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**SERMON TITLE: How Much God Longs to Hear Your Prayers**

**SCRIPTURE: Luke 11:5-13 various**

**DATE: August 18, 2019**

*Check out the service at* [*www.fpcd.org*](http://www.fpcd.org)*.*

*Read also* *Psalm 18:6-17*

How many times have you prayed and you get this image of God acting:

“In my distress I prayed and then . . .

*the earth quaked and trembled. The foundations of the mountains shook because of his anger. Smoke poured from his nostrils; flames leapt from his mouth. He opened the heavens and came down; dark storm clouds were beneath his feet. He soared on the wind. He shot arrows and scattered his enemies; his lightning flashed, and they were greatly confused. He reached down and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters.*”

Isn’t that an amazing image of power? Isn’t that an amazing image of a roused parent? Isn’t that a powerful image of God being attentive to your prayers?

A study shows the familiar sound of a mother’s voice is more likely to rouse a sleeping child than even the loudest buzz of a smoke alarm.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In another study, moms from 11 countries consistently responded to their sobbing infants by picking them up, holding them and talking to them. MRI scans of mothers' brains, revealed heightened activity in regions tied to caregiving, movement and speech.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Now if a child responds more to a mother’s voice than anything else, and a mom responds to an infant’s cry so much so that it causes heightened brain activity, then perhaps the same is true of God when we pray and when God hears our prayers.

Each week we pray the Lord’s Prayer. Now I can’t say we sound that excited when we pray it! Jesus probably knew that would be the case, so throughout the Gospels he tells stories about prayer. Today we are going to take an overview of God’s desire to hear our prayers, and how to heighten our effectiveness in getting answers to prayer.

Now remember, Jesus sometimes prayed all night:

“One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night” (Luke 6:12).

You are probably not going to begin there—but what if you prayed for an hour? To learn how, let’s begin with what Jesus first taught his disciples about prayer. Notice, it says Jesus wanted to teach the disciples—and us—more about prayer. God longs to hear your prayers. Jesus wants us to get more answers. READ Luke 11:5-13

What can we learn from this story about showing up at a friend’s at midnight and you want something. That’s major inconvenience.

* *We can show up and ask God for something even if it is a major inconvenience and it costs God something.*

But our friend, when inconvenienced, rebuffs us and sends us packing. But if we keep bugging him (which few of us will do), he will finally help us out because of our “shameless persistence.”

* *God likes shameless persistence; in fact, he encourages us to engage in it.*

So do not be shy. Be shameless in your asking.

Let’s turn to Luke 18. (see below) This story is for the direct purpose of teaching us to pray and never give up. Jesus uses an illustration of a woman who was seeking justice from a judge. She hunted the judge down. She showed up everywhere he was. Finally, to get rid of her, he gave her justice.

* *Do you need justice? Has something unfair happened to you? Bug God about it—Jesus says.*

But, Jesus adds in verse 8, will anyone do this? He wonders*—“when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?”*

Faith is being willing to hang in there, hang on when things go wrong, and ASK.

There’s a little chorus that will help remind you. It goes like this:

God is so good, God is so good,

God is so good, He’s so good to me.

God answers prayer, God answers prayer,

God answers prayer, He’s so good to me.

We need to know we have a God who wants to hear us, a God who desires to defend us and comes to our aid.

Jesus identifies God as a good provider who gives good gifts:

* *If you ask for something to nourish you, God’s not going to give you something that will harm you. (Luke 11:11-13)*

Here’s another one. We have some goals. We want to grow this church. We want to see Duncanville turn to the Lord and pray. We have lots of hope for ministry here. Do you think God longs to hear this prayer? Jesus says:

* *“So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields” (Matthew 9:37-38).*

We have much more help than we can imagine but are we taking any time to access it? Are we—are you praying?

Imagine the problem you have. Would it help for you to have more of the Holy Spirit to deal with it? The Holy Spirit is your ADVOCATE (supporter, backer, promoter, activist). Take a look at Romans 8:14-16:

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.”

So we are like the kid in the play yard that is attacked by another kid, and we can say, “My dad is bigger than yours and he is going to beat you up for attacking me.” We don’t have to worry that we have disappointed God but trust that as God’s child, God has your back.

* *Ask that you become aware of the gift of the Holy Spirit who gives you confidence in your standing with God.*

In the Book of Jude we find this verse:

“But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit” (v. 1:20).

Sometimes we don’t pray because we get bogged down in resentment. We don’t realize that we are lambs in a world of wolves. These are not nice people! Jesus said, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest. . . . Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves” (Luke 10:2-3).

Are there wolves in your life? Jesus recognizes as we go through life, especially as Christians, there are those people who are going to attack; there are others we struggle with. Jesus says,

“But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too” (Mark 11:25).

Resentments are common so ask Jesus, help me to deal with them in prayer; help me to place this in your hands.

You never know. He may take those difficult people out of your life. Or he may use them to sharpen you. When YOU forgive, God is giving you the opportunity to lighten your load and receive forgiveness yourself.

So you get the gist of the encouragement Jesus is trying to bring to you? How much God longs to hear your prayers!

He cares for me, He cares for me,

He cares for me, He’s so good to me!

I love Him so, I love Him so,

I love Him so, He’s so good to me!

So I tell you (Jesus says):

“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” (Luke 11:9-10).

Is it time to live into this and stop struggling with your burdens? Take a greater step into discipleship and lean harder on your Father. He desires to hear your prayers.

AMEN

***Luke 18:1-8***  *NLT*

*One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. 2 "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. 3 A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' 4 The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, 5 but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'" 6 Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. 7 Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?"*

1. Dan Garisto, “New smoke alarm tests a mother’s touch,” Science and Society, December 11, 2018, <https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/moms-voice-is-best-fire-alarm>, accessed August 14, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jacqueline Howard, “Around the world, mothers have similar response to crying baby, study finds,” CNN, October 25, 2017, [https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/23/ health/moms-babies-crying-response-universal-study/ index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/23/%20health/moms-babies-crying-response-universal-study/%20index.html), accessed August 14, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)