

The Currency of the Kingdom

Kingdom Living #13 - Pastor Gary Combs - June 22, 2025 - Matthew 7:7-12

INTRO: Good morning church! I happy to be back in the pulpit after taking some time off to rest and to study for our church's future. I'm thankful for a church that understands a pastor's need for such time. I'm also thankful to our teaching team, especially Mike Laramee and Stephen Combs for preaching in my absence.

Today, we're continuing our sermon series today entitled, KINGDOM LIVING. It's an expository study of Christ's Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. Many have described it as the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived.

In this sermon, Jesus lays out what life looks like for those who belong to His kingdom, not an earthly kingdom built on pride and performance, but a heavenly one marked by humility, dependence, and grace. Again and again in this sermon, Jesus turns the world's values upside down.

And that's especially true in our passage today, Matthew 7:7-12. Here, Jesus invites us into a relationship with our heavenly Father where the norm is not earning but asking. The world says, "You get what you earn." The world's currency is merit—performance, success, hard work, self-reliance. But the currency of the kingdom is asking. It's coming to God not trying to earn His blessing, but as children depending on a generous Father.

Need: Now, that goes against everything we're taught from an early age, doesn't it? Many of us were raised to be self-sufficient, to never ask for help, to earn our way forward. Even as Christians, we often fall into the trap of thinking we need to prove ourselves before God or that He won't listen unless we're good enough. But Jesus says otherwise. He teaches us to come boldly, to come often, and to come expectantly—not because of our worthiness, but because of the Father's goodness.

And that's why we need this message today. Some of us have grown weary in prayer. Others have stopped asking because we think God isn't listening, or that we don't deserve an answer. Some of us have tried to live the Christian life in our own strength and we're running on empty.

Trans: Today's message is a gracious reminder from Jesus: **You don't earn God's favor—you ask for it.** And He's more willing to give than we are to ask. So let's lean in and listen to our King as He teaches us how to experience the generous provision of our heavenly Father in this sermon that we've entitled: "The Currency of the Kingdom." For the currency of the kingdom is asking!

BODY: In Matthew 7, Jesus continued His Sermon on the Mount by teaching kingdom citizens how to experience the generous provision of their heavenly Father. We can experience the generous provision of our heavenly Father. How can we experience the generous provision of our heavenly Father? The text gives three ways we can experience the generous provision of our heavenly Father.

Read text: Matthew 7:7-12 (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! ¹² "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE GENEROUS PROVISION OF THE FATHER:

1. Take hold of the Father's promise in persistent prayer.

EXP: (7-8) Jesus returns to the topic of prayer. He has warned against praying to be seen as hypocritical (6:5-6). He has taught us how to pray, telling us to call on God as Father and reminding us not to think we'll be heard because of our many words, because the "Father knows what you need before you ask him" (6:7-13). Now, Jesus promises that those who persistently come to the Father asking, seeking and knocking will receive, find, and have the door opened. John Stott's insight is helpful here:

"Jesus seeks to imprint his promises on our mind and memory by the hammer blows of repetition. First, his promises are attached to direct commands: Ask...seek...knock (7). These may deliberately be in an ascending scale of urgency. All three verbs are present imperatives and indicate the persistence with which we should make our requests known to God. Second, the promises are expressed in universal statements: For everyone who asks receives...(8)." (John Stott. *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, p.201).

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“Ask” (7,8,9,10,11 - 5x) (αἰτέω, *aiteō* - PAM) - to ask, beg, desire. Present tense implies persistent action:

Matthew 7:7 (NLT) “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.”

“Seek” (7) (ζητέω, *zēteō* - PAM) - to seek a thing; to seek by thinking, meditating, reasoning, to enquire into.

“Knock” (7) (κρούω, *krouō* - PAM) - to knock: at the door

“Everyone” (8) (πᾶς, *pas*) - all, whosoever, everyone. The promise of prayer is to everyone!

ARG: The three imperatives definitely speak of prayer, but do they speak of different types of prayer?

Dr. Quarles doesn't see the three as “introducing distinct ideas.” He says that all three are to be seen as “pleas for God to act, different metaphors for prayer” (Charles Quarles, *Sermon on the Mount*, p.296).

While others such as Stott see “an ascending scale of urgency” in prayer. Still others such as Andrew Murray see a unique difference, saying that asking we seek the gift, seeking the Giver, and knocking “speaks of admission to dwell with Him and in Him. Asking and receiving the gift would thus lead to seeking and finding the Giver, and this again to the knocking and opening of the door of the Father's home and love” (<https://www.path2prayer.com/holiness-and-spirituality-writers/andrew-murray-holiness--spirituality-writer/andrew-murray-certainty-of-answers>)

Following Murray's thinking on the three verbs of “gift, Giver, and Father's home, these verses:

Jeremiah 29:13 (ESV) You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

John 10:9 (ESV) I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved...

God's Word clearly commands persistent prayer:

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV) pray without ceasing

Colossians 4:2 (ESV) Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

ILL: Jesus told two parables to illustrate persistent prayer. The 1st is this parallel passage: Luke 11:5-9 And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

The other is the Parable of the Persistent Widow: Luke 18:1-8 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, “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.”

ARG: But why does Jesus say be persistent in prayer if the Father already knows what we need (6:7)?

- **Because persistent prayer is not a transaction—it's communion.** When Jesus tells us to persist, He's not inviting us to wear God down, but to **draw near** to the Father who already loves us. As Murray writes “Our Teacher waits to imprint this upon our minds: prayer and its answer, the child asking and the Father giving, belong to each other.” — Andrew Murray

- **Because persistent prayer forms us spiritually.** God uses waiting and wrestling in prayer to shape our desires, refine our motives, and grow our trust. Persistent prayer teaches dependence, humility, and hope.

“Prayer doesn't change God; it changes me.” — C.S Lewis

APP: God already knows our needs, but we don't pray to inform Him—we pray to invite Him. We don't pray just fulfill our needs, but to have fellowship with our Father. And persistent prayer opens our hearts to His presence, power, and purpose. So will you obey Christ's command to be persistent in prayer?

2. Look to the Father with confident expectation.

EXP: (9-11) Jesus appeals to something all of us understand—parenting. He says, "Which one of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?" Of course, no good parent would do that. Even though we are "evil"—flawed, broken, sinful—we still know how to give good gifts to our children. So how much more will our perfect, loving, heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask Him?

"Bread ... stone" (9) (λίθος, *lithos*) - Why bread vs. stone? Perhaps because a stone could resemble a loaf of bread. God is not out to deceive you by giving something harmful in place of something essential.

"Fish ... serpent" (9) (ὄφις, *ophis*) - a snake, serpent or eel. Why fish vs. serpent? Again there is some resemblance between the two, but again God is not deceptive nor would He harm you.

"Evil" (11) (πονηρός, *ponēros*) - bad, evil in an ethical sense. We are all sinners.

"Good gifts" (11) (δόμα, *doma*) - good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy ... gifts or presents.

"How much more" (11) (μᾶλλον, *mallon*) - more, to a greater degree, rather; much, by far. You Father in heaven is able to give far more than you could imagine. Jesus is confronting our tendency to expect little from God, to wonder if He hears, or worse, to doubt His goodness. He says, "Your Father is far better than you think. You can trust Him completely." And notice what Jesus says in Luke's parallel account:

Luke 11:13 (ESV) How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Matthew says "good things," Luke says "the Holy Spirit." This isn't a contradiction—it's a clarification. The greatest good gift the Father gives is Himself.

ARG: **God has already given us the most costly gift—His Son. Why would we doubt His generosity now?**

Romans 8:32 (ESV) He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?

However, the promise is not unconditional. It isn't knock and "open sesame" (Stott).

James 1:5-8 (ESV) ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 4:1-3 (ESV) ² ...You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

1 John 5:14-15 (ESV) ¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

ILL: When I was 8 I prayed for God to heal my dad, but He passed. At age 14, I realized that I was fearful of God's response to prayer, of committing my life fully to Him. I didn't doubt His goodness. I doubted whether He would answer my prayers and give good gifts to me. This Scripture changed me.

APP: What do you expect when you pray? Are you asking, but deep down thinking, "God probably won't answer"? Jesus is inviting us to expect more from our Father, not because we're worthy, but because He is good. Don't let past disappointments define your present expectation. Look to the Father with confidence. He is willing and able to provide what is best for us. As Dr. Akin has said:

"Prayer is the great blessing that puts our impotence in touch with God's omnipotence, our lack in touch with his supply, and our needs in touch with his riches." (Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 141).

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3. Live out the Father's generosity toward others.

EXP: (12) It might seem like verse 12—what we call “The Golden Rule”—doesn’t belong with what came before, but Jesus is actually wrapping up this teaching by pointing to the fruit of receiving from the Father: we become people who give generously to others. We become like our Father.

“**So**” (12) (οὕτως, *oun*) - then, therefore, consequently. The result of receiving from the Father.

“**Whatever you wish**” (12) (θέλω, *thelō*) - to will, to purpose; to desire, to wish for.

“**Others would do to you**” (12) (ποιέω, *poieō*) - to do; to act rightly, do well; to carry out.

“**Do also to them**” (12) - Traditional wording: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

“**Law and the Prophets**” (12) - The Golden Rule might better be called the “royal law.” For it expresses the heart of the Great Commandment towards others and it is the fulfillment of the Law and Prophets. Which Jesus said that He came not to abolish, but to fulfill (5:17).

James 2:8 (ESV) If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

ARG: Having received the Father's generosity, we are called to be like Him:

Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV) ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The positive command is to want for others, both in quality and quantity, that you want for yourself:

“Jesus gives the positive form of this rule, and the difference between the two forms is profound. For example, the negative form would teach behavior like this: If you do not enjoy being robbed, don’t rob others. If you do not like being cursed, don’t curse others. If you do not enjoy being hated, don’t hate others. If you do not care to be clubbed over the head, don’t club others over the head.

However, the positive form teaches behavior like this: If you enjoy being loved, love others. If you like to receive things, give to others. If you like being appreciated, appreciate others. The positive form is thus far more searching than its negative counterpart. Here there is no permission to withdraw into a world where I offend no one, but accomplish no positive good either. What would you like done to you? What would you really like? Then, do that to others. Duplicate both the quality of these things, and their quantity—“in everything.” — D.A. Carson (Akin, p. 145).

ILL: When I was young, I wanted to be like my Dad. As I grew older, I want to be like my Father in Heaven.

APP: Jesus says that this principle—“do to others what you would have them do to you”—summarizes the Law and the Prophets. This is kingdom living in action: having received mercy, we show mercy. Having received provision, we become providers. Having been forgiven, we forgive.

If you’ve truly experienced the generous provision of the Father, it will show. Are you reflecting His generosity in your home, in your church, in your community? Are you living out what you’ve received?

CONCLUSION: Let me remind you: the currency of the kingdom is not earning—it’s asking. Jesus invites us to (1) take hold of His promise through persistent prayer, (2) to look to our Father with confident expectation, and (3) to live out His generosity toward others.

Some of us have stopped asking. We’ve grown discouraged, disillusioned, or even cynical. But Jesus is calling us back today—not to a performance-based religion, but to a grace-based relationship with our heavenly Father. He’s not waiting for you to be impressive. He’s waiting for you to be dependent.

So church, let’s return to the throne of grace. Let’s ask boldly. Let’s seek Him earnestly. Let’s knock persistently—knowing the door will be opened. And let’s reflect the Father’s generosity in all we do.

Let’s pray.