Ask, Seek and Knock: The Jesus Approach to Prayer

*Here's the Download for the Sermon

*Jesus invites us **to ask** (and keep on asking), **to seek** (and keep on seeking) **to knock** (and keep on knocking). See Matthew 7:7*

In this passage, I sense that Jesus is challenging us to pray continually in three different paradigms.

1: To Ask– This is the practice of vocalization.

So often my prayers are scattered shards of synapses. These are thought prayers which can be effective, but not as effective as the prayer spoken aloud in the closet. Our vocal chords are effective tools in private prayer when we speak out to God and in ear-shot of the powers and principalities of this dark age. The sound of your voice in prayer speaks volumes, not only to God but to your own soul. Practice making prayers vocal.

You do not have because you do not ask. James 4:2

Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. Jeremiah 33:3

2. To Seek– This is the practice of curiosity in prayer.

We enter into a sleuthing of God's fingerprints in prayer. We are hunting for His movement. Spying his aspect… To seek as a praying believer is to never lose your curiosity in the movement and mystery of the Divine.

You will find Him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul" Deuteronomy 4:29*).*

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6

In a sense I believe that all faith has an element of curiosity to it. Think about Peter on the boat. He must have been curious about this water walking business. Think about Zacchaeus. He must have been very curious about the dinner guest to give away such glorious tax refunds. Faith is often a unique mixture of curiosity and desperation. And I would argue that Thomas' doubting was caused by a curiosity deficit.

Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it has saved many a sinner.

3. To Knock– This is the practice of initiative.

In order to knock we must first *approach the door*. I must admit, I have a strange phobia about knocking. Maybe my scars that those Evangelism Explosion cold calls of the 80s have had a traumatic effect on my psyche. Nothing gets me more anxious, for some reason, than to knock on a door. Some people get a real thrill out of a door knock. Not me. I admit it. I'm weird that way. Knocking on the door takes initiative and courage. When we knock and no one comes, there's always that question of how long we should wait before we give up, stop knocking, and move on to the next big idea or possibility. Jesus implored us to continue to knock in prayer, even if there is no answer. Jesus knows what it's like to stand at the door and knock. He's been knocking on the doors of churches for years. For some churches, I would imagine that He's been knocking for centuries with no entry yet granted. But He's knocking, still knocking patiently.

So think about *that* when you consider how long you've waiting for that mate, that prodigal or that healing. After all, time is relative.