

Weaving the Word

Ask, Seek, and Knock

Part 48 – October 11, 2015

Welcome to where we're learning to open our eyes to see, and our ears to hear!



On the hill, Jesus is winding down His initial training with His newly appointed apostles. When we ended, He was telling 'em to ...

“... **first** take the plank [that blinds us to truth] out of your own eye, **and then** you will see clearly [and humbly] to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” [So he can see] – Matthew 7:5 NIV



Here's an obvious question: **How ... if we can't see it?**

“**Ask** [for clarification] and it **will** be given to you; **seek** [to find that to which you're blind] and you **will** find; **knock** and the door [of opportunity] **will** be opened to you. For everyone who **asks** [for understanding] receives; he who **seeks** [that to which he's blind] finds; and to him who **knocks**, [and expectantly waits and patiently watches] the door will be opened.” – Matthew 7:7-8 NIV



However, as Jesus had just finished warning 'em when we left off:

“... do not throw your pearls to pigs.” – Matthew 7:6 NIV



But *do*, as the first appointed apostle later writes ...

Always be prepared to give an answer **to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have**. [There's your open door] But do this with gentleness and respect ... – 1 Peter 3:15b NIV

Want to feel what it was like to be one of Jesus' twelve?

ASK. SEEK. KNOCK. Which of these three is the greatest?

If you don't understand the question, *ask* for clarification. You only need to see what's in this list, to figure this out. And, by the way, “greatest” doesn't always mean “most important”; sometimes it means the “largest quantity”. There are only three words, yet it's a four-part list.

And, the greatest of these three is the one listed twice. If you still can't find it, tap someone who's found it; knock on 'em, and ask 'em to share and open your eyes and let you in on it.

I haven't spelled out the answer, and yet you all now know. *How? Because ...*

Everyone who **Asks** receives; he who **Seeks** finds; and to him who **Knocks**, the door will be opened.

If I'd begun by spoon-feeding you the answer, I would've robbed you of the **hunt**, the **discovery**, and the **sharing**. Now, imagine following Jesus, and pretty much every time He speaks or teaches or even makes a request, it feels like *that!* **Jesus wasn't a question and answer man; He was a question and question man!**

Because, **we got'a grapple if we're gonna grow!**

"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod." They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread." Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: **[Question #1] "Why are you talking about having no bread? [#2] Do you still not see or understand? [#3] Are your hearts hardened? [#4 & #5] Do you have eyes but fail to see, [Same question He asks all His disciples] and ears but fail to hear? [#6] And don't you remember? [#7] When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"** "Twelve," they replied. **[#8] "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"** They answered, "Seven." He said to them, **[#9] "Do you still not understand?"** **["It's their hypocrisy!"]** – Mark 8:15-21 NIV

Jesus could be very intimidating.

... because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." But **they did not understand what he meant** and **were afraid to ask him** about it. – Mark 9:31-32 NIV

Those poor boys are so parable-rummy, they can't understand Jesus when he speaks *plain Aramaic!*



The hunt and the discovery isn't necessarily fun (but it is necessary).

And the sharin' is our share in His Kingdom.

It's all part of fulfilling our created purpose.

To ask what you are uniquely designed to receive.

To seek what you are uniquely equipped to find.

To knock on the door you are uniquely able to enter.

He'll clarify. He'll reveal. He'll open an opportunity ... if, that is, you want in.



[Like Paul, when he wrote to the Colossians] And pray for us, too, **that God may open a door for our message** ... – Colossians 4:3a NIV

[And when Paul and Barnabas went to Antioch they] ... gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and **how he had opened the door of faith** to the Gentiles. – Acts 14:27 NIV

Luke prefaces a parallel ask-seek-and-knock teaching with this:

He said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, [ASKING] ‘Friend, lend me **three loaves of bread**, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’ Then the one inside answers, [in a way you don’t expect and won’t like] ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness [i.e. persistence; SEEKING! SEEKING! SEEKING! KNOCKING! KNOCKING! KNOCKING!] he will get up and give him **as much as he needs**. [“Three loaves of bread”] So I say to you: **Ask and it WILL be given to you; [just don’t expect the answer you expect; expect some back-and-forth, and except the challenge! Got’a grapple if we’re gonna grow!] seek and you WILL find; [if it’s accompanied with knocking for the purpose of sharing] knock and the door WILL be opened to you.**” [If, that is, you really want in] – Luke 11:5-9 NIV

We receive truth to the degree it answers a question we have.

We retain truth to the degree of effort we put into finding it.

We realize truth to the degree that we share it with others.

That’s just how that works. All three are very, very necessary.

Are you prepared to share the three loaves of our Bread of Life? (Loving Father. Sacrificed Son. Comforting Spirit.) **To anyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have?** “Is there gonna be a test?” Uh, yeah, actually there is ...



Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the **testing** of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom [regarding this] he should **ask God**, who **gives generously to all [both he’s and she’s] without finding fault**, [oneidizō (pronounced an-eye-DEED-zoe): expressing criticism or disappointment] and it will be given to him. But **when he asks, he must believe and not doubt**, [What? That God “gives generously to all without finding fault,” because it can feel the opposite] because **he who doubts** [Doubts what? That God “gives generously to all without finding fault”] is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; [because, he won’t persist in seeking, let alone with an intention of sharing] he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. – James 1:2-8 NIV

And, since God *answers* without expressing criticism or disappointment, here’s *an-idea’d-zo*: **we should ask without expressing criticism or disappointment.**

Often, when we say, “Why?!” it’s really a rebuke: “How could you?!”

“Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a **stone**? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a **snake**? [Luke adds: “Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a **scorpion**?” (Luke 11:12)] If you, then, **though you are evil**, [lit. of a bad nature] know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give **good gifts** [a little seeking (in Luke’s parallel account) reveals the good gift as “the Holy Spirit” (Luke 11:13)] to **those who ask him!**” – Matthew 7:9-11 NIV

But, don’t expect what you receive to remove your need to seek. That would be a snake. A stone. A scorpion. And, don’t think you’re on your own; He’s given you His Holy Spirit.



But, **what if the kid asks his dad for a bad snake, thinking it’s a good fish?** Well then, *he won’t be gettin’ what’s on his fish-list!*

And, his plank will likely prevent him from seeing the reason. So, **the kid can get angry, get himself a fish-snake, or, trust his dad.**

His choice. Our choice. Your choice. **Don’t assume He’s a bad Dad; assume you asked for a fish-snake. Assume He’s giving His eternal best for your temporal moment.**



So, what are your questions? **Are you seeking to rebuke, or to receive understanding to share?**

Are your questions focused on your pain or His plan?

To the broken-hearted Jews exiled and held captive in Babylon, Jeremiah wrote:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will **listen to** [i.e. answer] you. [Then] **You will seek ME and find ME when you seek ME with all YOUR heart.** [Everything you’ve got] **I** will be found by **YOU**,” declares the Lord ... – Jeremiah 29:11-14a NIV

ASK. SEEK. KNOCK.

RECEIVE. DISCOVER. ENTER.

RECEIVE a loving Father you can trust with all your heart. **DISCOVER** a peace that passes all your understanding. **ENTER** a kingdom that demands your allegiance as an ambassador.

If you have no questions, expect no answers.

If you seek no treasure, expect no discovery.

If you knock on no doors, expect no openings.

That’s how *that* works.