

# RelationSHIFT

MESSAGE 3:

## *GOD THE FATHER GIVES GOOD THINGS, AND GOOD THINGS ONLY*

**PASSAGE:** MATTHEW 7: 7-11 ESV

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 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!

**MESSAGE GOAL:**

The goal of this message is to emphasize our dependence on God and to inspire a persistent, trusting approach to prayer. It encourages the congregation to recognize their neediness, persist in prayer, and trust that God, as our Heavenly Father, will provide what is truly good for us when we ask Him for it. The message seeks to dispel

any misconceptions about God’s nature based on earthly experiences, shift the focus from material blessings to spiritual blessings, and foster faith in God’s perfect wisdom and provision. Ultimately, it calls for practical application of Jesus’ teachings, urging believers to daily seek the Father’s help to live according to His will.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Every single child on this earth is a needy child; they need someone to provide for them, care for them, protect them, and meet their basic needs. And I want you to have this image of a needy child in mind because, in a sense, you, too, are a needy child, and if you are not careful, you will fail to realize just how needy you really are. And if you are not careful, you will fail to realize just how much you need God, the Father. If you are not careful, you will fail to realize you are but a child with needs. The good news today is that Jesus assures us that God, the

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Father answers needy children and gives them good things, and good things only.

## ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

Jesus encourages us to come to the Heavenly Father continuously and persistently, and this is evidenced by the use of the present-tense verbs in verse 7.

The English translations do not fully give us a sense of what Jesus is really saying.

He is not just saying, "Ask, and it will be given to you," but he is saying, "Keep on asking the Father."

He is not just saying, "Seek, and you will find," but he is saying, "Keep on seeking the Father."

He is not just saying, "Knock, and it will be opened to you," but he is saying, "Keep on knocking on your Father's door."

And this sense of asking, seeking, and knocking are metaphorical ways that call us to the work of ceaseless praying, which is what needy children, who understand and embody who they really are, will do. This need that we have for the Father is so crucial that we must persist in our asking, which in fact, is a true realization of the reality that we are both needy and confident that God, the Father, can meet the need.

The best way I can illustrate this is by re-telling a story Jesus told when teaching His disciples about prayer as recorded in Luke 11:5-8. He says, "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.' But I tell you this, though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence."

Friends, this is the Sunday school lesson Jesus gives to us children:

You don't have to be ashamed about being needy because that is what you have a Father for, and God, the Father, who has exactly what you truly need, will give it to you when you sincerely express that you are truly in need, which if is the case, will not be expressed in a passive manner, but will be expressed in a persistent manner! Beloved, it is our desperation mixed with demand that reveals a heart that not only has a void that needs to be filled but also a heart that realizes that God, the Father, is the one who has exactly what we need to fill that void. And Jesus comes on the scene and confirms

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for us that we can be vulnerable with God, the Father, by persistently coming to Him with our needs and trusting in His willingness to provide.

Let me re-tell another story Jesus told His disciples when teaching them about prayer as recorded in Luke 18:1-7. He says, “There was a judge in a certain city,” he said, “who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, ‘Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.’ The judge ignored her for a while, but he finally said to himself, ‘I don’t fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I’m going to see that she gets justice because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!’ Then the Lord said, ‘Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don’t you think God will surely give justice to His chosen people who cry out to Him day and night?’”

Ladies and Gentlemen, persistence, not passivity, should be your posture before God, the Father, because if you are passive with prayer and not persistent in prayer, are you truly in need? Passive behavior implies that either you don’t fully trust God, the Father, you don’t really have faith in God, the Father, you don’t truly believe that your request is critical in the eyes of the God, the

Father, or your request is not critical to you! But persistent prayer is an act of faith! Persistent prayer is embodied belief that recognizes that you are in desperate need, and God, the Father, is the one who can meet this need!

Notice Jesus comes on the scene and lets us know that God, the Father, will give good things to us if we keep asking, we will find that good thing if we keep seeking, and he will open up the door to the good thing that no man or woman can close if we keep knocking! Dear child, God, the Father, will not withhold good things if you ask, for he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him! Jesus says, "For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

## **THE EARTHLY FATHER IS INCOMPARABLE TO GOD, THE FATHER**

Next, in verses 9-11, Jesus used a standard Jewish argument technique called “qal vahomer,” arguing from the lesser to the greater, to further assure us that the Heavenly Father gives good things to His children. The lesser, in this case, is the earthly father, and the greater, in this case, is the Heavenly Father.

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Jesus says, "Or which one of you fathers, if your son asks you 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!"

The point he is making is that even an earthly father, who knows the difference between what is good for their child and bad for their child in a limited sense, knows how to give good gifts to their children. The Heavenly Father, who knows the difference between good and evil in a way that the Earthly Father does not, will only give good things to his children who ask him!

An earthly father, who knows the difference between good and evil in a limited sense, will inevitably make mistakes. The earthly father at his best sometimes thinks that what he gives is for the good of his child but discovers later that it was bad.

And because of that, beloved, we must not make the mistake of allowing any emotional baggage from our earthly relationships, or any issues that we have, or had, in our earthly relationships with our earthly father, skew our understanding of God, the Father, because ultimately there is some level of

failure in the earthly father, but there is no failure in God, the Father!

The earthly father will make some mistakes, but the God, the Father, makes no mistakes! He will never give you anything that will turn out to be harmful to you but seemed good at first.

He will never give you anything evil.

He will never lead you astray.

He will never make a mistake in what He gives you.

He knows everything.

His knowledge is absolute.

His wisdom is perfect.

His grace is sufficient.

His love is everlasting.

And since you have access to this Father in Jesus the Christ,

Why do you worry?

Why do you fret?

Why are you so fearful?

Why are you so weighed down?

Why are you so anxious?

O Child, if you would just ask God, the Father, for good things, He will give them to you.

Notice, friends, I said if you ask your God, the Father, for good things, He will give them to you because in verse 11, Jesus says your Father who is in heaven gives good things to those who ask Him. You see, God

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will never give you anything that is evil, but God only gives us things that are good.

James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift comes from God." If you have received something that is not good, it did not come from God, the Father, for God, the Father, only gives His children good things.

What that means, then, as His child, He will not grant your request for bad things, even if you think they are good for you. You may think what you are asking for is good, but if it is not truly good, the Father knows it is bad, and as your Heavenly Father, He will not make the mistake of giving you something that is not good for you!

And on that note, we should thank God that "Asking, seeking, and knocking, does not literally mean if we ask for anything, we shall get it because, if truth be told, if you look at some of the things you asked for back then, you can thank God that He didn't give it to you because you now realize that it wasn't as good as you thought it would be.

Get this: When it comes to asking, seeking, and knocking, when it comes to asking God for what Matthew calls "good things" Luke clears it up for us. Luke records this same teaching in his writings, but in his writings, he gets more specific than Matthew when speaking to his audience. Luke 11:13 says it like this: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how

much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Children, I must inform you that a new car is not a good thing you should be asking for! A new house is not a good thing you should be asking for!

Other material blessings are not the good things you should be asking for, and I would argue that you are selling yourself short if you ask God, the Father, for these types of material things!

For the Father has far more valuable things to give His children than what money can buy!

The Father has far more valuable things to give His children than what a dealership can offer!

The Father has far more valuable things to give His children than what you can get at the mall, the store, the market.

And ultimately God, the Father, loves you too much to give you things you will idolize, to give you things that will destroy you, to give you things that will harm you, to give you things that will make you depressed!

No, the Father only gives good things, and if you only ask Him for material things, or if you are only asking Him for things that you think would be good rather than what He has said is good for you, then you need to renew your Western mind, you need to renew your mind, and ask God for God's Spirit!

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If you ask God for His Spirit, He will give it to you!

And what we need in this hour more than material things, is God's Spirit!

God's Spirit is what we need to be knocking God's door down asking for!

These good things God has for us, are laid out in the scriptures. The good things are God's word, God's Spirit, and God's Blessings! The good things that God has for us are laid out in the scriptures, and I implore you to find out from the scriptures what these good things are and seek them!

Now, the good things that Matthew speaks of are all the things that Jesus had been teaching about on that mount.

And You can't live the righteous life that God requires without His help and His grace!

You can't conform to the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ without His help!

You can't obey God's word without His help!

You cannot truly experience peace in your life without His help!

You cannot truly experience love in your life without His help!

You can't forgive others as you have been forgiven without His help!

You can't love your neighbor as yourself without His help!

You cannot get justice in an unjust world without His help!

But you must ask the Father for help to live the life that He is asking for you to live!

God may not help you to live the life that you want to live because the life that you want to live is not good for you, but God will help you to live the life according to His word because that is a good thing, and our Father gives good things, and good things only to His children that ask!

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.