

Luke 11: 5-10 The persistent friend

Coming into the week of prayer and fasting so this morning I want to try and set the scene for the week ahead and talk about prayer matters

The parable I am going to use this morning is in Luke 11 and it's the parable of the persistent friend but before we go there we need to look at the context of this parable

In the verses preceding this parable it says Luke 11:1 (NIV2011)

1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

And we know that Jesus went on to talk about the Lord's prayer

And so, we pick up straight after

Luke 11:5-10 (NLT2)

5 Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him,

6 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.'

7 And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.'

8 But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

9 "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

This is a parable about bold, shameless, persistent prayer

I want to pull out some obvious lessons from this parable that will help us this week before we deep dive

1. One day Jesus was praying in a certain place

If we want to commune with the father, we need to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life

I know that we can talk to God all day long but there is something about that certain place.

Matthew 6:6 (HCSB)

6 But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

It is in the secret place that we find intimacy with God

The words here private room come from the Greek word **tameion** and historically that word was used to describe a safety deposit box or vault, somewhere treasured possessions were kept safe.

It later became translated as closet and came to mean the bedroom, a place where intimacy took place between a husband and wife in a private place that is not available to everyone.

Yes, we can pray while we wash the dishes and drive the car, but it won't be a secret place.

Jesus wants us to be drawn into a place that is special just to him and us, where we can shut the door, where we can bear our heart and soul in isolation and solitude.

Jesus got up early to pray, he went out all night to commune with His father, it was a lifestyle for him

Psalm 91:1-2 (KJV)

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

We will find a greater depth in God when we know him in the secret place as Jesus did. Yes, of course praying with others is good but its not a substitute for the secret place.

1. The man who was knocking on his neighbour's door wasn't asking for himself.

His visitor had arrived at midnight.

We often think of midnight as the darkest hour. It could have been that this friend was in trouble or going through a crisis and so he was keen to provide for this man, as was the custom but he needed the help of his neighbour.

Jesus is reminding us that when people come to us, even in their darkest moment we need to pull together the resources we need to help that person.

I think of the prayer request we received on Tuesday for the pastor in India and within minutes it was all over whatsapp and by Wednesday the need had been met.

Corporate prayer is important

8 But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

Jesus wants us to be BOLD when we pray. He wants us to SHAMELESSLY keep praying. To pray shamelessly means to pray without being embarrassed about how often we ask God to answer our prayer. It means to pray without worrying whether God is annoyed by our persistent prayers, because God is NEVER annoyed by our prayers. He loves for us to rely on Him.

2. Having the right mindset

As believers, our mindset should be that persistent prayers are not the grown-up equivalent of a child asking repeatedly for toy in a toy shop.

Persistent prayer is not nagging God - it is our requests for kingdom fruit to be present in our lives,

our petitions are for God's glory to be shown, to see kingdom rule in our situation and the situation of others.

9 "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen. - James 5:16b

To dig a bit deeper into what Jesus is saying here I want to look at an OT account of prayer where we know God has spoken to us and we pray into the fulfilment of that prayer.

1 Kings 17:1 (KJV)

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

And we know it didn't rain for three years and God sent ravens to feed Elijah and then when the brook dried up he went to the widow of Zarephath who provided for him

Then we fast forward to

1 Kings 18:1 (KJV)

1 And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

So, Elijah had seen and heard the word of the Lord and its fulfilment more than once in his life.

He had witnessed 3yrs of drought at Gods word and now the word of the Lord came to him again that the drought would end and rain would once again fall on the land.

So what did he do?

1 Kings 18:41-46 (NLT2)

41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go get something to eat and drink, for I hear a mighty rainstorm coming!"

This is faith

What is faith = the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not yet seen

Substance = elpizo = confidence, expectation

42 So Ahab went to eat and drink. But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his face between his knees.

Elijah was so confident that it would rain he went to look for the rain

How often do we position ourselves and expect to see the answer to our prayer?

Elijah bowed down low with his face between his knees

Elijah was not just positioning his mind and spirit he was positioning his body.

He was telling his body to bow down to the authority of God and while he was face down he told his servant to go and look for rain

43 Then he said to his servant, "Go and look out toward the sea." The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, "I didn't see anything." Seven times Elijah told him to go and look.

44 Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, "I saw a little cloud about the size of a man's hand rising from the sea."

This is what it means: And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

The number seven in scripture does not literally mean seven times, the number seven means completion

(So when the disciples asked if they should forgive 7 times Jesus said no 70 x 7 meaning until forgiveness is complete)

Then Elijah shouted, "Hurry to Ahab and tell him, 'Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don't hurry, the rain will stop you!'" 45 And soon the sky was black with clouds. A heavy wind brought a terrific rainstorm, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel. 46 Then the LORD gave special strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt and ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to the entrance of Jezreel.

So what are we seeing here?

There are times in prayer when we should not give up until we see the answer coming.

Some things need persistent prayer

Battles are often fought and won in the heavenlies before we see the evidence on earth.

In Daniel 10:12 we read that Daniel had to pray for 21 days even though his prayer was heard the first time he prayed.

Why?

Because the answer to his prayer was blocked in heaven by opposing forces and Michael the archangel had to come and intervene for the answer to get through

The persistent neighbour would not give up until he got the food he needed and the neighbour in bed gave in because he knew he would not give up.

He did not care if he woke the whole family, he was just focused on meeting the need of his visitor.

So let's think about some principles in prayer that we can carry into this week ahead

Principles in prayer

1. Praying in line with God's will

- a. Can be personal
- b. Can be for others
- c. Can be according to the word

If we pray in line with God's will we can expect to see the answer.

How can we start?

We start with what we know

What did Jesus explain just before the parable of the persistent friend

The Lord's prayer

Let your kingdom come, let your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We can confidently pray that God's sovereign will and purpose be evident in everything we pray for and we can look for evidence of answers to that prayer.

What else do we know?

Its not his will that any should perish

Brian's message

Ezekiel 18:4 (NIV2011)

4 For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.

2. Position yourself

Kneeling, face down, secret place

3. Expecting to see and hear the answer

Jesus introduces this section in Luke 11 with an emphatic statement “so I say to you” that would be literally translated as “I to you I say . . .”

He is putting stress on that fact that He is the source of this teaching which explains the lesson of His story. 9 “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. 10 “For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

We are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17),

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

You are to pray at all times and not lose heart (Luke 18:1).

David said in Psalm 55:16-17, “As for me, I shall call upon God, And the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice.”

Paul explains his own practice and instructions for prayer in Ephesians 6:18, “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints . . .”

I think God is speaking to us ahead of this week

There are some, including myself that have been praying for years about things and perhaps we are starting to give up

Perhaps we have lost our expectation that God will answer

Have we stopped looking for the answer?

How often to we positon ourselves, there is a place for kneeling, for falliong on our face before God, for telling our proud body to bow down before God

There is a secret place for all of us – that place where it is only God and me, that place where what we do in secret will be rewarded openly.

This week church lets take on a new challenge in prayer.

Whether or not you are able to fast, you are able to pray.