

SEPTEMBER2005 HOW DO I SPEAK TO GOD?--PRAYER  
**LUKE 11:1-13**

Continuing with our series BACK TO THE BASICS

Today we look at the question : **HOW DO I SPEAK TO GOD?**

The obvious answer is through prayer.

According to the gallop poll

90% of Americans says that they have prayed.

It is a basic human instinct to talk with God who created us.

1. One month ago the people of the Southern coast were praying For God to intervene in the path of hurricane Katrina and Rita. And today they continue to pray in the aftermath of destruction.
2. Two weeks ago over 140 some people were praying on JetBlue flight 292 That they could land safely Even though 6 other airbus lanes landing gear has locked up.
3. Every week a student prays taking at test
4. Every day a young mother prays in labor
5. Every night young a young child and his mother pray for his Father to come home from the war in Iraq, and a young father prays to come home safely.

Prayer for the Christian

is an intimate, private, personal conversation with God.

Through Jesus Christ,

Empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Mark Twain said: "You can't pray a lie!"

Even Children pray:

**Joyce age 8 says: Dear God,**

Thank you for the baby brother but what I asked for was a puppy.

I never asked for anything before. You can look it up.

Joyce

**Or this prayer by Janet age 9**

Dear God, I wish you would not make it so easy

for people to come apart I had to have 3 stitches and a shot.

Janet

HOW DO I SPEAK TO GOD? WE SPEAK TO GOD IN PRAYER

**I. OUT OF OUR NEED.**

Luke 11:5-7:

**Jesus 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 him 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'?" (Luke 11:5-7 RSV)**

Jesus tells us the man in this story is in need.

Dire need of some food.

He gets unexpected company at night.

They haven't eaten, and he doesn't even bread to give them.

**He asks his neighbor for bread.**

**TRUE PRAYER NEVER OCCURS APART FROM A SENSE OF NEED.**

**Jonah prayed to his God out of the fishes belly**

Daniel in the lions den.

Shadrack, meshack and Abednego in the firey furnace.

Mary in the stable in Bethlehem about to deliver a baby.

Jesus in the Garden of Gesemanie and on the cross.

People pray when there are in need.

**Billy Sunday, the Chicago Cub baseball player turned evangelist,**

Would pray for specific people in the city where he would be preaching. He wrote the Mayor of Columbus, Ohio, requesting a list of the names of people in that city who were in need of special prayers. The mayor responded by sending him the city telephone book. The mayor perceived rightly that everybody needs prayer.

We act out of our need, but this parable of Jesus show us we  
Also act in prayer out of the need of others.

I rather suspect that this man would never have gone over  
in the middle of the night to his friend's house  
in order to borrow bread to meet his own hunger.  
But because his friend was in need he went.

HOW DO I SPEAK TO GOD? WE SPEAK TO GOD IN PRAYER

**I. OUT OF OUR NEED.**

**II. CONFIDENT GOD CAN SUPPLY--MY NEED**

**"I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is a friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs." (Luke 11:8 RSV)**

Jesus moves to give us a note of absolute and profound certainty.

This man was confident his neighbor had the supply of bread he needed.

IF your neighbor has what you need and will give it to you

How much more will your heavenly father supply your need?

Now his neighbor may give it because

He wants some shouting fool

Off his porch at midnight

But God give it because he loves us.

**My God will meet all your needs, according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**

**Philippians 4:19**

Jesus says: Just ask!

Now some interpret Verse 8 as the way to pray.

That the only way to get anything from God

is to be demand, nag, and wail him into submission.

until he give us our request.

Jesus did not say:  
 God is the grouchy, irritable, sleeping, neighbor  
 He said just the opposite.

He was saying;  
 If a tired and disgruntled neighbor  
 will meet the needs of a bothersome friend,  
 How much more will a loving heavenly Father  
 met the needs of his children.  
 He was arguing from the least to the greater.

I hear people say: If only I had prayed more.  
 If only I had more faith and persisted more in pray,  
 maybe this wouldn't have happened.  
 Maybe he would have been healed.

Do we have a reluctant God  
 Asleep like an old dog on a porch  
 Who need to be kick and drags to his feet to bless us?  
 Jesus says this is not the case.

**"And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." (Luke 11:9-10 RSV)**

The only real meaning we can give to Verses 9 and 10  
 is that God willingly, freely, without fail, has the resources and  
 gives to every child willingly who asks, seeks, knocks.

WE SPEAK TO GOD THOROUGH PRAYER

**I. OUT OF OUR NEED**

**II. CONFIDENT GOD CAN SUPPLY**

WE SPEAK TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER

**III. AS HIS CHILDREN**

Jesus was saying:

Remember we are not on the porch out front of the house.

We are children of God in the house with him.

We live with the Father.

Look at how Jesus personalizes this IN THE NEXT VERSE:

**"What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" (Luke 11:11-12 RSV)**

Will your father in heaven answer any differently,  
 we who are His sons and daughters?

**If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.**

**Luke 11:13**

If your not a Christian today you are standing on the porch,  
 outside the house of your heavenly father.  
 But if you are a Christian today you are living inside the home  
 You are family.  
 Adopted into the household of faith.

**Leighen Ford tells of a Presbyterian pastor,** Some years ago was in the hospital with a serious kidney problem. Leighen went to pray with him. "He held my hand and said, "Leighen, it bothers me that I hurt so much that I can't even pray. I can just tell God that I hurt and say, God, help me."

Leighen asked him, "Calvin, if your little son, Sam, was sick and all he could say was Daddy, I hurt,' would he need to say anything else?" -- By Dr. Leighen Ford

We have a God who knows our need and all we have to say  
 Is Daddy I hurt. I'm in pain.  
 Help me.

Jesus is saying God meets the need of all his children  
 Because he loves them,  
 And because in so doing he brings glory to his name.  
 And a witness to the world of his wonderful love.

### **WE SPEAK TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER III. AS HIS CHILDREN---- IN THE HOUSE WITH HIM**

#### **WE SPEAK TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER IV. KNOWING HE WILL ANSWER.**

Jesus personalize what the man on the porch did.  
 And give us specific instruction how to pray.

**And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Luke 11:9 RSV**

Jesus was saying the man on the porch of his neighbor  
 Took prayer through the three levels.  
 Which are vastly different in our prayers to God.

#### **A. ASK is the first level.**

James says, **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 KJV).**

We ask if we need wisdom, love, courage, power, patience,  
 When I was about 14 I remember asking God  
 To give me the gift of discernment.  
 To be able to see into people lives  
 Where they were having spiritual difficulties or problems.  
 And to be able to help them by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
 And I believe God has given me that ability.

Simply ask and the answer is given.

James goes further in our asking by saying

**"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord."  
(James 1:6-8 RSV)**

We must let our asking be in faith.

The answer is certain. **Ask and you will receive.**

**A. ASK – first level of prayer**

**B. SEEK --A second level of prayer**

**seek and you will find**

Seeking adds to our prayer the element of time.

Seeking is not a simple act, it is a process, a series of acts.

When we seek God in prayer we spend more time with God.

We get to more about God and we know more about ourselves.

Every mother here knows what it means to seek.

When a child loses a toy or your husband the keys or check book.

They function at a simple level of seeking.

They think that by standing in the middle of the room

Scanning it for the lost item and then calling for help.

They are seeking or looking.

Hey Mom where is my cell phone?

Dear, where are my keys?

Now the mother comes in and opens the drawer or moves the bottle,

lifts the paper, look under the sofa pads and find the keys, and the cell phone.

What the difference.

The child or father asks

The mother seeks and find.

Prayer is seeking God for answers,

Satan laughs at our words,

Mocks at our toil

But trembles when we pray.

Jesus said: the answer to prayer is absolutely certain.

**Seek, and you will find!**

**THE MAN ON THE PORCH KNOCKED**

**C. KNOCK --- IS THE THIRD LEVEL**

This requires both time and repetition

We don't just knock once.

This is a persistent in our knocking.

A insistent request for admittance,

Maybe someone doesn't like you  
 Someone has hurt you,  
 Wounded you by their actions .  
 Speaks out against you as their enemy.

You have asked God to heal it.  
 You have sought God to give you insight .  
 But now you in earnest you are knocking at heaven's door.  
 Give me a clue to settle this difference.  
 Send a person or event to initiate conversation.  
 Give me a tool or task that can soften the edges.  
 An opportunity to heal the gap.

That requires knocking.  
 It takes time and energy.  
 And an unshakable desire  
 That is what Jesus was talking about when he said we  
**Hunger and thirst after righteousness," Matthew 5:6**

Go into the kitchen if you're hungry.  
**Ask:** "What is for supper?"  
 You **can seek** : By looking in the refrigerator.  
 But supper appears because someone.  
**Knock** themselves out-- fixing it at the stove or microwave.  
 Setting the table, placing the silverware  
 Putting out the cups  
 Pouring the drinks.  
 Serving the meal.

Russian proverb "Pray to God, but continue to row to the shore."

HOW DO WE SPEAK TO GOD.  
 We speak to God through prayer.  
 Not as a man on the porch of a disgruntled neighbor, but as God children.

**OUT OF OUR NEED.**  
**CONFIDENT GOD CAN SUPPLY**  
**KNOWING WE HIS CHILDREN**  
**ASSURED HE WILL ANSWER.**

**"For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."**