

Boldness: Will We Seek Him?

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[0 : 0 0] Well, welcome again as we continue our time in God's Word as we are talking about prayer, our power through prayer that we have available to us as followers of Jesus Christ made possible by the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

Today we're going to be talking about our boldness in prayer. Are we going to seek Him when we need Him as we're continuing this series?

The first week we started and talking about that we ask God for the things that we need and that prayer is not simply asking God for the things we need and maybe that we need to expand our understanding of what prayer is.

And for many of us, maybe our prayer life has been like this staying in one room of a house when maybe we need to explore prayer as being a whole house of prayer.

That prayer is more than simply asking God for things. And we also saw our first time together that we pray because we need God.

[1 : 1 4] We come to God because we need Him. We could really not do anything apart from Him. The second week we looked at Jesus' model prayer.

And we talked about how the disciples wanted to pray like Jesus did. And so they asked Him, Lord, teach us to pray. And then He gives us this model prayer. God, may Your name be hallowed throughout all the earth.

And then He gives how they ask God for different things. How we are to ask God for His glory, His grace, His gifts, and His guidance.

And today we're going to continue there in Luke chapter 11, talking about or trying to unpack a parable that Jesus gave His disciples after He gave them the model prayer.

Now this is a rather confusing parable. And I know it confused His disciples when He gave this parable.

[2 : 2 1] And just like His disciples were confused pretty much every time He gave a parable. And so they're asking Him, Lord, teach us to pray. And then He gives them this model prayer.

And then He says, I've got a story for you. And I can just imagine His disciples go, eyes rolling, oh no, not one of these quirky stories. Just tell us. But He proceeds to tell them a story.

And I'm sure they're kind of trying to figure out what does He mean in this. As a matter of fact, still, 2,000 years later, Bible scholars still don't understand completely this parable that Jesus gave.

So I'm not going to say today that I'm going to explain to you the parable and that's exactly what it means. Because Bible scholars still are unclear about it. And I'll show you what I mean by that as we get into this parable.

So let's go into Luke 11. We're going to be looking at verses 5 through 10 this morning. But I want us to go back to catch a little bit of context, back with Luke 11, chapter 11, verses 1 through 4.

[3 : 26] Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples.

So He said to them, When you pray, say, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins.

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us, and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Now we come to verse number 5, and here's the story that He gives them, His parable.

And He said to them, Which of you shall have a friend? And go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves. For a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him.

And he will answer from within, and say, The man, the household, the homeowner, will answer him from inside, and say, Do not trouble me. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed.

[4 : 30] I cannot rise and give to you. I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him, because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence, he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds.

And to him who knocks, it will be opened. Let's pray. Father, we pray this morning that you would help us to understand this parable, this story that Jesus gives, to teach a lesson to His disciples.

Father, help us to learn from which perspective to view this story this morning, and help us to understand what it means to be bold to come to you for our needs, and also for others' needs as well.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, in order for us to understand the full impact of this story, you have to go back, in your mind, to first-century Palestine.

[5 : 42] Now, the thing about, interesting thing about this story is, we're not talking about a guy going to his neighbor, to his three-bedroom, two-bath house.

Houses in first-century Palestine were one-room homes, typically. And so here we have a guy, it's midnight, and he's put his family to bed.

So what do you do, and where does everybody sleep in a one-room house? In the same room, right? And there were no beds. We have, many of you have traveled to Asia and places like that, that you don't sleep in a bed, you sleep on the floor.

And so they probably had a mat laid out, and everybody was asleep. So dad puts the kid number one to sleep, and kid number two to bed, kid number three, and it's his wife settled in, and he goes, he bolts the door, and he comes and settles down for the night.

That's the sleeping arrangement, most likely, that we see here. Now think about this. Middle of the night, someone needs to get up and go to the bathroom.

[6 : 51] It's not a simple thing. You've got to step over a brother, you've got to step over a sister, you've got to step over a mama. So it's a big deal if anybody is awakened.

And so what we have here is Jesus says, which of you will have a friend? Which one of you guys has a friend who is traveling?

It's midnight, knocks on your door, and in this day and age, hospitality was a big thing. If someone comes to you, not only was it the social thing to do, it was also the religious duty.

And so you have a friend who comes, and there were no, the way you did your food was you prepared your food for that day, and by the time you go to bed, all your food's gone.

And there were no pantries, there were no refrigerators, and so you got the, whoever, the woman of the house would get up early the next morning and be preparing, and they would prepare the meals for the day.

[7 : 54] Well, there was also no late night Taco Bell. Your friend comes over and says, hey, it's midnight, Taco Bell's still open, drive-thru's still open, and so let's go get something to eat.

Didn't have that. And so no bread, nothing to eat in the house, and so now, this guy has got two options. This friend has two options. Do I be a poor host and say, sorry, no food, you're going to have to go to bed hungry, or do I be a poor neighbor and go wake up my neighbor at midnight and ask him for three loaves of bread?

So here's what we see in the story so far, and but what we have is wondering who in this story is God.

Now think about it. Some of the other places where we see Jesus talking, we have Luke 15, just a few chapters over, where we have the story of the prodigal son.

And, oh, by the way, that clock, it's not almost four o'clock. I've been putting off getting a new clock, we haven't gotten one yet, so just ignore it. Now that I've said something, everybody's going to be looking at the clock, right? So in Luke 15, we have the story of the prodigal son or the father who is willing to receive this son.

[9 : 22] And so his disciples are going, hmm, let's see, I think I'm the prodigal son in this story, and I think the dad is God. Okay, that makes sense. But this story, okay, I think I'm the friend who needs the bread, but who's God in this story?

Is God the grumpy old guy who won't get up and give me and says, get up, go, I mean, get away? Okay, that doesn't sound like God. So it's a little bit confusing. So his disciples were going, okay, well, is God the grumpy old guy who says, go away?

Or, but I think I know I am the guy who needs the bread. So we have to understand also that Jesus' parables that he gave, not every piece of Jesus' parable was meant to have a profound meaning.

Jesus typically used a parable to give a story, to give a meaning, to make a point. But where we go wrong sometimes is we try to take a parable, unpack it, and make every single little piece of the parable have some profound meaning.

Jesus used a story to tell a meaning. That was as simple as it was. And so, is God this grumpy guy who won't get up to help his friend?

[10 : 45] I think Jesus was basically trying to say, this is how you approach God. This is how you approach the Heavenly Father. So we're going to unpack this as we go along and try to unpack this parable and understand what Jesus was trying to say about prayer.

And I think what we need to see is the key to understanding this parable. Not trying to make meaning of everything in the parable, but try to find how do we understand Jesus' point?

What point? What's the moral of this story? Well, I think the way to find that is to look at it through the perspective of the man in need. To look at this story, to look at this parable through the perspective of the person who needed the bread.

He had a responsibility to be hospitable to his traveling friend who comes in. He needs something. And so as we look at it through this perspective, we're going to look at it, I think, see three characteristics from the perspective of this man in need as he sees his neighbor.

So remember, we're looking at it through the perspective or through the lens of the person who had the need and he is going to perceive his neighbor as being able to provide this need.

[12 : 11] I think that's the way Jesus wants us to see our heavenly Father. And the first thing that we see here is, and you have in your notes, shameless praying.

We're going to see as we look at the terminology here what we mean by that. But the first thing that we see is that God is able.

God is able. Now what we find here as we are looking at this is the terminology that Jesus uses.

So we have a friend who has a need. He goes to his neighbor and what is he assuming? Well, what is the reason why he says that he comes to him?

He says he will give to him verse 11, or excuse me, chapter 11, verse 8, I say to you he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

[13 : 29] So what we see here, I think, is the fact that you have a need and you come to God and we view God as being able to provide.

In King James, it uses the word importunity. Now, I don't know about you, but most people don't use that word. other than in the King James.

So what does it mean? New King James has persistence. So a lot of times people will, this parable will be preached in terms of come to God and just be persistent and God's going to give to you.

Kind of like what we see in the story of the unjust judge in Luke chapter, I think it's Luke chapter 8 where the widow comes to the unrighteous judge and she asks for something and he says, go away.

I don't have time for you. And she keeps coming back and she keeps coming back and she keeps pestering him and she keeps pestering him and scripture says that he will finally give her what she's asking just to get rid of her.

[14 : 38] Now again, another story, another parable that Jesus gives is God, the unrighteous judge? No, of course not. But he's saying that we need to be persistent.

But here, I think it has a different meaning. So I looked up the term importunity in Webster's dictionary and this is what Webster says importunity or importune means.

Making annoying requests or demands. making annoying requests or demands. So what is Jesus saying?

Is Jesus saying just be annoying and go to God and ask God for whatever you need? Well, sort of.

Because if we look at the Greek word that Jesus used, it's a difficult word to translate. translate. It's a word that is a little bit difficult to translate in English because it means it's a cross between boldness and shamelessness.

[15 : 55] It's a cross between boldness and shamelessness. Do you know anyone who you would consider shameless? that means let me see if I can illustrate it.

Do you have someone that would be the one that would say let's say you've got a brand new vehicle. I mean still off the showroom floor new car smell new and they come to you and says oh I love your new car.

The wife and I are going on a 3,000 mile across the country vacation. Can we borrow your car? That's shameless. They're like no big deal right?

Why won't you let me borrow your car? And so that's the term that Jesus used. Someone who knows no social boundaries to the point where he's just shameless.

Why not ask? And so he says which of you will be like this friend who goes to his neighbor ask for three loaves of bread at midnight and make him get up and imagine this some dude knocking at your door and all of a sudden dad all these little eyes are popping open and they start fussing and so you're a little bit annoyed.

[17:16] But Jesus says you need to be like this shameless friend who just goes and asks. And so it's a little cross between boldness and shamelessness.

And so I think we are to be bold in our approach to God and understanding first of all when this guy goes to his friend would he have gone to his friend if he didn't think he was able to provide?

Probably not. And so he's thinking well you know I know he's got a bread stash somewhere and so I'll go knock on his door and ask for some bread.

So from his perspective he believed his neighbor was able to provide and we have to understand that God is able God is able to provide our needs because he has the supply.

God has the supply and we have to well let's go through some verses in the Old Testament that shows a little bit about the supply that God has.

[18:20] Let's look first of all at Psalm 50 verses 7 through 12 where he says hear oh my people and I will speak oh Israel and I will testify against you I am God your God I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings which are continually before me I will not take a bull from your house nor goats out of your folds for every beast of the forest is mine so why does God say I don't need your just routine your sacrifices that you're just doing out of duty and it's not from the heart God says because I don't need them he says I have every beast of the forest they're all mine the cattle and a thousand hills they're mine I know all the birds of the mountains as a matter of fact that's Larry that's

Mo he knows them all by name he says I know all the birds of the mountains and all the wild beasts of the field are mine what does this tell us God says I have the supply I own everything so if you come to me and ask it's mine to give so he has the supply but also we have to understand that he has the sovereignty he has the sovereignty he has the authority to give whatever it is someone ever come and someone says would you just kind of hold on to this and someone comes you say hey can I have some of that well I don't know if I have the authority to give it to you we'll have to wait and ask so and so well that's not a problem with God because God's got it and he's got the authority to use it so he's got the supply as well as the authority to use what he has he has a sovereignty let's look at

Job 42 together this morning Job chapter 42 and see not only does he have the supply God said I've got it all I've got the cattle I've got the wild beast I've got the birds I don't have any need because I own everything I created it all and so Job 42 2 I know that you can do this is Job saying I know that you can do everything and that no purpose of yours can be withheld from you what did Job understand God was sovereign and what he's saying is no purpose of yours can be thwarted if God makes up his mind to do something what is he going to do he will do it so what Job is saying is no purpose of yours can ever be thwarted nobody can ever do anything that would keep you from accomplishing your purpose God let's look at Psalm 33 33 10 and 11 33 verse 10 the

Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing he makes the plans of the peoples of no effect the counsel of the Lord stands forever the plans of his heart to all generations what does the psalmist here tell us I don't care who you are you can make whatever plan you want if God has a different plan you better change yours because God's plan is going to happen doesn't matter what China says or North Korea tries if God says it's not going to happen it's not going to happen and so we need to understand not only in politics not only in history not only global economies nothing happens without God's permission so God's in control he's sovereign let's also look at Proverbs 19 Proverbs 19 verse 21 there are many plans in a man's heart how many of you would agree with that

I mean you wake up and you go hey I'm going to do this I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that we have a lot of plans and some of us are dreamers I mean you have more plans than you've got years in your life you've got more plans than you probably have seconds in your life and so you're just always dreaming and planning something and so what scripture is telling us we've got we may have a lot of plans nevertheless the Lord's counsel that'll happen that will stand no matter what we may think or plan or think up God's will is going to be done so God is sovereign God's got the supply and God's got the authority over the supply now we may ask ourselves the question this is kind of a little aside and many people have thought this over the centuries well if God's sovereign why even ask him and I like things simple because God said to because

[23 : 43] God said to ask because God said to pray to him and so that is why we pray we pray because we need him but also we pray because he said to communicate to him so first of all we come to God shamelessly not worrying about how God is going to respond because God already said come to me so we come to him boldly because he is able the second characteristic that we see in this story is that God is approachable remember we're looking at this from the perspective of the man in need so this guy has a friend comes over at midnight friends hungry and so he needs to feed his friend and so in his mind he's thinking and some of you know people like this you know Frank he's probably not asleep they're probably up playing Monopoly and so no big deal Frank goes oh don't go over there and bother him he goes oh

Frank won't mind you got friends like that you know it's like three in the morning and they call you were you asleep uh yeah oh I just want to ask you something they ask you the most inane thing that could have waited until the next morning they were shameless you know they thought oh he'll be up he won't mind understand that God is approachable God is approachable and what we see the next thing is God invites us and I say this very carefully God invites us to bother him at any time I mean that's not the most positive thing to say but think about it I've had people come and say pastor I know you're busy and I hate to bother you but I've got this problem or

I've got this whatever but you know what from my perspective I want you to bother me and I have people say oh and I find out they had like this extreme major surgery and I find out like a week or so later and they go well we didn't want to bother you really I would have wanted you to bother me call me in the middle of the night I don't care I'll come I'll be there from God's perspective it's really not a bother God says please come to me don't think you're bothering me because sometimes we may think well you know guys God I know you're you know you're busy running the universe and everything but you know I've got this little issue that that I really want to come to listen to what I have to say and you know then you can go on with your important stuff you know running the universe and all no

I think everything we see in scripture especially the New Testament is God says we can come boldly before his throne of grace right we can come boldly because of what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary and I think this carries on the same idea here just boldly coming to him not wondering what not wondering is he going to be asleep because he's approachable that's the way God says he is with us so God is approachable and I believe he delights in revealing himself to those who are bold enough to come to him to those who are bold enough for what we think is a bother but it's really not a bother parents when your kids when your children or grandparents when your grandchildren come to you and want something and ask for something is it really a bother I mean they may catch you at an inopportune time but because you love them you will provide for them you will take care of that need and I probably dare say grandparents more so than probably parents parents will say oh get it well

I'll give it to you later oh honey come on I just load them up with candy load them up with stuff and send them back home to the parents right but it's not a bother it's not a bother at all so God is approachable God invites us to bother him at any time and I think in the story that Jesus gave it was midnight for a reason it was midnight for a reason because what was Jesus trying to get across to his disciples it's never too late it's never too late to come to God so I hear some people sometimes say well you know what I've gotten myself in this mess and it's probably too late to go to God with it because what can he do now it's never too late whatever we have going on in our life we were talking this morning about about Lauren whose stage five cancer has a week to two weeks left to live and you know one of the things is it ever too late to come to God can God heal yes he can so really it's never too late now

[29 : 08] God may choose to do this he may choose not to but what happened with Jesus and his friend Lazarus he waited till he was already dead well it obviously wasn't too late for Jesus the family thought it was too late the important thing is it's never too late to come to God go to him the second thing is it's also never too early it's also never too early because maybe you've got something looming on the horizon and you're wondering well it might be a little too early to talk to God about this maybe too early to pray about it I'll wait till no it's never too early to come to God with something you're thinking about something years down the road you pray God give me guidance help me when this comes along you know you're on your way home from the hospital with your brand new baby okay God I pray for their mate I pray that you be preparing their mate because maybe they're born yet maybe they're not born yet how many have you ever done that it's never too early it's never too early to approach

God boldly and say God I know this might be 18 20 some odd years from now but God I pray that you already start working on this it's never too late it's never too early and let's look at Philippians 4 6 most of you could quote this from memory be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God so no matter what no matter when if you have something you need come to God boldly and ask him for it and that brings us to the next thing is there is nothing too small I mean after all he was only asking for three loaves of bread he wasn't asking his neighbor for an entire meal he wasn't asking his neighbor to get up and cook a seven course meal just three loaves of bread so what we ask for to God is never too small but there is also nothing too great to come to God with so you may think well

God I just misplaced my keys that's not really a big thing I hate to bother you God but I misplaced my key well that is a big thing especially the price of keys now for some of these new vehicles right amen and so it's nothing too small but also it's nothing too big as a matter of fact what did Jesus invite his followers to do he said you say to this mountain move and it'll be moved and so really that's that's pretty great so no matter how small no matter how big we can ask now I ask this morning what's going on in your life right now that need the touch from God boldly approach him say God I need God thank you for hearing me thank you for answering this so God's able he's got it all God is approachable he says come boldly before the throne of grace and ask what you need and so that brings us to our third characteristic that we're going to look at this morning and that's this

God is active God is active so we have this friend who needed some bread he goes he's thinking to himself he won't mind friend probably saying oh it's kind of late don't bother him you know I don't mind you know I'll just wait till breakfast oh he won't mind he's approachable and I like the way he comes to him in verse seven or come to verse five and go to midnight knocks on his door how does how does he start off the conversation friend you know it's it's pretty good that he at least started it off that way because you know now that you know friendship is kind of on a very thin line right here and so he starts off with friend so he comes to him and says oh he's approachable he won't mind and also he's thinking it's not too late he may be up anyway no big deal and so one thing that I think we can see from his perspective is that God is active what does the Bible say about God and sleep he never sleeps nor slumbers our God is never asleep that's hard for my little mind to understand how can an infinite

God who never began will never end just is not sleep can hear every prayer of his children from all over the world all different time zones all different languages all different accents all at the same time can't understand it but the Bible says he can he is he does he hears our prayer no matter when never too early never too late and so he is never asleep God is always God is active and God is not asleep not asleep but also what we see in this story he says in verse number 8 I say to you though he will not rise to give to him because he is his friend you know there's that fine line is it too late at night yes I know as a friend we're always ready to help a friend but Jesus is saying he's not going to give him the bread because he is his friend he will give it to him just simply because he was obnoxious enough to come and wake him up in the middle of the night and ask to him boldly and asks for it he says he's not going to give it to him because he's a friend but because of his importunity because of his boldness he will rise and give him how many here let me empty the table here all you have is whatever you need and he just throws it out to him he says have all that you need because of his boldness and so then what does

[35 : 41] Jesus say in verse nine so what's the moral of the story so I say to you ask ask and it will be given to you seek it and you will find it knock and it will be opened to you for everyone who asks receives and he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be open we're going to look at the rest of this the week after Easter which is next week by the way for those of you who may not have been looking at your calendar but God's not asleep but there's another element to this parable as we close to whom was this friend asking for bread he was asking for his friend and I think another thing that Jesus is telling us in this story is we don't have to just simply ask for what we need but prayer to

God on behalf of others is never ever ever in vain intercessory prayer praying for others is never in vain whether it's praying for the kin whether it's praying for Kim whoever it is that we're praying for it's never in vain that's why we're going to have an opportunity in a moment before we close to come and to pray together pray for these needs pray for your own needs pray for some other needs that you may know but this is the means by which we take part in the activity of God in the lives of others and that is by coming to him prayer to God on behalf of others is never in vain so let's become a praying church let's become a church that just simply prays and everything that we do is born out of that prayer life out of that foundation of saying

God we need you God we cannot do anything without you and God there's this need we come to you with it God there's a need that we don't think can be done but with God nothing is impossible the Bible says and so we come to God it's never too big and we simply seek him boldly all of this morning we pray teach us to pray boldly seeking you coming to you knowing that you're always active never asleep and we can get involved in what you're doing the lives of others by praying interceding for them help us dear

God today to to be mindful of those in our congregation those in our neighborhood those that we know who need a special touch from you it may be for salvation it may be a physical need it may be an emotional need it may be a family need it may be a financial need whatever it is dear God we come to you boldly and ask for what we need and Father we thank you for being who you are and inviting us to come to you at any moment any time and ask for anything and help our wants to be your wants Lord be with us and answer our prayer we pray this in Jesus name amen emp we we we me really