

Sermon Series: Unlocking the Power of Prayer

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Sermon 3: The Power of Asking

Introduction: Unlocking the Potential of Prayer; The Power of Asking & The Significance of Asking

Join us on a captivating journey as we explore the words of Jesus found in **Luke 11:9**. Let's delve into the power of asking, a key that opens doors to divine intervention through prayer. Prayer is about aligning us with God, positioning ourselves in Jesus to be heard by the Father, flowing in the Spirit to speak words out of a purified heart; words filled with the understanding of who God is, and His will for our lives.

Why didn't you speak up earlier? Why is it that we often turn to other people and things before turning to God? It's easier to rely on something tangible that we can see rather than trusting in a Father who is unseen. This lack of trust stems from a lack of communication. We tend to rely on snippets from sermons, social media posts or daily verses instead of truly conversing with God. And when we don't communicate with Him enough, the words of the enemy and our own desires start influencing us.

Have you ever noticed that even good people can make foolish choices? Take Hezekiah, for example. He had a heart devoted to the Lord, but in his moment of greatest need, he made an unwise alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Now let me ask you this; When you're exhausted, tested by life's challenges and struggling to manage everything, where do you turn for help? Initially, we seek support from trusted individuals in our lives. We exhaust all our contacts. And if that doesn't work out, some people may turn to external sources like agencies, politics, or psychology. They may even believe that taking a vacation will bring peace to their souls and bodies—but not necessarily their spirits.

However, it's important to remember that if Jesus and His teachings are not taken along on your vacation journey—both physically and spiritually—then upon returning home and being confronted with the same issues left behind before your break... Well... Reality hits again!

You'll discover yourself in the exact same situation as before you departed. Prioritize seeking God and His righteousness. Remember that God is the ultimate Creator, so it's important to turn to Him first.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (**Genesis 1:1**) _

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by

the word of God, **so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.**" (Hebrews 11:1-3, NRSV) _

Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you in public.

Why should I have a conversation, with anything that existed (including people) prior, to speaking with the Creator?

How many of you need God to start answering prayers quickly?

Isaiah 30:19 The Bible says, "People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, **you will weep no more.** How gracious he will be when you cry for help! **As soon as he hears,** he will answer you."

This verse emphasizes God's willingness to respond to the cries of His people and provide them with help and comfort. _

Jeremiah 33:3 The verse says, "**Call to me and I will answer you** and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

This verse highlights God's invitation for His people to call upon Him in prayer, and His promise to answer them and reveal to them marvelous and unknown things. _

I. Ask Well: Pray in the Name of Jesus

The Provision and Embracing of God Overflowing Goodness is only by living covenant with Jesus.

James 4:3

³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with **wrong motives**, that you may spend what you get on your **pleasures**.

John 16:23-24 reads as follows: "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. **Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.** Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." _

Non-Negotiable: Jesus's Name

- Legal right and authority to operate in prayer on earth.
- Jesus was the one who delegated the authority to us to pray in his Name.
- Prayers in Jesus's Name are always heard by the Father. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." 1 John 5:14
- Prayers in Jesus's Name are powerless without a relationship with Jesus.

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive

out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, '**I never knew you.** Away from me, you **evildoers!**'" _

II. Ask Well: Pray the Word of God

God is the ultimate provider, and we can bring our needs before Him in prayer. Whether it's **physical** provision, emotional healing, or spiritual strength, we can ask God for what we **need**. God desires to meet our needs and cares about the details of our lives.

Matthew 4: ⁴ **Jesus answered, "It is written:** 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. **For it is written:**

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

⁷ Jesus answered him, "**It is also written:** 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "**Away from me, Satan! For it is written:** 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'

- Common mistake # 2 Failure to connect our Prayers to God's Word.
- If it is written its done, and we can pray it. What is the foundation of our prayers? Do you know how to say, it is written?
- Learn the Biblical Pattern for Prayer: Study prayers in the bible. What aspect of prayers do you see in the Scriptures that are not included in your daily prayers. Daniel, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, and David. In other words, are our prayers standing in holy ground, which God's word or is it all wishful thinking?
- Know the will of God, not only what to pray? Or how to pray? People are experts on what to pray, but knows little about the will of God, the why behind the prayers.
- Desperation is a good initiator, but not a good sustainer for our prayers.

III. Ask Well: Living in holiness. (Bob and Mary: our Cleaning Crew)

- Keep the commandments of the Father and Jesus. **1 John 3:21** reads as follows: "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God." _
- Failure to linking our confession to our prayers.

Psalm 51 (NIV) is a well-known psalm of repentance written by King David after his sin with Bathsheba.

Personal guilt says you are a mistake, conviction says, I made a mistake. Condemnation says, I am a sinner, and questions our identity, if you are a child of God? (**Remember these words?**) but conviction says I am Child of God.

Here is the text of Psalm 51:

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so, you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. 7 Cleanse me, and I will be clean. 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Sin does not keep God from hearing us but keep us from hearing God. Here the good news! **Romans 8:1** "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." _

Jesus is the embodiment of my holiness and righteousness, empowering me to approach the Father with unwavering confidence. This act of boldness, however, necessitates genuine humility, as there is greater humility in asking for help than in bestowing it upon others. This explains why many people excel in giving but struggle when it comes to receiving.

In short, disrupted prayers comes from a corrupted lifestyle, and mindset. However, a single moment of repentance will close the gap between heaven and earth.

- The Lord's Prayer teaches us to ask for forgiveness: "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us."
- Prayer is a way to confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness.
- When we ask for forgiveness, we experience the cleansing and restoration that comes from God's grace.

Seeking forgiveness is an essential aspect of our spiritual journey. In the Old Testament of the Bible, we find numerous verses that emphasize the importance of asking for forgiveness from God. One such verse is found in **Psalm 86:5 (NIV)**, which says, "You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you."

In the New Testament, we witness the fulfillment of God's forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The death and resurrection of Jesus make it possible for us to seek forgiveness directly from God. An example of seeking forgiveness can be found in **1 John 1:9 (NIV)**, which reads, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

It is through prayer that we confess our sins and ask God for forgiveness. When we take the time to humbly acknowledge our wrongdoings, we open ourselves to experience the cleansing and restoration that comes from God's abundant grace. Prayer allows us to connect with God, seek His forgiveness, and experience the transformative power of His love.

Additionally, the Lord's Prayer, as taught by Jesus in **Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)**, includes a request for forgiveness: "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." This prayer serves as a model for seeking forgiveness, reminding us not only to ask for God's forgiveness but also to extend that same grace to others.

In summary, seeking forgiveness through prayer is a fundamental aspect of our spiritual journey. The Old and New Testaments of the Bible provide us with verses and teachings that encourage us to ask for forgiveness from God and extend forgiveness to others. Through the act of seeking forgiveness, we can experience the cleansing, restoration, and transformation that come from God's unfailing love and grace.

When we ask for forgiveness, we experience the cleansing and restoration that comes from God's grace. Deep within every heart resides a longing for forgiveness. Brace yourself as we delve into the power of confession and seeking God's forgiveness through prayer. Explore the wisdom hidden within the Lord's Prayer, where we are taught not to seek forgiveness for our own wrongdoing but also to extend that same grace to others.

Allow the words of **Miroslav Volf** to resonate within us, "Igniting a desire to break free from the prison of holding grudges and embrace the transformative power of forgiveness."

IV. Ask Well: Pray with faith and expectation. (Amazon Illustration I know I will get my staff; I just pay and wait)

- God is the ultimate provider, and we can bring our needs before Him in prayer.
- Whether it's physical provision, emotional healing, or spiritual strength, we can ask God for what we need.
- God desires to meet our needs and cares about the details of our lives.

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." (**Psalms 23:1**) "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (**Mark 11:24**) _

Witness the truth that lies within the realm of asking. Prayer connects us with the provider enabling us to present our needs before Him. Whether it involves provisions for our lives or the deep longings within our souls, God will meet every aspect of our existence.

As we reflect upon the renowned theologian

N.T. Wright's timeless wisdom be prepared for a revelation that shows how prayer does not alter circumstances but profoundly transforms who we are at our core.

- Prayer is not limited to the natural realm; it can tap into the supernatural power of God.
- We can ask God for miracles, healing, deliverance, and breakthroughs.
- Faith plays a crucial role in asking for miracles, and we must trust in God's sovereignty and timing.

Jesus invites individuals to experience firsthand the incredible and captivating wonders that God can manifest. He emphasizes the power of prayer, encouraging believers to embrace the limitless possibilities it brings.

Jesus suggests that through faith, prayer can transcend the ordinary and connect believers with the divine power of God. In this supernatural dimension, prayers have the potential to break through limitations and initiate divine intervention in our lives. It implies that by immersing ourselves in prayer, we can witness extraordinary transformations not only in our circumstances but also within ourselves.

C.S. Lewis is a renowned scholar and theologian who is recognized for his insights into the authenticity and significance of prayer. C.S. Lewis encourages believers to deepen their understanding of prayer, emphasizing its transformative power and the divine intervention it can facilitate. One of the powerful quotes by **C.S. Lewis** on prayer is from his book "Mere Christianity," where he states:

"I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me."

This quote beautifully captures Lewis's perspective on the essence of prayer. He expresses that prayer is not merely a means to gain something from God, but rather an inherent need that flows from deep within the individual. Lewis acknowledges that prayer has a transformative effect on the person who prays, shaping their heart, mind, and character.

Acts 12:1-6

"It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So, Peter was kept in prison, but **the church was earnestly praying to God for him.**"_

Acts 12: 13-16

"When he knocked at the outer entrance, a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, '**Peter is at the door!**' '**You're out of your mind,**' they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, '**It must be his angel.**' But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were **astonished**. Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison."_

In summary, the act of prayer doesn't necessarily change God's nature or will, but it changes the one who prays – it molds and aligns them with God's purposes. He recognizes that through prayer, believers open themselves up to the transformative work of God's Spirit, allowing Him to shape and refine them according to His divine plan.

Conclusion: Ask Well

- Ask Well: Pray in the Name of Jesus.
- Ask Well: Pray the Word of God
- Ask Well: Pray living in holiness.
- Pray Well: Pray with faith and expectation that you will receive.

Let us commit to a life of prayer, unlocking the power and blessings that come from our relationship with Jesus. Let us firmly hold on to the truth that prayer's far more than a mere ritual. It is a direct channel for communication with the Creator of all things in existence.

This invitation calls upon you to experience the presence of God, seek His guidance, and witness the unfolding of His works. Allow the flame of prayer to ignite within your spirit, propelling you towards a life deeply connected to Him.

Prayer: Gracious and loving God,

We come before You today, seeking Your wisdom and guidance as we reflect on Luke 11:9: "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." We hold onto this promise, knowing that You are a God who hears our prayers and responds with grace and mercy.

Lord, we humbly ask for Your presence to fill our lives, for Your wisdom to guide our steps, and for Your strength to sustain us. Grant us the humility to seek You earnestly, recognizing that You are the source of all abundant life.

As we embrace the promise of this scripture, help us to ask for Your will to be done in our lives, seeking alignment with Your purposes over our own desires. Teach us to seek Your face in every circumstance, knowing that in Your presence, we find comfort, peace, and joy.

Give us the perseverance to knock on the door of Your grace continually, understanding that Your timing is perfect, and Your plans are higher than our own. May we trust in Your divine wisdom, even when the answer to our prayers is not immediate or clear. Strengthen our faith, Lord, and help us to lean on You with unwavering trust.

We thank You, Lord, for the assurance that You hear our prayers and respond according to Your perfect will. May our prayers be a constant conversation with You, deepening our relationship with You and transforming us into vessels of Your love and grace for the world to see.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we pray. Amen.

Benediction:

May the assurance of Luke 11:9 resonate within your hearts as you go forth from this place. Remember the promise that when you ask, it shall be given to you; when you seek, you will find; when you knock, the door will be opened to you.

May you approach the throne of grace with boldness and confidence, knowing that God hears your prayers and responds according to His perfect wisdom and love. As you go out into the world, may you seek God's will above your own desires, trusting in His guidance and provision.

May the Spirit of God strengthen your faith and give you the patience to persevere in prayer, even when answers may seem delayed or unclear. And may the transformative power of prayer shape your hearts, minds, and lives to reflect the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Go forth now, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.