

04.05.26

Luke

Chapter 11 - A Polarizing Wish

God's Wish for You

Anticipation - Expect This (vs. 9-13)

Luke 11:9-13: “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. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 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?”

You could basically entitle this passage, “So, What Do You Expect God to Do?”

1 Thessalonians 4:14 begins this way,

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again...”

“If.” Then as it goes on, it changes our lives.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

(1 Thessalonians 4:16) “... the dead in Christ will rise first.

(1 Thessalonians 4:17) Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

If you believe. Believing is more than just to celebrate a particular day. One of my concerns always when we come to these holy days, that's where you get the word “holidays,” by the way, is that we have a tendency to think that we are a part of that holy day simply because we attended a service or simply because we heard a particular message or perhaps even agree with some of the things that were said. But it's far more than that. And my concern is always that you not only say that you

believe that Christ came and rose again, but that you know you believe that the Spirit of God is actually within you. The same Spirit that raised Him from the dead is in you. If in fact that's not true, then you won't be raised from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15 says, if in fact Christ was not raised, then the fact that we believe this, we're the most to be pitied. Paul is talking to these Epicureans and Stoics in Athens in Acts 17, and he begins to talk about the resurrection. At that point, they go, "We can't hear this." The resurrection seems to be one of the things that separates the believers from the unbelievers when you start talking about the legitimacy of resurrection. People don't mind, you know, looking for Easter eggs and doing all those kinds of things. But when you actually talk about, we actually believe that we're going to be raised, it's something that they just can't seem to grasp, and the miracle of God can't seem to be grasped.

The fundamental principle of Christ being raised, and Paul speaks of this in Acts 17, he said, "You know that Jesus was the Christ because God raised Him from the dead." In

other words, you know, you might be looking about other religions and going, “Well, is that one true? Maybe this one's true.” And God goes, “Okay, I'll let you know which one is true. The guy that was raised from the dead, that's the guy you follow.” And it kind of makes it unique, doesn't it? It's hard to kind of follow that particular miraculous event. So, we understand that it is that which is at the forefront of our faith.

There is a passage in Romans 8 before we come to this text, because obviously, as we read this passage, it's about prayer. And it's hard to think, “What in the world is he going to say about resurrection in that regard?” I have a point. So, if you turn me to Romans 8, I want to show you a wonderful passage that makes reference specifically to the Holy Spirit. Now, the reason I bring up the Holy Spirit within this is, as Peter so aptly put it at the time of Pentecost as he was preaching, His statement was, and he quotes from the Old Testament in the Psalms, “God would not allow His Holy One to undergo decay.” He actually quotes that passage as he begins to proclaim the resurrection of Christ. The fundamental point is that the

reason why Christ was raised was because He was holy, because He pleased God in all things. He was the exact representation of the nature of God, as Hebrews tells us. Holy. It was the Holy Spirit that would not let Him die.

The passage reads in Romans 8, if you turn with me in verse 11,

(Romans 8:11) “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you...”

I bet you didn't think that. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, if in fact you are redeemed, dwells in you.

“... He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

What is that telling us? It's telling us that if in fact you have the Spirit of God, you're going to live forever.

Unfortunately, most people aren't really sure about this.

And for a good reason. It's one of the reasons why the Book of 1 John was written; for those who say they believe that they might know that they have eternal life,

because quite frankly, I don't think most people know. And I'm not sure that most people are saved.

Jesus will make an interesting statement, if you look with me in Luke 13, to His disciples. And in Luke 13, this question was brought up that it seems like very few people are going to be saved.

(Luke 13:22) “And He was passing through from one city and village to another, teaching, and proceeding on His way to Jerusalem.”

(Luke 13:23) And someone said to Him, “Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?” And He said to them,

(Luke 13:24) “Strive...”

It's actually where we get the word “agonize”. Struggle, contend, and work hard. “Eh, I thought it wasn't by works that were saved.” It's not. But what He's talking about is that you're going to have a lot of blockades.

The statement reads this way,

“Strive to enter through the narrow door...”

Underline the word “narrow” in that particular passage.

The Greek word that He uses, “*stenos*,” is making

reference to not necessarily that the door itself was narrow, but that there were a lot of obstacles around the door. And the point is that there's a lot of things that are telling you not to believe. And that's why you have to strive. More specifically, you have to long for this, because you're going to hear voices, you're going to have people come up to you that are going to say it's not real, it's not true, They're going to come up to you with what they perceive to be scientific thoughts. Scripture says they're so smart, they're stupid. Professing to be wise, they become fools. You're going to have all kinds of obstacles in your life that's going to shoot what they would call a theory down. Not a theory. He is raised from the dead. It's true.

The passage reads this way,

“Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

(Luke 13:25) Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up to us!’ then He will

answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.'"

Another way of putting that is, "I don't know where you're coming from."

The passage is making reference to the fact that God is not acquainted with you. "Oh, wait a minute. Now, wait a minute," you'll answer.

(Luke 13:26) "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'"

"We were there," I guess, in proxemics. "We saw You. We gave audience. We even had some kind of fellowship."

If you look at the passage,

"... 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets';

(Luke 13:27) and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME...'"

"You never were on the same page with Me."

Now what is He talking about? What He's talking about is that you had a love for unrighteousness rather than righteousness. You weren't pursuing the same things that

God was pursuing. “Well, why would I do that?” Well, you know, that's a good question because it's not within us to want to do that. But it is literally the evidence of the Spirit of God within us. I can tell you that before I came to know the Lord, I didn't want to do these things. In fact, in many ways, I didn't even want to enter church. And my dad was a preacher, too. But you know those PKs; they're not that good themselves. But the fact of the matter is that when God comes into your lives, He changes you and changes your “want to.” It was clearly shared. It's not something that can be explained. It's inexplicable. It's not something that you can write a formula about or even work hard at. You have to work hard at pushing away the obstacles. And you have to really desire.

This is why this prayer is so important. This particular prayer, the disciples come up to Jesus and they go, “You've got to teach us how to pray because we don't know how to do it.” And Jesus goes, “No problem. This is how you pray.” And as He goes through it, and we talked about this, but I just want to set this stage, He begins with a sentiment. He begins with, “This should be on your

heart, this should be your focus, this should be your treasure, this should be your thought when you pray.” Now, the passage, and we've talked about this, is not necessarily saying, “Repeat these words,” as we have oftentimes read and have repeated in verse 2, as it starts off, “Father, holy is Your name, Your kingdom come. Give us this day...” And we go, “Yeah, we know the words.” And He goes, “No, it's not about the words. It's about the sentiment. Pray this way. Desire God to be your Father.” You want God to be your Father? That means that you want God to direct you. It means that you want God to correct you. You are calling on Him to be your Father. And your desire is, and you know that His direction is not going to be anything like the direction of the world. It's not going to be anything like your earthly father. Scripture tells us that earthly fathers corrected us as seemed best to them, but your heavenly Father will correct you appropriately, to bring forth righteousness. Do you believe that? Do you desire that? That's really what it's about. What is your sentiment? And He goes on and He begins to say, “And your sentiment should always be His kingdom come. In other words, His rule, His standards, ‘I

want them first.” Remember, as it so aptly is put in Matthew 6:33, “Seek ye first His standards.”

So, let's talk about prayer just a minute. So, when you come before God and you start praying, you go, “God, I really need this, I want this, I need this.” And you can go through the list, whether it's a physical thing or whether it's a career move or something like that. We all have our particular list. And I think sometimes we get very frustrated because God doesn't seem to be hearing what we're telling Him. And the thought is, we read this, and He goes, “Well, ask, and you'll receive it. Keep seeking, and you're going to find it. Keep knocking, and it's going to be.” “It's not there; it's not happening.” And God goes, “You didn't get the first part. When you come to Me, every time you pray, every time you bring something before Me, Say this, ‘God, I want You to direct me. I want You to correct me. I want You as my Father. I just want to do what Your will is above everything else. Tell me what the standards are. Tell me what You want me to do in this area. I want Your will in my life.’” Is that how you begin your prayers? Or is it “I’ve got this list of things that I want

God to do”? And He goes on in the prayer, “And I want to trust You for everything in my life, every single day. I want to trust You. Give us this day our daily bread.” That's what He's talking about.

Once again, it's not doubting that God is going to care for us, but you're saying, “I just want You to give me exactly what is necessary for me to stay close to You,” because that's your desire all the way through. And obviously, you can't hold on to sins. And you want God to forgive, but you also want God's mercy and God's compassion for everybody else. Have you ever prayed a prayer something like this: “God, I just want You to destroy that mean person down the block”? What does the passage say? You have to come with this sentiment, “Forgive me as I forgive them.” And if that's not on your heart, then you're coming to God, and He's not listening to your prayer. There's a duplicitous desire that you go, “Well, I have these desires,” so you kind of amalgamate into God's desires, and you go, “I'm sure He's going to be happy with this. Maybe He'll...” It's sort of like bills passed in the Congress. Just put a whole bunch of other stuff in there, and

hopefully it all gets passed, and God goes, "It doesn't work that way." "Forgive us our sins, we forgive those who are indebted against us, and don't let temptation get a hold of me." Well, if you think about it, a lot of our prayers are about our temptation, about the desires that we have. And so, we just bring them before God, and we go, "We just want more." And God goes, "You're supposed to ask Me not to give you temptations. And the very things you're praying for, the very things that are going to draw you away from a relationship with Me."

As you go on in the passage, He gives this interesting story about importunity, or more specifically about being persistent in your prayers. And once again, the thought oftentimes is, "Well, God just wants me to keep asking Him this prayer and finally He's going to give me what I want." And that's not what the text is saying at all. It's saying you need to be persistent in the prayer of, "God, I want Your will to be done. God, I want You to be first. I want You to be my Father. I want you God to direct." And you need to pray that prayer every single day. "Don't let anything come into my life that would draw me away

from You. Don't let anything that I do cause me hindrance in my relationship with You. Keep me from these things. Cause me to ever be forgiving of those.” And you have to pray these prayers every day because I don't know if you've noticed, but we have a tendency not to be very forgiving. And so, Jesus is saying, “You keep asking God for these things.”

Now, if you read with me in verse 9, it reads this way, (Luke 11:9) “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.”

Ask, seek, knock. Three things that He said. Now, I just want to remind you that all three of those are in the present continuous, which means this, “Keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking.” For what? Well, what we just talked about. These are the things that in your heart you should ever be seeking, not your particular request that you're wanting to get fulfilled because of your particular desires, but “Your kingdom come.” Keep asking for that. Keep seeking for that. Seek first the kingdom of God. Keep knocking. Now, if you think about it, each one of those

has a different perspective. The “ask” is you admitting that you have a need. That's why you ask.

I remember in the Book of Isaiah, in Isaiah 7 in particular, you have this King Ahaz, and God comes up to Ahaz, and He goes, “I know you're being surrounded by the enemy, come to Me, ask whatever you want, as high as the heavens, as deep as sheol, I'll give it to you.” Ahaz goes, “I'm not going to ask.” God goes, “Your problem is you won't admit that you have a need. You think you can fix your problems.” The very action of asking is you admitting, “I have a need. I need You to help me.”

The second part is “seeking,” and that really displays a desire. So, the first, “I have a need.” The second is, “I desire Your will. I desire Your kingdom.” Once again, “Seek first the kingdom of God.” That's your desire being complete.

And the last is knocking. And that is really conveying a relationship. Whether it's in Luke 13 or Revelation 3:20, you have this wonderful picture in Revelation 3:20 of Jesus saying, “Behold, I stand at the door knocking. If any man hear Me, will open the door, I'll come in with him.

We'll have fellowship together, and he with Me.” What is the passage saying? You need to desire not only this with all of your heart, but you also need to desire to have a lasting relationship. Jesus will oftentimes use the phrase, and in particular in John 15, “Abide with Me. Stay with Me. Stay. Let's stay together.” I think the wonderful thing about our faith is that as Christians, we actually want to be with God. So, Jesus says, “I've gone and prepared a place for you that where I am, there you can be also. I'm coming again, and I'm going to receive you unto Myself.” Those are wonderful promises, aren't they? That we're going to be with Him. You have to want to be with Him. The passage is saying, “If you do these things, I'll be real to you.”

Now, follow through in the passage, because verse 11 or 12, you know, we oftentimes come in prayer really doubting the goodness of God, and I'm going, “Why are you even praying?” James puts it so succinctly in James 1, “Look, if you're going to ask, ask without any doubting. The one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. Don't expect that you're going to

receive anything from the Lord being double-minded and unstable in all your ways.” So, when you're asking, what do you think He's going to give you? Something bad?

And that's why it reads this way,

(Luke 11:11) “Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?”

(Luke 11:12) Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?”

In other words, the father's not going to give him things that are destructive or painful in his life. He's only going to do that which is best for him.

(Luke 11:13) “If you then, being evil (*ponēros*) ...”

I know there are a lot of fathers here probably going, “I'm not an evil father.” Fundamentally, what He's talking about is a father that's weighed down with things like your temperament. Are you sometimes impatient? Okay, sometimes you're impatient. Are there events where you're self-centered? So, I would guess that you at times have vindictive spirit and grumpy. Even when you're

disciplining your kids, sometimes your whole thought is, “I just want them to like me.” And then you really mess up. The point is that you don't always think righteously.

But it goes on and says,

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father...”

Now, watch how the text ends,

“... give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”

You know what this does? This actually goes back to the beginning of this particular passage. Remember the disciples? “Teach us to pray. We don't know how to pray.” Romans 8 will say this, that the Spirit actually prays for us. Because of the groanings that we have in this world, and we don't really even know how to pray, it actually emphasizes that phrase again. But we do not know how to pray. What we're talking about is that, and you know, I read these things, “Father, holy is Your name. I want You to direct me. I want You to...” You know, I just think in the decision of my life, it's not natural for me to think this

way. The first thought in my head isn't, "I want Your standards to be alive and well in my life. I want them to be first in my life." I don't think that way. What the passage is ultimately saying is, "I know you don't. You need the Holy Spirit within you." And the Holy Spirit within you changes the desires of your heart.

Now, here's the point. If you don't have the Spirit, the same Spirit that resurrected Jesus from the dead, you won't be resurrected to life eternal. Just trying to make this as clear as I can. The evidence that you have His Spirit is that you want these things. Now, that's something you couldn't fabricate. This is why we tell you, receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. And you're sealed, Ephesians 4:30, by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption. How do I know I have the Holy Spirit? Because you think this way. Now, here again, we're in the flesh. So, we come with a prayer and I'm just going to surprise you, even Paul was in the flesh. Paul was in the flesh. And you remember in particular in 2 Corinthians 12, where he comes before the Lord? Remember, the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh? Do you remember why? Because he was caught up in the

third heaven. And he sees things and then God turns to him, and He goes, "Don't say anything. Don't say anything about this." And so, in this particular text, Paul goes, "I'd like to tell you about it. But God put this thorn in the flesh so I wouldn't." And you go, "Why would God do that?" And he goes on and he says, "That I might not exalt myself." Now, if you remember the text, it reads this way, "And I came to God and requested three times that He would remove this." That's Paul praying, isn't it? That's Paul, the apostle Paul, praying. And God said, "No." No? Come on, ask, seek, knock. It'll be given to you, right? No. You have to ask according to His will. And this is the Spirit of God. Paul then responds this way, "But it was a good thing. Because when I'm weak, He's strong. And His strength is made perfect in my weakness." He's explaining this to Corinthians because of the fact that he didn't know how to really minister to them. They're very arrogant people. The thought naturally is in order to minister to arrogant people, you have to be in the upper echelon. It doesn't work that way. God will oftentimes use the weak and the foolish things to confound the wise. And so, He brings Paul in a very humble place so that they might see

only the love of God and not look at the position, that they might embrace the message and not look at the possessions that he has. Paul will come to them in great weakness, and he'll state that, "I came to you in weakness, so that you wouldn't rely on strength and believe that it's all God and none of me." You'd say, "Well, it's too bad that Paul's desire was not met." That's not exactly true.

Let me have you turn to a passage in Philippians 1. You're going to come to God with prayers and desires and, look, naturally we all have certain things that are important to us. But something happens when you receive Christ as your Lord and Savior and the Spirit of God comes within you. And He begins interceding for you in ways in which you wouldn't think. Fundamentally, when you come to the Lord, you say, "I want You to be Lord of my life. I want You to direct my life. I want You to correct me in any way possible. Don't let me fall away from my love for You." And He hears that prayer. Unfortunately, the other prayers sometimes that you bring are the very things that would cause you to fall away from Him. And in Paul's life,

the very desire for that thorn in the flesh to be taken out would cause him to perhaps be exalted in his own mind. And God said, "You would fall away from Me." You would say, "Well, that's God pushing Himself on Paul." No, that was Paul's wish.

Look with me in Philippians 1, as Paul will say this,

(Philippians 1:19) "For I know that this (condition) ..."

This particular condition in Philippians 1, he's in prison. So, that's not necessarily a place that you would pray to be in either.

"For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

(Philippians 1:20) according to my earnest expectation..."

Okay, here's the question: What are you expecting God to do? When you come to pray, what are you expecting? What are you looking for? You expect Him to give you whatever you want? Is that what you're expecting? Or when you came to Him, did you surrender your life? And did you tell Him, "I want You in charge"?

“According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”

What's your expectation? There are going to be things that come into your life; some of you are going to be praying for family members, “Oh God, You've got to save this family member. You've got to do it this way.” You know, you have it all mapped out. And God goes, “What was your original prayer?” And you say, “Oh God, that even now You would be glorified in whatever way You choose. You're the Father, I'm the son.” You want to know why Christ was resurrected? Exactly what He said. Did He want to go through the pain and suffering? No, “If You could remove this, remove this. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done.” You know, the wonderful thing about that earnest expectation is it's only good.

Scripture tells us in Ephesians that God is actually going to do above and beyond what we can ask or think. I was just thinking that we would ask for a long life. You know, if you come before God, “God help me to live.” God would

give us life eternal. You and I would seek for temporary treasure, but God would give you a treasure, as Peter would say, that is not going to fade away, reserved in heaven for you. I mean, eternal rewards. We would strive for better health. But He's going to resurrect you, immortal, and incorruptible. Would you rather have your prayer or His?

When this passage starts off, it starts off, "How shall we wish?" Remember, "*proseuchomai*," the word "prayer," means to wish upward. What do we wish for? And He says, "Wish that I'm in charge. Wish that I do everything My way." Watch how your life will be better. And I know that God is not going to give me anything that'd be destructive in my life. I would ask for destructive stuff, but God is not going to. And the very evidence of resurrection is telling me He has far better things than I could ever imagine. If you don't believe this, if you don't pray like this, does the Spirit who raises from the dead reside within you? Simple question.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today. We ask that You would do a work within our hearts. The realization that You were raised from the dead, this we know to be true. Historically, we know it to be true, but more than that, You ask me how I know You live? You live within our hearts. And I have the same Spirit that raised You from the dead living within me. I have an assurance and a confidence. But more than that, I have the Spirit of holiness that says, "Not my will, but Yours be done." And I have such a great confidence that You're going to be doing great things in my life.

God is asking you to come to Him in prayer. And you say, "Why?" And the answer is, He wants you to desire the very things that He desires to give you. Do you think for one moment that God is going to give you bad stuff? He'd never do that. God is wishing that you would wish for all the wonderful things that He has in store for you, and that you would keep on wishing for them every single day. That you would not allow another wish to enter into your head, but that your desire would be for His will, for His wonderful righteousness to be exemplified in your life.

That your light would so shine before men that they would see your good works and glorify Him in heaven; that this would be predominant over everything else. And I know you're going to have other requests. And I know that there are going to be other things that are important to you, but when all is said and done, you're going to lay those things at His feet, and you're going to say this, "But God, I know You know best, and I trust You, and I expect better than what I could ever hope for." If you can say that, you have the Spirit of resurrection in your heart.