

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Matthew 7: 7-12 Ask, Seek and Knock by Kathy Mathew w/c 26th July 2020

We continue studying chapter 7 in the Sermon on the Mount with this important and significant passage of scripture. Jesus is encouraging his disciples to develop their relationship with God. He is at the beginning of his ministry. He has gathered together a small group of followers and is constantly searching for somewhere quiet where he can teach them. Hence we are told he is on a hillside or 'mount' in an attempt to escape the crowds who constantly seek him out. We will find Him to be a loving and generous Father. We only have to ask to receive His help, only to seek to find His way and only to knock to discover His welcome.

Read Matthew 7:7-12 then read again verses 7-11

Verses 7 – 11 are often called *The Charter of Prayer*. Jesus came from a nation that loved prayer. In this passage he gives us the *Christian* charter of prayer. The simple model here is *Ask, Seek, Knock*. We should not be afraid to take our requests to God however difficult they seem (verse 7-8) We have a great and powerful and loving father who will answer our prayers. (See Psalm 17:6)

God will answer those who ask but there is not a promise about exactly what God will give you. It says "it" will be given you. God will give you the thing which you really need even though maybe you didn't know you needed it.

Q. 1. Can you think of examples of how God's timing has worked in your life and your prayer has been answered in an unexpected way?

We should not be afraid that God will disappoint us or take advantage of our weakness, or suddenly let us down (verse 11). Jesus says that a human father with all his failings, knows how to be kind and give good gifts to his children. Won't our Heavenly Father who is perfect be better still? Human love is not even close to the great love that God has for us. Man's love is conditional. God's love is unconditional expecting nothing in return.

Q.2. What do these verses show us about God's heart?

Q.3. What kind of things count as "good gifts"?

Now read again verse 12

This verse is sometimes known as the *Golden Rule*. It is probably universally the most famous thing that Jesus ever said. It has been called the *Everest* of all ethical preaching. It is interesting that Jesus made this a positive command enriching its meanings - *Do to others.....* It is generally used in the negative today- *Do not do to others.....*

Q.4. How does verse 12 relate to the rest of the passage?

Q.5. Reflect for a moment on the practical implications of doing to others what you would have them do to you. What 'others'?

So in this final verse, Jesus sums up his teaching on how to treat people. We must behave towards others as we would like them to behave towards us (see Luke 10: 27). It can be harder to take the initiative and do something good for people than it is to accept a good deed. But we must give generously and receive joyfully. Forgive and be forgiven. Don't judge and don't be judged. This is the golden rule. This is the love of God in action.

God bless you all. Kathy