

40 Days of Prayer
Three Lakes Evangelical Free Church
Day 18

Assurance of Answered Prayer, Pt. 3
Luke 11:11-13

There is a phrase that parents use with their children that makes perfect sense to the parent, but that raises serious question in the mind of the child. Do you recognize it? “This hurts me more than it hurts you.” Usually these words of wisdom are uttered during a time when a child is receiving the consequence of misbehavior, specifically right before getting whacked on the bottom. Then there are the times when mom and dad assign them chores around the house. “You’ll see the benefit of _____ when you grow up.” Do you remember our childish thoughts? “Yeah, right. Who cares if my room is a mess? The only one who sees it is me!” Well, in general, if a parent guides a child in his/her growing-up years and it looks like that guidance is misdirected – *look again!*

This principle applies to answered prayer. Jesus elaborates on this principle in Luke 11:11-13.

¹¹ Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ 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 11:11-13 NIV)

Here is a description of a very devious father – playing practical jokes on his children. The word for snake here describes a serpent that may be similar in appearance to a fish. It is known that a scorpion rolls itself up in an egg-shaped ball to lure its prey close and then unrolls and attacks. Vs. 11 asks the same type of question Jesus asked in Vs. 5, “Which of you would do such a thing?” Answer – “Horrors! Never!!” If an earthly father would never play tricks on his children, but rather provide good things when they ask, how much more would God give good things to us.

Now comes the most difficult question that might arise from this section. Can we still have confidence in prayer, even in the tough times, even when the situation is hard, full of pain and suffering, even when there are hard questions that stump us – *even when it seems that God is not answering our prayers?*

I would answer – absolutely. We have confidence that God is a loving Father and would never give us a snake or a scorpion. *If we pray and in response to our prayers it looks like God has given us a snake or a scorpion – **look again.*** The point of prayer is that we can have confidence that God will answer our prayers. It may not be what we want. But, it will always be what God wants. And, it will always be good.

The prayer of an unknown soldier:

I asked for strength that I might achieve
I was made weak that I might learn to humbly obey.
I asked God for health that I might do great things
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.
I asked God for riches that I might be happy
I was given poverty that I might be wise.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men
I was given weakness that I might feel the need for God.
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything that I hoped for
Almost in spite of myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I among all men am most richly blessed.

Notice the following passages, which are actually prayers, that speak of the goodness of God and then thank him for the promise that he has our best interest in mind as he answers our prayers.

1. Psalm 100:5
2. Psalm 106 1
3. Psalm 107:1
4. Psalm 34:8
5. Psalm 119:68
6. Psalm 84:11