

## Faith that Receives

There is no point in having faith if your faith cannot receive. ***“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24)***. Receiving (by faith) is how you get what you’re believing God for. When you are living in touch with the Lord and praying correctly, you can have the assurance of answered prayer before the answer actually comes. You can pray with confidence on any subject provided it rests on a promise of God as revealed in the Bible. Prayer, like faith, is to no avail unless (a) it is in line with God’s will, and (b) you are willing to receive from Him.

But you must receive with a right attitude. In **Luke 18:17** Jesus says, ***“I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”*** Receiving like a child is having childlike faith, therefore, the only way into the kingdom of heaven is by having the simple trust and dependence of a child.

Childlikeness is a kingdom characteristic. Jesus called His followers to childlike humility and servanthood in order to establish the spirit and style by which faith could be exercised correctly. Faith flourishes in this climate. Childlikeness removes the tendency to associate authority with dominance over others and it establishes an authority which can be exercised as an agent of God’s kingdom power. The simple trust and dependence of a child paves the way for great faith to operate.

Have you noticed that children don’t have a problem with asking or receiving; especially in family surroundings? Jesus introduced a devoted God when revealing the Father figure in **Luke 11**. Throughout this chapter Jesus encourages us to approach God in a childlike fashion. In the illustration about a friend coming to ask for three loaves at midnight, Jesus highlights the need for persistence.

But listen to how the passage ends, ***“I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs”*** (verse 8). The word translated “persistence” in the Greek means shamelessness or irreverence. It looks like the translators may have had a problem with this, maybe because they missed the whole point of the story. The entire chapter has to do with a Father / child relationship.

**Luke 11** starts with, ***“Our Father... And ends “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly Father give...”*** There is also a whole section dedicated to “asking and receiving” (verses 9 -12), and these verses are written in the imperative tense which is exactly the way children react when they have urgent needs. Jesus made a very important point here, and it was something the Jews were unfamiliar with in their understanding of Jehovah. Jesus revealed the Almighty God as a devoted Father willing to meet the needs of His children.

When it comes to any basic necessities children are often shameless and irreverent toward their parents, and yet their parents will still give them whatever they have asked for. It’s the same with our heavenly Father. Jesus encourages a Father / child relationship by reminding us all of the love-nature of the One to whom we are dependent. He reminds us that if faulty human parents will meet the real needs of their children, instead of deceiving them with harmful gifts, how much more can we expect from our heavenly Father. Therefore, we must fully accept that He is both able and willing to meet our needs.

This is a fundamental aspect of faith - childlike trust. A child asks, and immediately believes that his needs are met (he has no doubt that he is getting exactly what he has asked for). When you do the same, your

attitude will come in line with your convictions and you too will start *acting* as if it's already yours. Acting as though you already have what you've asked for (in prayer) authenticates your total trust and dependence on God. You are in fact proclaiming His goodness, His loving kindness and tender mercies, and this is faith in action.

**Luke 18:35-43** tells a story about a blind man receiving his sight. This man's custom was to sit by the road and beg. One day a large crowd passed by him so he asked them what was going on. When they told him that Jesus of Nazareth had walked by he immediately started to cry out aloud, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Some of the people warned him to keep quiet but he shouted all the more.

Jesus must have heard him because He suddenly stops and tells them to bring the man to Him. I like Darby's comments on this incident. He says, "*Joshua once made the sun stand still in the heavens, but here the Lord of the sun, and the moon, and the heavens, stands still at the bidding of a blind beggar.*" The people may not have been interested in the beggar but Jesus was.

When the blind man arrives, Jesus asks, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Without hesitation the beggar tells Jesus that he wants to receive his sight. He was ready to receive his miracle! The blind man's request was short, specific, and full of faith. But notice, he was utterly ready to receive. When Jesus asked him what He should do for him, he replied, "*Lord that I may receive my sight.*" Then Jesus said to him, "*Receive your sight, your faith has made you well.*" For Jesus to respond in this way He must have discerned that the blind man was ready to receive his miracle.

There are a couple of things the beggar said and did that got Jesus' attention. Firstly, he somehow recognised Jesus as the Messiah because he appealed to Him as the Son of David. Therefore, he must have believed that the Messiah was anointed to meet his specific need. But notice, he later addressed Jesus as *Lord*. The title "Lord" is an acknowledgement that Jesus had the authority to grant him what he had asked for (not just the anointing). The blind man believed that Jesus was fully equipped to perform the impossible because He possessed the anointing and authority. With both Jesus could engineer a miracle.

This unique man was full of faith, but he was also ready to receive. Many Christians believe that God can do the miraculous but they are never ready to receive it for themselves. You should dare to believe for the impossible. Great faith greatly honours the great I Am.

When ever you aren't prepared to receive you limit God. **John 1:11, 12** says, "***He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God***" When Jesus visited His home town of Nazareth He couldn't heal a single person because no one would receive from Him. There are churches today that won't receive from the Lord and this restricts His ability to do mighty things on behalf of the people. I love the way Jesus puts it in **John 16:24**, "***Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.***"

Receiving brings about pure joy! God the Father wants you to be happy. He desires that you fully accept every promise He has made in the Bible so that He can keep His word and bless you abundantly. The only limiting factor is your own ability to receive. Your inheritance in Christ is sitting in a heavenly account, awaiting specific instructions from God to be delivered to you. However, He must first be sure that you can wilfully acknowledge receipt by believing that you've received it.

Receiving from God isn't just about basic necessities, or at the other extreme, for the miraculous.

In **John 20:22** Jesus breathed on them and said, ***“Receive the Holy Spirit.”*** You are to receive the Holy Spirit and thereafter receive an empowering for service. **Acts 1:8** says, ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”*** This is like having ‘power steering’ attached to your Christian walk.

Note, even during the partaking of Holy Communion you are expected to receive. On the night that He was betrayed Jesus took the bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ***“Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you”*** (1 Corinthians 11:24). Here the Lord is commanding you to receive; ***“Take, eat!”*** If during communion you are not willing to receive what the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus has secured for you there are serious consequences. **Verses 29 and 30** state, ***“For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.”***

Not receiving what Jesus did for you on the Cross is “not discerning” the Lord’s body. Not receiving the wholeness and soundness that is represented by the bread is “not discerning” the Lord’s body. Not receiving forgiveness and cleansing through the shed blood, is also “not discerning” the Lord’s body. You must be willing to receive all the benefits of Jesus Christ’s full redemption for your life to discern the Lord’s body correctly. This includes, health, strength, sufficiency and provision.