

Good Fathers Don't Give Stones

Caleb Hyers | The Resting Place Apostolic Family | Matthew 7:7-11

GOOD FATHERS DON'T GIVE STONES

Today my title is Good Fathers Don't Give Stones, and this is out of Matthew 7:7 through 11. I just want to pray for the word really quick. I hate platforming or giving any attention to the enemy, but I will say this. Someone did not want me to give you this message today. I woke up with a horrible migraine. It was to the point where I did not even know if I could actually do this today. So the team has been praying for me. Kimberly's prayer watch team has been praying for me. I am feeling decent, but not all the way. When you just know that this is weird and this is not natural, I am feeling that. It is rare, but that is what I am feeling.

So thank you, Jesus, for your word. We say yes to what you are saying to us today. We say you are speaking. You are speaking, Lord, and we say to our own ears, hear the word of the Lord. We do not need to hear Caleb. We need to hear Jesus. We need to hear the word of the Lord. So, Lord, would you use this tired, feeble, silly little man with long hair and actually speak your word. Use him, Lord, speak your word so I can hear it, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Good fathers don't give stones. Matthew 7:7 through 11 says:

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 the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?

Good fathers don't give stones. One quick note about this passage. I do not have time to preach this part of it, but when he says you who are evil, you have to understand, he said that before he went to the cross. He was speaking to unredeemed humanity. They were evil. Without God, you are evil.

But anyone in Christ is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come. So do not be selfish and make this passage all about you. That is not the point. It is about the Father. You hear me? That was quick, and that was free.

BOTH THESE CAMPS ARE WRONG

These verses are pretty popular. Who has heard this verse before? Yeah, pretty popular. And they have been trumpeted by a few camps. One camp is the name it and claim it camp. Anybody know about that camp? Some in that camp have said, see, if you just have faith, then you can ask for anything, you can seek anything, you can knock on any door and it will open. Just get a vision board and declare it. I am not against vision boards, that is fine. I am just saying that is really not the implication here. But some have taken it to mean that if you are asking and you are not getting, your faith is the problem, you do not have enough faith.

I have been in the room. A man was being prayed for who was in a wheelchair. The person praying prayed for the guy. The guy did not get out of the wheelchair. They said, come on and get out of the wheelchair, and the guy praying blamed the man in the wheelchair. My head snapped, because I was just praying, and I thought to myself, what is wrong with you? And you know what I said? I said it out loud, what is wrong with you? It is one of my problems. If I think it, it tends to come out. So we did not have much of a relationship, that person and I, after that, because I kept asking questions. And he said, well, he does not have enough faith. I said, did Lazarus have faith when he was laying dead in the tomb? Come on, what are you talking about? I think it is the faith of the person praying. I said that to him, to his face. We did not talk again. It is okay. These verses have been used that way.

And they have also been largely ignored by another camp. How many know the sovereign will camp? Well, God is sovereign, and so God's will will be done. Whatever happens is God's will. So asking, seeking, and knocking is kind of unnecessary. They get ignored. God knows all we need. All we need to do is trust him and not ask for what we need. That is ridiculous as well.

Both these camps are wrong. Both missed some huge things. They missed the relational reality behind the asking. In the context of children and a father, they miss that we are children speaking to a good father. So here is what is wrong with it. The name it and claim it crowd very easily turns God

into some type of glorified vending machine. Just put the prayer in, get the candy out. If I do this, if I pray for an hour, if I keep on asking, you are going to do this. Surely Jesus was not admonishing us to just get everything we want and treat the Father that way. Surely that is not what was going on.

The sovereign will camp very easily turns God into an apathetic figure who does not care about our desires, who does not care about what we actually want. But surely Jesus was calling us into a real relationship with a Father who says to ask for what we desire. He says, ask. Psalm 37:4 says, if you delight yourself in him, he will actually give you the desires of your heart. So that does not work either.

PERSISTENCE ROOTED IN TRUST

Today I am going to prove to you that the text itself requires something. It requires persistence rooted in trust. Persistence rooted in trust. Why do I say that? You are asking great questions this morning. The Greek here, if you just look at the Greek, is actually grammatically explicit, even though the English is flat. What do I mean? The Greek words here, when it says ask, seek, and knock, each one of those is a present, imperative, active verb. What does that mean? It means it is a continual burn, not a single action. A present imperative active verb. That means other translations really nail it a little better than the popular ones.

It really should read something like Matthew 7:7 out of the New Living Translation:

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.

Or the Amplified, which I love. This is my favorite one in this passage:

Ask and keep on asking, and it will be given to you. Seek and keep on seeking, and you will find. Knock and keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives, and he who keeps on seeking finds, and to him who keeps on knocking, it will be opened.

When you hear this verse, you need to think, ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking. How many of you have ever prayed for something for a long time? Did you notice that even though you are praying for the same thing, the way you pray changes? Look at that. Maybe as you pray, you are learning to pray rightly. Maybe as you ask, you are learning to ask rightly. Maybe as you are seeking, you are finding a better way to seek. Maybe as you are knocking, you are actually looking for the right door. There is a training and a discipleship in the process that we cannot just skip around.

And at The Resting Place we have our core values, honor everyone, empower faith for everyone. But we also have something I call core characteristics. We call it the TRP way. And the first thing that we are as a people is we are a people of persistent prayer. That is the TRP way. We are a people of persistent prayer. And that is on purpose. That is first, and it comes from this passage.

A SHAMELESS PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

I want to take you to Luke 11:5 through 10, because Jesus gives the same command in another context of asking. I love this. The Passion Translation says that Jesus gave this illustration:

Imagine what would happen if you were to go to one of your friends in the middle of the night, pound on his door, and shout, please, do you have some food you can spare? A friend just arrived at my house unexpectedly, and I have nothing to serve him.

But your friend says, why are you bothering me? That would be me, honestly. What are you doing, knocking on my door? The door is locked. My family and I are all in bed. I am in my pajamas, bro. What are you doing? Do you expect me to get up and give you our food?

Jesus says, I tell you, because of your shameless persistence, even though it is the middle of the night, your friend will get up out of his bed and give you all that you need. So it is with your prayers.

He is saying, bother me. Wake me up in the middle of the night. Inconvenience me, please. That is what he is saying.

Ask and you will receive, seek and you will discover, knock on heaven's door and it will one day open for you. Every persistent person will receive what he asks for. Every persistent seeker will discover what he needs. And everyone who knocks persistently will one day find an open door.

We need a shameless persistence in prayer. A shameless persistence in prayer.

Jesus speaks to the same concept, and I am going quickly, in the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1 through 8. It is one of my favorites. It says he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, give me justice against my adversary. For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming. And the Lord said, hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

You have a license to be annoying in prayer. You have a license to lay hold of the Lord and say, I will not let go until you bless me. You have a license here. When he says, will I find faith on the earth, he is saying, will he find us persisting in prayer because we trust the judge? When I return, will I find you persisting in prayer because you trust the Father? You trust the judge. God is the righteous judge. And that is the question, will we trust his righteousness and persist until we see justice? That is the question.

PERSISTENCE IS ONLY SUSTAINABLE WHEN IT'S ROOTED IN TRUST

The idea is that we persist in prayer. But this is not actually about prayer. The idea of persisting in prayer is not about prayer. It is actually about trust. This is about trust. Hear what I am saying. Persistence is only sustainable when it is rooted in trust. I want you to think with me this morning. Persistence is only sustainable when it is rooted in trust.

The only reason you are going to keep on asking is because you trust he is good and he is going to answer. But if you do not trust that he is good and he is going to answer, your persistence will wane. It is not sustainable. You do not have enough willpower for this, bro. You only have so much soul. How many know your soul is limited? And you have to engage your soul to pray. It is not soulless. It is using your soul, using your mind, using your will, using your emotions. You have to will yourself to praise sometimes. Can I get a witness? I do not always feel like praying. But the only reason I sustain my prayer is because I know who he is. And even if I do not see his promise fulfilled, I know he is a promise keeper, so I trust it. And I keep persisting until it comes. But without that trust, there is no sustainable persistence.

PATIENCE WAITS WELL

The key of that persistent prayer is patient trust. It is patient trust. It is patience. I am just going to go really quick, I hope that is okay. I am going to drop this on you. Patience has nothing to do with how long you wait, but everything to do with how well. It is not about how I have waited for years. That does not make you patient. Patience has nothing to do with how long you wait, but everything to do with how well.

How many know patience is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? That means the devil cannot be patient. Why do I say that? Well, Luke 4:13 says he waited for a more opportune time. The devil waited for a more opportune time. After tempting Jesus in the wilderness, he retracted and waited. Does that mean he was patient? No. Patience does not wait long. Patience waits well. Patience, hear me, does not wait long. It waits well. No matter how long it takes. The question is not how long you can wait for something. It is how are you in the waiting? How are you while you are waiting? Are you full of life while you wait? Are you full of joy? Are you full of hope? Or are you full of grumbling, complaining, and anger?

If you are patiently waiting, then love is flowing, because the first thing love is, hate to break it to you, is patient. I ask people that question all the time, what is the first thing love is? And they say anything but patience. They go through the list. The first thing love is, is patient. People say, do not pray for patience. Come on, some stupid churchianity I want to kill this morning. Do not pray for patience, God will give you an opportunity to be patient. First of all, there are plenty of

opportunities to be patient. Wake up. The question is, are you leveraging those opportunities to grow in love? The first expression of love is patience. When you say do not pray for patience, you are just saying do not pray for love in its first form. I think I have done enough damage on that.

GOD IN HIS GOODNESS WILL REFUSE TO GIVE US BAD THINGS

Patient trust is the key to persistent prayer. Patient trust. What do I mean by trust? Trusting that God is our Father, and God is good. Sometimes we are actually persistently asking for rocks when God wants to give us bread. Sometimes we are asking for snakes when God wants to give us fish, and we are saying God is not good. But God in his goodness will refuse to give us bad things, even if we ask for it every day.

Almost every time I get in the car with my two older boys and we go to the grocery store, one of them asks to sit in the front seat. Almost every time. Can I sit up front? If Jamaris is not in the car, they think, oh, she is not in the car, so someone has to sit there. And it is their game. Can I sit there, please? I say, no, you are forty-three pounds. It is the most dangerous seat in the car. No, we are not doing that. And they complain, and they cry all the way in the car. You are mean. Same in your life, child. But they are being persistent in their seeking of that front seat.

Did I just throw a mirror up to your prayer life just now? Did I just show you yourself, complaining and begging for things that will actually hurt you? Chewing on rocks when you think it is bread is not fun. Grabbing a snake when you think you are scooping up some fish is pretty scary. And God in his goodness will refuse to give us bad things. We do not even always know we are asking for something that would hurt us, but he knows. He knows. When we are asking for actually good things, and we keep on asking, we need to trust that he will answer. This is not trust in the effectiveness of our prayer. This is trust in the character of our Father. We persist in prayer because we trust the character of the Father, not because we are trying to wear him down and get what we want.

It's a Father Wound

Why do we give up on patient trust? Sometimes we start in it and then we stop. Any get a witness? You start out trusting, you start out patient, then you give up. I have done the same thing. I would say the reason most people quit asking in prayer is not laziness. It is a father wound. Something happened, either with their earthly father or their heavenly Father, and they stop believing that God is actually good. The name it and claim it camp and the sovereign will camp I mentioned earlier, those could potentially just be father wounds dressed up as doctrine. I am not saying they actually are. I am just saying they probably could be. This one is on livestream, so I am saying it gentler than I would. If you want the unfiltered version, come to an IAM. I am not just talking to you right now, I am talking to the world. My theology police are typing away right now. I can hear you. Anyway, it is real.

Some of you here in the room used to be that person, and you got converted. It is okay. If we let our good Father heal our hearts, that is the key, heal our hearts, we will not fall into the error of either of those camps. We can discover all the wonderful things he has for us, if we let him heal our hearts. Some of us are praying with a broken heart for everything but our heart to be healed. We are praying with a broken heart for things that we actually do not need, when we just need a healed heart. We need the Lord to touch us in our soul. And then we can trust him. Amen.

DON'T TRY TO PRAY MORE. TRUST MORE.

So quickly, I want to apply this. If you are having trouble persisting in prayer, do not try to pray more. That is the worst plan. I really struggle with praying, so I am going to go try and put the works in. I have been told prayer is like a spiritual gym where you just have to put in the reps and tear the muscle. I completely disagree. I understand the principle. I totally disagree. Prayer is not about prayer. It is about communing with someone. It is about being with someone. If you do not trust someone, it does not matter how hard you try to be with them. So do not try to pray more. Trust more.

And I hear your question, how do I do that? You are asking wonderful questions. Three things, really quick. Number one, listen to the testimonies of others. Get around people with a testimony. Listen to the testimonies of those who have prayed for years and then the answer came. Number two, read the scriptures. There are tons of testimonies of God right here, where he broke in after

years. Read the scriptures. His history of faithfulness will produce greater trust in your heart. Number three, remember your own moment of salvation. Bring that to mind. If you are struggling to pray, bring your own salvation moment to mind. Think about where Jesus saved you because of who he is, not because of who you are. And let his actions toward you produce greater trust. The natural result will be asking and keeping on asking, seeking and keeping on seeking, knocking and keeping on knocking, because you know your Father wants to provide good things for you out of the good nature of who he is.

That is the truth. And it can be feeble. It can be weak. I will give you a short story that happened this morning. I think I told this at To-Gather. I woke up not well, with a migraine. It is terrible. I come out of the bathroom feeling horrible. I hate doing the woe-is-me bit. But it felt awful and weird. I just could not shake it, and I was just trying not to be a complainer. I come out, and Shiloh, my six-year-old, is having a bad morning. I find him under the sheet, in my bed, grunting. This is what he does when he is angry. I do not know where he gets it from. He was under the sheet, and he said something to the effect of, I am not having a good morning. I do not remember exactly what he said.

And then I just had this idea. I am going to ask him to pray for me. He was having a bad attitude, and I thought, you are the one. And I said, Shiloh, I am sorry you had a bad morning. I am not feeling good either. My head hurts. Would you pray for Daddy's head to feel better? He is quiet for a second, and then he goes, Jesus, please help Daddy's head be better. Amen. And I am only dramatizing it a little. He was agitated. But I think the Father gives. I think you are discounting the effectiveness of your relationship as a child. It follows. Good sons get bread. Amen.

And we are going to head into a time of communion this morning. And we are going to think on the bread of life that was given to us. We did this on the first Sunday of the month. And I hope that you feel at least compelled with a spirit of prayer right now. Amen. So if you could stand, and we could have our team come forward, as Amy starts to play, I would ask that each one of you prayerfully come and receive the elements, and just hold on to it and go back to your chair. Victoria is going to lead us in a minute, but I want to say this clearly. This is for every follower of Jesus. If you are a follower of Jesus, we are inviting you to this. Come receive your elements, go back to your seat, and we are just going to be contemplative for a moment while you do that. So as we go about, I am

asking you to have no discussion with anyone. I am asking you to keep a sacred environment and get into a spirit of prayer. And just seek the Lord with everything we just heard. Amen. Come and grab your elements.

Transcript of a message delivered at The Resting Place Apostolic Family in Tampa Bay, FL. trpfamily.org