

Union Baptist Church

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The Promise of an Answered Prayer

Scripture: Matthew 7:7–8

“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 he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

Lesson Aim

To help believers understand that Jesus’ words are not a shallow promise of instant gratification, but a gracious invitation to live in ongoing communion, dependence, discernment, and trust before the Father.

Opening Thought

By the time a believer has lived through enough of life, she knows that prayer is not always simple. She has asked for some things and received them. She has asked for other things and had to wait. She has sought God’s will and discovered that His way was not the way she first imagined. She has knocked on doors that opened, and she has knocked on doors that remained closed because God was protecting, redirecting, or preparing her.

So when Jesus says, “Ask... seek... knock,” He is not speaking to childish impatience. He is speaking to disciples who must learn how to trust the Father with the whole journey of life.

This lesson is for those who know that answered prayer is sometimes joyful, sometimes mysterious, sometimes delayed, and sometimes different from what we expected. But through it all, God remains faithful.

Biblical Setting

Matthew 7:7–8 comes near the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus has been teaching His disciples what life looks like under the rule of God. He has addressed the heart, attitudes, relationships, forgiveness, integrity, anxiety, judgment, and trust.

This means Jesus is not giving these words in isolation. He is teaching Kingdom people how to live before God. The kind of life Jesus describes in Matthew 5–7 cannot be lived by human wisdom alone. We need grace. We need direction. We need the Spirit’s help. We need the Father’s provision.

So Jesus gives an invitation:

Ask. Seek. Knock. These describe a posture of life before God.

Central Truth

Jesus invites His disciples to bring their needs, their questions, and their closed doors to the Father with humility, persistence, and trust.

This promise is an invitation to commune with God.

Lesson Movement 1: Ask — The Grace of Bringing Our Needs to God

To ask is to acknowledge need.

That sounds simple, but it requires humility. Many mature believers have spent much of life being needed by others. They have cared for children, spouses, parents, church members, coworkers, neighbors, and friends. They have been the ones people called, leaned on, expected, and trusted.

But Jesus reminds us that even the strongest disciple must remain a dependent child before the Father.

There is grace in being able to ask.

You do not have to be the answer for everybody.

You do not have to carry everything silently.

You do not have to be strong without help.

You do not have to pretend that wisdom means you have no needs.

Jesus says, “Ask.”

That means God welcomes the honest voice of His children.

Spiritual Principle

Asking is faith expressed through dependence.

A mature believer does not stop asking because she has walked with God for many years. She asks with deeper trust. She asks with a surrendered heart. She asks with the wisdom to say, “Lord, this is what I desire, but I trust what You know.”

Discussion Question

Where have you learned that asking God is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of faith?

Lesson Movement 2: Seek — The Grace of Pursuing God’s Will

To seek is deeper than asking.

Asking may begin with a need, but seeking moves toward God’s will. Seeking means we are not only interested in what God can give; we are interested in what God desires.

This is where mature faith becomes especially important.

A young believer may ask, “Lord, give me what I want.”

A growing believer may ask, “Lord, show me what I need.”

A mature believer learns to pray, “Lord, bring me into alignment with Your will.”

Seeking involves discernment. It means listening for the Holy Spirit. It means searching the Word. It means examining motives. It means remembering how God has led in the past. It means being willing to receive correction, not just comfort.

For believers with wisdom and life experience, this is a sacred place. You have lived long enough to know that every open opportunity is not God’s will, every desire is not God’s direction, and every delay is not God’s denial.

Spiritual Principle

Seeking teaches us to desire God's will more than our preferred outcome.

This is where prayer becomes formation. God does not only change circumstances through prayer. God changes us through prayer.

Sometimes while we are seeking an answer, God is shaping our patience.

Sometimes while we are seeking direction, God is purifying our motives.

Sometimes while we are seeking relief, God is deepening our trust.

Sometimes while we are seeking clarity, God is teaching us to walk by faith.

Discussion Question

Can you recall a time when God did not simply give you what you asked for, but led you into deeper understanding of His will?

Lesson Movement 3: Knock — The Grace of Persevering When the Door Is Closed

To knock means there is a door before us.

A door suggests access, opportunity, transition, or entrance. But the fact that we must knock means the door is not yet open.

This is where faith must become patient.

Some doors open quickly. Some doors open slowly. Some doors open only after much prayer.

Some doors never open because God has another way.

Mature believers understand closed doors. They have lived through disappointments, losses, illnesses, career changes, family burdens, unanswered questions, and seasons where God seemed quiet. Yet many can testify that the closed door was not the absence of God. Sometimes the closed door was the mercy of God.

Knocking is not demanding. Knocking is not forcing. Knocking is not trying to break down what God has not opened.

Knocking is faithful perseverance.

It says, "Lord, I am still here. I still trust You. I still believe You are able. I still believe You are good. And I will wait for You to open what is right, when it is right, in the way that is right."

Spiritual Principle

Knocking is patient faith that keeps trusting God when the answer has not yet appeared.

There is a holy dignity in perseverance. Many believers have kept praying for children, grandchildren, healing, peace, family unity, church strength, and personal endurance. They know that persistent prayer is not always loud. Sometimes it is quiet faith that refuses to let go of God.

Discussion Question

What has life taught you about trusting God with closed doors?

The Promise: God Responds Faithfully

Verse 8 says:

“For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

This does not mean every prayer is answered according to our timetable or preference. It means the Father is not indifferent to His children.

The promise rests on the character of God.

God hears. God knows. God responds. God gives what is good. God opens what is right. God withholds what would harm. God redirects when necessary. God strengthens us while we wait.

This is why mature believers can say, “God answered me,” even when the answer was not what they expected.

Sometimes the answer is provision. Sometimes the answer is endurance. Sometimes the answer is wisdom. Sometimes the answer is God Himself becoming more real to us in the waiting.

Understanding Answered Prayer

Answered prayer is not merely receiving what we requested. Answered prayer is the faithful response of God to the needs of His children according to His wisdom, His will, His timing, and His love.

That kind of understanding protects us from two errors.

First, it protects us from presumption — the idea that prayer gives us control over God.

Second, it protects us from despair — the idea that if God does not answer the way we hoped, He has not heard us.

Jesus invites us into something better than control and deeper than despair. He invites us into trust.

Life Application

This passage speaks to several areas of life today.

1. Pray honestly.

Do not edit your heart too quickly before God. Bring Him your concern, your grief, your desire, your fatigue, your questions, and your hope.

2. Pray discerningly.

Ask not only, “Lord, will You do this?” but also, “Lord, what are You teaching me? What are You showing me? What do You desire?”

3. Pray persistently.

Do not confuse delay with abandonment. Some answers unfold over time.

4. Pray having surrendered.

Faith does not require us to know the outcome before we trust God. Faith rests in the character of the Father.

5. Pray should be intergenerational.

Mature believers carry a sacred ministry of prayer for children, grandchildren, younger women, the church, and the community. Your prayers are part of your spiritual legacy.