

Episode #730 - Matthew 7 Part 2-Ask and Receive

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was giving His great teaching session to His disciples commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount.” He warned them not to judge lest they be judged. Yet we discussed that to “judge” is to determine what is right and to set things right, not just to have opinions. To “judge,” one must be in a position of authority. Moreover, this is not just about not judging, as the Lord Himself said to judge with righteous judgment, John 7:24. This is about not judging hypocritically, when you are doing the same or worse yourself.

III. Matthew 7:6. Dogs and swine.

- A. Dogs and swine were very unclean to the Hebrews by an edict of God. So even to cast the truth before some men is to watch them trample God’s pearls into the ground. They have no more appreciation for them than a swine or a dog.
- B. In the very next chapter the Lord would cast many demons into a herd of swine. These were swine-like creatures, and there are swine-like men as well.
- C. A demon-possessed boy was torn by a demon in Mark 9:18 and Luke 9:42. Again connecting swine with demons prior to chapter 8.

IV. Ask and You Will Receive!

- A. Verse 7. Some Christians become enamored of this verse like a child with a gift on Christmas. They think they can name it and claim it. But let’s be honest: this has not worked in my life and it will not work in yours.
 - 1. Many times I ask for things that may not even be good for me to receive them.
 - 2. I do believe in prayer. I believe we should pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17). I believe I should make my requests known unto God (Philippians 4:6-7). Yet I do not believe that I can ask anything and get it.
 - 3. This must be taken in its context. As much as we would like to think that we are practically equal to the Lord’s disciples, this is not so. The Lord Himself did not speak this to the multitudes, and why should I do so?
- B. Verse 8. “Everyone” means His disciples. But for what are they asking, seeking, and knocking? In Acts 12:2 Herod killed James with the sword. Are we to believe that no one asked for James to be delivered; indeed, that he did not even ask this for himself?
- C. Verse 9. This bread is a flat loaf, it might look like a stone, but of course is far different in character! Bread symbolizes food in general too, but here probably literal. Certainly anyone who is a father or a grandfather can understand the truth of this. Yet for a child’s welfare we may not always give them what they ask for.
- D. Verse 10. “Fish” is the Greek *ichthus*, the common symbol used by Christianity later.
- E. Verse 11. What did the Lord mean? Compare to Luke 11:9-13. This is talking about gifts of the Holy Spirit! The apostles had such gifts for the asking. We do not, and it simply does not work to try to apply this to ourselves. This is simply an error. Yet neither could the disciples just ask for anything at all. They could not ask to fly like Superman, or breathe underwater, or move stars with their fingertips. Nor for riches or fame. The “good things” were the gifts of the Spirit, held out to them freely.
- F. Verse 12. Whatever you would will, *thelo*, desire or wish, people to do to you, do the same to them. The law and the prophets are the first two divisions of the Hebrew

Bible, and stand for the whole Old Testament, as in Matthew 5:17. This is the so-called “golden rule.” Do you think this is difficult to do? Perhaps this is something you should ask for, verse 7, instead of just asking for things that benefit you.

V. Conclusion: Many take “ask and you will receive” as a promise for us today. All these are ultimately disappointed, however. We must note that the Lord was speaking to His disciples, not to any believer today. When we compare with Luke, we will see He meant the gifts of the Spirit, not just anything one might come up with to want. The Lord’s disciples received the gifts of the Spirit for the asking, but no promise like this was made to us today. We must follow Philippians 4:6-7: make our requests known to God, and let Him determine the outcome. Anything else is really a lack of faith.