

Luke 9:51-11:13 Chapter Study

VIII. The Judean Ministry 9:51-24:53

A. A Trip Through Samaria 9:51-62

1. A village rejects Him vs. 51-56

⁵¹ Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, ⁵² and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. ⁵³ But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.

Jesus now begins His journey South, & as He does, He passes through Samaria, a region of half-Jews who are locked in an on-going battle with the Jews over *where* God ought to be worshiped. The Jews of course, said God had set His favor on the temple in Jerusalem & that was the *only* place sacrifices could be made to Him.

The Samaritans held *Mt. Gerizim* was the sacred mount of God's favor & had built their temple there.

A generations old debate waged between the 2 groups with not a little hostility.

While the shortest route between Galilee & Judea was through Samaria, Jews generally avoided Samaritans & took the longer route around their region, traveling to the east, along the Jordan river valley.

Jesus took this trip through to lay the groundwork for the future, when the disciples would return to proclaim the gospel.

As they traveled, Jesus sent some messengers on ahead of the main group of disciples to get some lodgings ready.

But when the Samaritans heard that Jesus would not be staying for more than a night in His trip south, they refused hospitality.

Now – this just *wasn't done!* Hospitality was something you showed even a sworn enemy if he came to you and asked for it. This refusal was an egregious breach of etiquette and marked this village as ripe for God's judgment.

Remember that one of the reasons why God wiped out Sodom was because of the failure to show hospitality to a couple angels.

How much more grievous to refuse it to the Lord Himself?
This explains the actions of James & John . . .

54 And when His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?”

- On Mt. Carmel, when he called forth fire from God to consume the sacrifices in the showdown with the prophets of Baal.

55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save *them*.” And they went to another village.

Jesus had come for salvation, not judgment.

Interesting that while the first village refused Jesus hospitality, another welcomed Him.

And so it ever is – some reject God, others receive Him.

2. Count the Cost vs. 57-62

Now we get 3 quick responses that Jesus gave to people who came to Him with insincere appeals to following Him.

57 Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head.”

Jesus knew this potential new disciple was only interested in how Jesus could *add to his fortunes*.

So He made it clear He wasn’t in the business of merely making His followers *more successful*.

Jesus offers a whole *NEW & different* life where success means something very different from the world’s ideas.

This is the great error I think the whole seeker-sensitive movement makes.

By watering down the gospel to make it *inoffensive* to the lost, they’ve presented Christianity as little more than a means of achieving success.

“Add God to your life, and things will go better.”

It’s kind of like the “Got Milk?” ads.

Someone has just eaten a huge cookie or giant piece of cake &

realizes they need to wash it down to truly enjoy it – so they look frantically for some milk to drink.

In our modern age of consumerism, the message of the Gospel has been reduced to a kind of “Got God?” campaign.

People go through life, enjoying the abundance of our prosperous American culture, but don’t seem to find genuine satisfaction. To make their lives complete, they just need to add God – then they’ll be happy.

That is **NOT** the message of Christ! His message is – *exchange your life* for mine!

We don’t **ADD** God to our lives, we give ours **TO** Him.

The Gospel is not a “Got God?” campaign.

The question is, “Does God ‘got’ **YOU!**”

59 Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

Jesus invited this guy to follow Him, but he begged off by asking for a ‘discipleship-deferment.’

When he said, “Let me bury my father” he wasn’t saying his dad had just died & needed to be put in the ground.

He meant, “Let me *wait* till my old man dies & I’ve got my inheritance – then I’ll come.”

Jesus made it clear – when the call to follow Him comes, **NOTHING** can be allowed to interfere – *nothing*.

This is the universal struggle people face when the Holy Spirit convicts them of sin & their need to repent and put their faith in Christ.

They immediately begin to realize all of the things following Jesus will mean – all the changes it will bring, the relationships it will necessarily alter.

And they strike a compromise. They say to themselves, “I know I should commit my life to Jesus, and I will, **LATER** – after I have done this & that.”

But what happens is, once they’ve done those things, a *new* set of this’s & that’s arises, and since they’ve already deferred the call once, it’s easier to do it a second, and third and fourth time.

And the end of life comes, and they’re surprised by the fact that

their intention to “one day” follow Jesus has never been followed through on.

It is a supremely dangerous thing to say “later” to God.

61 And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house.” 62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

What an important caution this is – the danger of the influence of friends.

How many people stall in embracing Christ for fear of what their friends or family will say?

Jesus tells this man if he’s earnest about the things of God, then he can’t look back with regret at the world.

The farmer who plowed a field made straight rows by keeping his eye fixed on a landmark in the distance.

If he ever looked back, the furrow would go crooked.

Jesus makes it clear that once we’ve decided to follow Him, looking back at our past life with regret will only bring ruin – just as it did for Lot’s wife.

B. The 70 Sent Out 10:1-24

1. Instructions to them 10:1-9

1 After these things

Meaning after their trip through Samaria – so they are now in the Southern region of Judea, back in Jewish territory -

the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.

Remember that Jesus had already appointed the 12 as His official disciples.

But besides the 12, there was a large group of people who followed Jesus.

Many of were “disciple-candidates,” young men who aspired to become a disciple of Jesus and were waiting for Him to select them as well.

Then there were others who would attach themselves to Him for a time, until personal matters required them to head home for a time.

Jesus now selects 70 from the larger group that was following Him, & sends them out in pairs to proclaim the message they've been hearing Him give.

Now, let's stop for a moment & think about that message.

As we read the gospels – we find the same truths & lessons spoken again & again by Jesus.

This is to be expected. When He entered a new village, we ought to expect Him to give the residents the same message He'd given in other cities & villages.

Repetition was a large part of His ministry – so that the disciples, who heard Him speak at each occasion, would have become thoroughly familiar with His message & lessons – they heard them, literally, *hundreds* of times!

So as Jesus sent them out now, they would be able to repeat the message with ease.

This also explains how the disciples were able to teach so fluently on the life & ministry of Jesus *after* His departure – & why we can be confident in the veracity of the NT story of Christ.

2 Then He said to them, “The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road.

This is going to be our text for this Sunday, so we'll pass over it tonight –

5 But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8 Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.

This is similar to the instructions Jesus had given the 12 when He sent them out in ch. 9.

He told them to go light, not burdened with a lot of provisions, because the one who travels light, travels far.

When a village welcomed them & someone offered them a place to stay, they were to stay there, & not seek to *upgrade* their accommodations as their popularity rose.

Why would their popularity rise? →

9 And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

As the people received the disciples & responded to the message they brought, their growing faith would set the stage for the miraculous. This would lead to even *more* openness on the people’s part – and a potentially greater response to the gospel and welcome toward the disciples.

This would then lead to invitations from more wealthy folk for them to stay at their homes where they’d get better food & accommodations.

Jesus made it clear to His people – while the worker is worthy of his wages, he must never prostitute the gifts & anointing of God as the means to his own advancement.

In contrast with the places that welcomed the 70 were those who resisted them.

2. The danger of rejecting them 10:10-16

10 But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’

When the Jews crossed over from traveling in a Gentile territory back into a Jewish region, they would stop at the border & shake the dust off their sandals.

The idea was that Gentiles were under the wrath of God & would know His fiery judgment.

When the judgment of God finally fell, as Jews, they wanted to make sure nothing Gentile was touching them, for it was doomed to wrath.

Jesus uses that idiom here – but applies it to Jews – saying that God’s wrath abides on those who reject Him, His message, and those He sends with it.

When the 70 performed this rite of shaking the dust off their

sandals in a village that rejected them, the residents would realize they were being likened to godless Gentiles – a serious insult!

Jesus then makes this image of judgment crystal clear.

12 But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day

The day of Judgment

for Sodom than for that city.

Sodom was the preeminent symbol of God's judgment – & stood as the premier image of what Gentiles were all about.

Yet Jesus said that in the final judgment – the residents of Sodom will get off easier than the residents of the places that reject the 70!

How is that possible?

Well – think about whose sin was greater?

Sodom rejected a couple angels. These cities were rejecting the ambassadors of Jesus. Their sin was *far greater*.

13 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Chorazin & Bethsaida were 2 cities Jesus had spent a lot of time in, in Galilee.

They'd heard His message & seen thousands of miracles.

While multitudes from other cities came to hear Him, the people of Chorazin & Bethsaida had rejected Him.

Tyre & Sidon were well known Gentile capitals to the north of Israel in Modern Day Lebanon, that had been brutally destroyed in war, as judgment for their evil.

The Jews held up Tyre & Sidon as examples of the severity of God's judgment on evildoers.

Jesus makes it clear that the evil of Chorazin & Bethsaida is far worse – so their judgment will be more severe.

14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.

Capernaum was the *center* of Jesus' ministry in Galilee and had seen far more evidences of His power than any other place.

This brought with it a level of responsibility to respond in faith. Where there's revelation of the truth & power of God, there is a responsibility to respond.

16 He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

Jesus had been sent & commissioned by the Father to proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom of God.

Since Jesus was acting as the agent of God, to reject Jesus, is to reject God.

Here, Jesus extends His authority & power to the 70 & sends them out to be His agents.

Whoever received them, receives Jesus – while those who reject, aren't really rejecting the agents – they're rejecting Jesus.

3. They return 10:17-20

17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

As they went out to do the work they'd been authorized for, they saw the power of God & came back stoked at how they'd been used.

18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Jesus rejoices *with* the 70 as they return with a good report.

The key for understanding what He means here is in the tense of the verb, "I saw."

Literally it's "I was beholding."

When they reported that they had authority over demons, Jesus said it was the evidence that the power of Satan was crumbling.

He saw in their work the beginning of the end of the devil's dominion.

19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Scorpions & serpents were idioms for unclean spirits.

Jesus is affirming their authority over all the power of the devil.

20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Jesus issues a vital word of caution to the disciples.

They must not grow proud in their new position of authority and power, for that way leads to the fall & error of the devil.

They must never define their joy & lives in their position & the success of their ministry.

Rather, they must define themselves & take their joy in the fact of their relationship with God.

It could be argued that one of the greatest medical discoveries was chloroform, which has probably saved the world of more pain than any other discovery.

When Sir James Simpson, who pioneered its use was asked,

“What do you regard as your greatest discovery?”

Expecting the answer to be “chloroform,” he replied, “My greatest discovery was that Jesus Christ is my Savior.”

“Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to thy Cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress; Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior, or I die.”

4. The disciples are blessed 10:21-24

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

Those following Jesus were not the well-educated & social elite of the day.

As we’ve seen, the lawyers, scribes, & Pharisees had mostly taken a stance of opposition to Him.

It was the common people who followed Him.

As we’ve seen, it was the wash-outs & drop-outs from the rigorous disciple schools who became Jesus’ disciples – the ne’er-do-wells, the wannabes, & also-rans.

For decades the religious experts had held the treasures of God’s

Word to themselves, looking with disdain on the poor puny peons as undeserving of such wonderful insights.

But through Jesus, the Spirit was giving the goods to average folk – and they were demonstrating a fluency in the life & language of the Kingdom of God that shocked the experts.

Jesus was having a blast at this turn around.

22 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

Knowing Who God is, is something that can only come through divine revelation.

We can assume or conclude something about the existence and attributes of God logically.

The existence of creation demands an eternal, all-power, & super intelligent Being.

But logic cannot infer much more than that from the existence of the universe.

To really know God – we must be introduced to Him by One who is able to bridge both the divine & the human – That’s who Jesus is and that’s what He does.

23 Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; 24 for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.”

The 12 enjoyed a unique moment in history, for they were the ones chosen to follow the Son of God during His incarnation.

Men like Isaiah & David had spent their whole lives yearning for what they enjoyed.

Think about when Jesus said this to them – it was before His death & Resurrection, which means none of them were in fact born again at this point.

Yet Jesus says *they* were more blessed than the prophets of old.

If they were blessed then, how much *more blessed* are WE who’ve been born again & have the Spirit living inside us?

C. Parable of the Godly Samaritan 10:25-37

Jesus has now arrived in Jerusalem & is visiting the temple grounds.

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”

Lawyers were men who defined how the Law of Moses applied to

everyday life.

They did little more than sit around all day & debate fine points in the law.

One of the long running debates among the religious scholars of the day was if there was one law that superseded all others – one that summed up all the rest that by keeping, you could merit eternal life.

Since Jesus has the reputation of being a remarkable teacher, this lawyer decides to run the debate by him.

Before Jesus answers, He asks the man to give his take on it.

Let's learn from Jesus here.

When we're sharing the Lord with someone, we're often quick to speak & share our precious gems of wisdom.

But it's usually better to find out where the person you're talking to is coming from.

Ask them what they believe about spiritual things, about God, about how one gets into heaven.

Listen to their answer – for you will usually find something to launch from as you share the love of Christ with them.

27 So he answered and said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” **28 And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”**

Jesus settled the debate about whether there was one law that summed up all the rest – Yes there was – Love God & others.

If a man or woman does that – then eternal life is theirs.

The problem is, no one can do that without fail, without at some point falling short of the full measure of love required.

The lawyer knew that – but he also thought he was an okay guy who merited eternal life, so he tried to muddy the waters of Jesus' reply by raising an objection.

29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

We know who God is & what it means to love Him, but *who* precisely is the neighbor we're supposed to love, & to what degree are we to love him once we know who he is?

Jesus answered by way of a story -

30 Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho,

Jericho is east of Jerusalem, but at a much lower elevation. You literally go down from the capital to the resort city & commercial center that was Jericho.

“A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a busy highway that wound around small hills and large rock formations that made for great hiding places for bandits and highwaymen.

Thieves left large groups alone, but single travelers were easy pickings.

31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road.

And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32

Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.

These religious men were too busy with their own concerns to stop and help a poor victim of crime.

Besides, this must be a rough area with bandits near – best to press on & get away before they become a victim too.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.

Jesus is telling this story in the temple in Jerusalem.

As soon as He mentioned this man was a Samaritan, the scowls would break out on dozens of faces.

The Samaritans were considered as worthless half-breeds – a mockery of true Judaism.

But where the priest & Levite passed by this fellow Jew, abandoning him to his need, the Samaritan stops and helps.

34 So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay

you.’ ³⁶ So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” ³⁷ And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

To the lawyer’s question about who his neighbor was, Jesus replied that it was anyone he came in contact with who had a need he could meet.

As John makes clear in his first epistle, ch. 4 – our love for God who we cannot see is manifested in our love for fellow man we can see. If we are loving God, then as we go through life seeing people in need, we’ll provide what assistance we can as an act of love for God.

I love my wife. That love moves me to demonstrate it by the way I treat her and the way I treat the things she cares about.

Because I love my wife, I help out around the house, wash & wax her car, & do other little things that prove my love.

If we love God, then we’ll do things that please Him.

And nothing pleases Him more than when we love Him by loving and serving those around us.

D. The Priority of Worship 10:38-42

³⁸ Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said to her, “**Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴² But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.**”

We covered these vs. in depth on Sunday.

E. How to Pray 11:1-13

1. The model prayer 11:1-4

¹ 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.” ² 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. ³ Give us day by day our daily bread. ⁴ 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.”

Jesus was praying, & as He prayed, the disciples listened.

When He was finished, one of them asked that He would teach them how to pray.

Rabbis customarily taught their disciples a simple prayer they could always turn to when at a loss for words.

John the Baptist had taught such a prayer to his disciples, & this disciple asks Jesus to do the same.

Most of us have learned to pray by listening to others pray.

Prayer seems like such a specialized form of communication that feel a tad awkward just talking to God as we would to another human being.

So we tend to pick up the style & vocabulary of others we’ve heard pray who seemed to know what they were doing.

Here Jesus gives us a model, a template for our prayers.

This is the same model He gave in the Sermon on the Mount nearly 3 years before.

So here’s another case of Jesus’ use of repetition in training the disciples.

Since we’ve done in-depth studies on this model prayer at other times, we’ll be far more summary with it tonight.

First of all, Jesus never intended this prayer to be quoted verbatim.

It’s a model or template for prayer – giving a sequence of topics that the disciple was to fill in with personal specifics.

It begins with praise –

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

“Hallowed” means “reckoned as holy.”

It’s always good to begin prayer with a reminder of Who we are speaking to and how great His love and power are.

All too often we rush to God with a heavy burden – our vision of

Him eclipsed by some pressing need.

Beginning with a reminder that He is not just God, but our loving, caring Father, Who YES, is in heaven – exalted, way above the limitations of this earth, brings a comfort and confidence that infuses our prayers with renewed faith.

But we also need to remember that this God in heaven who is our Father, is also holy.

His perfection & goodness are unalterable. God cannot be anything other than GOOD.

Even if stuff is coming down in our lives that seems really bad, IS really bad – God has got it all under control and will turn it all around before the end.

Songs that exalt & affirm the holiness of God are important as we worship the Lord.

This is where prayer must begin.

Then we move to intercession -

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven.

God's kingdom refers to the realm of His reign – a kingdom is a king's domain.

When we pray for the Kingdom to come, we are asking for God to assert His dominion in the affairs of earth, just as His will is being done in heaven.

But again, we're not to just mouth these words – we're to give them specific substance by asking for God's will & work to be manifested in the lives of people around us.

After intercession comes petition.

After praying for others, we pray for our own needs.

³ Give us day by day our daily bread.

God wants us to specify what we need from Him.

Yes, He's already pledged Himself to take care of us – but that promise isn't meant to lead us into apathy and neglect regarding prayer.

It's meant to empower our prayer with confidence when we ask.

We all know that faith comes by hearing the Word of God, that's what Romans 10 tells us – but how do we implement that hearing?

God's word ought to be the main resource that informs our prayers.

We read and discover God's will, then pray that into specific manifestation in this world.

When we pray about some specific thing, something we've verbally articulated to God, then He answers, what happens to our faith? It grows!

We see the connection between the Word, the application in prayer, & His answer.

[IMANI McDuffy]

God wants us to live without anxiety, without worry and fear about the provision of our daily needs, so He invites us to ask Him to provide.

After petition comes cleansing.

4 And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

Sin hinders fellowship, it blocks the intimacy we can have with others that is the very life-blood of our spiritual lives.

If we are to be healthy people, we must both forgive & be forgiven.

And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one."

Jesus ends the prayer with the request for protection.

We know God does not entice anyone into evil, so what does Jesus mean when He tells us to ask that God would **NOT** lead us into temptation?

Think of this as the request for daily bread.

God has already promised to not allow us to be tempted above what we can endure, but will always make a way of escape.

Praying this regularly is a way to remind ourselves that nothing can come into our lives that doesn't have to first pass through the gate of God's permission.

So it must be intended to develop us, strengthen us, make us better.

2. Persistence in prayer 11:5-13

5 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; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door

is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? ⁸ 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. 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.

Many people read this & get the idea that Jesus is saying we ought to bug God until He gives us the answer we want. That is NOT what He's saying.

Jesus is contrasting what fallen human beings do with what our good God does.

Friendship might not be enough to get a guy out of bed in the middle of the night, but persistence certainly will – just to shut the requestor up!

Jesus' point is – if persistence will motivate a friend, then how much more will earnest prayer move Our Loving Father?

We must never think of God as a reluctant deity Who can't be bothered with us & our silly requests.

God is far more eager to hear our requests than we are to speak them.

And He is far more zealous to bless us with the answer than we are with making the request.

But God cannot let our prayers degenerate into some kind of formula, where as soon as we ask, the answer comes.

If this were the case, then we'd treat prayer like a spiritual slot machine, expecting it to payoff every time we pulled the handle.

No, prayer must be focused, sincere, real; It must be more than whims & wishes.

It must be a sincere desire of a heart in tune with God.

¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much

more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Jesus uses the same idiom again –contrasting fallen human beings to God.

If mere men & women desire to give good things to their children,
how much more does God to His children.

But Jesus speaks of a specific request here – the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It’s the Spirit who brings the reality of God’s presence to us.

When we ask for the Holy Spirit, we’re asking for nothing less than God Himself.