**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | The Power of Prevailing Prayer |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Matthew 7:7-11 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #1706 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Matthew 7:7
      1. This Scripture is one of the grandest promises in all of the Bible.
      2. It tells us how to get our prayers answered.
         1. The time will come, if the time is not already here, when the most important thing for us will be for God to answer our prayers.
      3. These are the words of Jesus.
      4. If we cannot believe these words, then we have no right to believe that we are saved.
   2. The same Bible that promises salvation also promises answered prayer.
      1. If we cannot believe one promise, then why should we believe the other?
   3. Matthew 7:7-11
   4. The best key to the vault of all of God’s treasure is prayer.
      1. Matthew 7:7
   5. In today’s message, we will look at the following three things about prayer:
      1. There is a promise to claim.
      2. There is a process to follow.
      3. There is a provision to enjoy.
2. there is a promise to claim (matthew 7:7)
   1. Matthew 7:7
   2. There is no substitute for prayer.
      1. If you lose a leg, then you can get an artificial leg.
      2. If your telephone is not adequate, then there is another way to communicate with others.
      3. There is a substitute for most things you need in this life.
         1. But there is no substitute for prayer.
            1. Not eloquence, intellect, energy, enthusiasm, or intention.
   3. The greatest unused and untapped resource in the world is prayer.
      1. Why is there poverty and powerlessness for so many Christians?
         1. There is one answer, and it is prayerlessness.
      2. There is not a failure in our lives but what it is a prayer failure.
      3. We don’t have a sin in our lives but what proper prayer would have avoided it.
      4. We don’t have a need in our lives that cannot be met through prevailing prayer.
   4. Why does God want us to pray when He already knows what we need before we ask Him?
      1. Matthew 6:8
      2. When we pray, we don’t pray to inform God.
         1. God already knows.
      3. We don’t pray to instruct God because God has a will.
      4. When we pray, we invite God.
         1. God wants to do some things in us.
            1. God wants to do those things through prayer.
   5. Why does God tell us to pray?
      1. There is the fellowship factor.
         1. John 15:7
            1. Does God just simply want to give us things, or does God want us to have fellowship with Him?

God wants us to have fellowship with Him.

Therefore, God wants us to pray.

* + - 1. Prayer is the way of us abiding in Him and Him abiding in us.
         1. That way, we and God do it together.

God could do it without us.

We cannot do it without Him.

God will not do it without us because God wants us to have fellowship with Him.

* + - 1. When we pray and God answers, we abide in Him and He abides in us.
         1. We are laborers together with God.

2 Corinthians 6:1

* + 1. There is the development factor.
       1. There is nothing that will grow us as Christians more than prayer.
       2. When we abide in the Lord Jesus Christ and He abides in us, then we are growing as we pray.
       3. Have you ever wondered why God doesn’t answer your prayer immediately?
          1. It is because He wants you to grow some more.
       4. Sometimes, we go to God and say, “God, please do this,” but there is something that God wants us to do first.
       5. Prayer is the way of developing our lives.
          1. We ask God for something.

God doesn’t give it to us.

* + - * 1. We go back and ask God why He didn’t answer our prayer.

Then, the Holy Spirit shows us any sin that is in our lives.

* + 1. There is the dependency factor.
       1. John 15:5
       2. If God were to answer our prayers automatically, then there would be no growth.
       3. If we never had to pray, then there would be no dependency.
       4. Prayer is God’s way of bonding us to Him.

1. there is a process to follow (matthew 7:7)
   1. Matthew 7:7
      1. Notice the verbs in this verse: ask, seek, and find.
         1. That is a process, an intensification, and an escalation.
      2. There is both a promise and a process in this verse.
         1. The promise is that God will hear us.
         2. The process is asking, seeking, and knocking.
   2. Ask: A desire expressed.
      1. Matthew 7:7
      2. There is something you want.
         1. You come to God, and you ask Him for it.
      3. The greatest problem in prayer is not unanswered prayer; it is unasked prayer.
         1. Most of us don’t even get to the asking part.
         2. James 4:2
      4. Unoffered prayer is not merely a tragedy; it is a sin.
         1. 1 Samuel 12:23
      5. The Bible not only invites us to pray, but the Bible also commands us to pray.
         1. Luke 18:1
         2. Mark 14:38
            1. Every time we sin, it is because we have failed to pray as we should.
         3. Philippians 4:6
            1. The reason we are full of care and worry is that we have not truly learned how to pray.
            2. In everything by prayer and supplication, we are to ask God for everything that we need.

A good test of whether something is right or wrong for us to have is can we ask God for it?

If it’s wrong to ask God for it, then it’s wrong to have it or to do it.

* + 1. We are to pray about anything.
       1. We should not divide up our lives into the secular and the sacred.
          1. Where there are some things we pray about and other things we don’t pray about.
          2. To a Christian, all things are sacred.

Every day is a holy day.

Every object is a proper object of prayer.

* + - 1. Pray about the little things and the big things.
         1. Can you imagine anything that would be big to God or anything too small for God to be interested in?
         2. Pray when your child is sick.
         3. You can also pray for a parking place.
         4. God is a God who is over all.
      2. God knows our needs.
      3. If there is a wrong thing that you want, then you should pray about that.
         1. God already knows.
         2. Ask Him to fix you “wanter”.
    1. God cannot answer unless we ask.
       1. James 4:2
  1. Seek: A discovery experienced.
     1. Matthew 7:7
     2. Many times, we ask for the wrong thing, or we don’t know what to ask for.
     3. Many times, we are not in an asking position.
     4. Sometimes, there are things that are lost or unknown to us.
        1. And so, true asking is linked with seeking.
     5. It may be the purpose of God that we need to seek.
        1. James 4:3
        2. We may be asking for the wrong thing.
        3. We need to seek the will of God.
     6. It may be the presence of God that we need to seek.
        1. God wants to do something in us before He can do something through us.
        2. James 4:8
     7. It may be the power of God that we need to seek.
        1. James 5:16
           1. The word “effectual” here means powerful, stretched-out prayer.
        2. We pray many frivolous and “Now I lay me down to sleep” type of prayers.
        3. We need to pray with seriousness and intention.
           1. We need to get hold of God in prayer.
     8. To seek is a discovery experienced as we find what we seek for.
  2. Knock: A determination expressed.
     1. Matthew 7:7
     2. To knock means that we will not stop until we know that we have what we have asked of God, or God tells us no.
     3. There are many stories in the Bible about knocking.
        1. Luke 11:5-10
           1. In this passage, “his importunity” means “his persistence”.
           2. In Bible times, it was unthinkable that a friend would come to you, and you would not give him lodging and food.

Hospitality was of the highest premium in the Middle East.

* + - * 1. Here was a man whose friend was on a journey and stopped to stay with him for the night.
        2. The man didn’t have any bread to give to his friend, so he went to his neighbor and asked for bread.

It was midnight, and the neighbor told the man not to bother him for his children were asleep.

The houses of that day were built where everyone slept in one room.

If you were to wake up one person, then you would wake up everyone.

The man persisted, and the neighbor gave him the bread.

* + - * 1. The neighbor gave the man the bread, not because he was his friend, but because he would not take no for an answer.

Matthew 7:7

It literally says, “Keep on asking,” and “Keep on knocking.”

Many times, we instead pray little take-it-or-leave-it prayers.

* + - 1. Luke 18:1-8
         1. The Lord Jesus spoke about a widow and an unjust judge.
         2. The widow asked the judge to adjudicate her case rightly.

The judge didn’t fear God or man, and he wouldn’t vindicate the widow.

The widow kept asking, and after a while, the judge gave her what she needed.

* + - * 1. If an unrighteous judge will do that, then how much more will a righteous God hear our prayers if we persist?

God wants us to persist because He is doing something in us and through us.

All through the Bible, we will find the Lord Jesus Christ teaching persistence and prayer.

* + - 1. A Syrophoenician woman asked Jesus to help her demon-possessed daughter, and Jesus answered with what seemed to be an insult.
         1. Matthew 15:22-28

The word for “dog” that Jesus used here means a household pet.

The word for “dog” that the woman used in response means a mangy, back-alley dog.

She applied this term to herself.

Jesus, heartbroken, said, “Great is your faith. You will have what you have asked.”

She kept on knocking.

* + - 1. Even the Lord Jesus Christ was persistent in prayer.
         1. Matthew 26:36-44

The Lord Jesus prayed to the Father three times.

* + - * 1. Jesus, the Son of God, prevailed in prayer.
      1. The Apostle Paul, the greatest Christian who ever lived, had a thorn in the flesh, and He prayed to God three times to take it away.
         1. 2 Corinthians 12:7-8
         2. He had three extended sessions of prayer over a long period of time.

Then, he got his answer.

* + - 1. On Mount Carmel, Elijah prayed for rain.
         1. He sent his servant seven times to look for a cloud.

On the seventh time, he saw a cloud the size of a man’s hand.

* + - * 1. 1 Kings 18:41-45
        2. Elijah had learned to pray through.
    1. Matthew 7:7
  1. How will we know when to stop asking, seeking, and knocking?
     1. We keep asking until God says, “Yes.”
        1. We can stop when we get what we asked for.
        2. God’s answers are sometimes direct, different, delayed, or they may be denied.
     2. We keep asking until we have the answer in our hearts.
        1. Sometimes, we don’t have the answer in our hand, but we have the answer in our hearts.
           1. We have the assurance of what we have asked God for.
        2. God has granted, God has given, and we can begin to praise Him for the answer.
     3. We keep asking until God says, “No.”
        1. If God says no, then thank Him because God only gives good things.
           1. Matthew 7:11

1. there is a provision to enjoy (matthew 7:9-11)
   1. Matthew 7:9-11
   2. How do we know that God will answer our prayers?
      1. Look at human nature.
         1. Take someone who doesn’t know God.
            1. If his children ask him for food, then will he not give it?
         2. Matthew 9:11
   3. Our prayers will be answered because God is good.
      1. Do you have that in your heart and in your mind?
      2. God delights to answer our prayers.
      3. God wants to answer our prayers.
      4. God is a good God.
   4. Our prayers will be answered because God is wise.
      1. Matthew 7:9
         1. God will not give us the wrong thing.
         2. The stones in Palestine are little brown stones that look like loaves of bread.
            1. It would be a cruel joke for a father to give his child a stone when he asked for bread.
      2. God knows exactly what we have need of.
         1. If we ask for bread, He will not give us a stone.
         2. If we ask for a stone, He will not give us a stone, either.
            1. If we ask for the wrong thing, then He will not give us the wrong thing just because we asked for it.
      3. God is good, wise, and able.
      4. Matthew 7:11
   5. Our prayers will be answered because God is sovereign.
      1. Our earthly fathers are limited, but our heavenly Father is not limited.
      2. We have the sympathy of a Father and the sovereignty of a King.
      3. We have a Father who can hear us and a King who can answer us.
      4. What a mighty God we serve!
2. CONCLUSION
   1. We are foolish if we don’t learn how to pray.
   2. Matthew 7:7
      1. It was Jesus who said, “Ask, and it will be given unto you.”
      2. It was Jesus who said, “Seek, and you will find.”
      3. It was Jesus who said, “Knock, and it shall be opened to you.”
   3. The wisest and best thing that you can do is to learn how to pray.
   4. Is He your heavenly Father?
      1. In Matthew 7:7, Jesus was not talking to lost people.
         1. He was talking to people who are saved.
      2. If the Lord Jesus Christ is not your heavenly Father, then you need to be saved today.
   5. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   6. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16