. But to be fair to the context of these words from Jesus, we do have on one side of them the framework of the Lord's Prayer and on the other side the promise from Jesus that God will give you his Spirit. You can pray for a bigger house, a faster car, more personal status and power at work and God in his graciousness may provide those things,

but my guess is that Jesus is encouraging a persistent and bold prayer life that is in line with what will bring us freedom and joy. God indeed desires to give us good things. And I take it they are things that lead us to pray ‘your Kingdom come’, ‘your will be done’, ‘forgive us our sins and we forgive others who sin against us’, ‘lead us not into temptation’.

Isn't it interesting that in the final verse Jesus says: “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” Galatians reminds us that to stay in step with the Holy Spirit is to put to death the desires of the flesh and to bear the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness

and self-control.

As we walk with Jesus on this road to Jerusalem, he encourages us to talk with our heavenly Father the way he does – intimate, trusting, persistent and with bold requests. He has given us the framework of prayer and he urges us to ask for the Spirit to be at work in our lives.

What a great day to reflect upon not only your own prayer life, but the God to whom you are praying. Generous, loving, and willing to give those things which will bring freedom and that which is truly life.

Why not speak with this God now?