**The Sermon on the Mount (Part 16) + Weekly Devotion + 12.4.2024**

**Read Matthew 7:7-11**

*“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11)*

Christ invites us to call upon our heavenly Father with the certainty that He hears and answers us. He has already taught us to call God “Our Father” in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6). Now, He teaches that our loving Father will give us “good things” when we ask Him.

Our Lord gives two examples about the love of parents for children that demonstrate the even greater love our heavenly Father has for us. If a son asks for bread, will his parents give him a stone? Definitely not! If he asks for a fish, will his parents give him a serpent? Not a chance!

The next verse is a little startling but makes a whole lot of sense. Jesus says that if we, who are “evil,” give our children the good things they need, we can certainly trust our Father in heaven, who is “Good,” to give us the good things we need.

Why does Jesus call us “evil?” He’s teaching His disciples in this passage, which means that He’s speaking to those who believe in Him by the Holy Spirit. He’s speaking to “saints,” so why does He call them (and us) “evil?” Indeed, we’re rightly called saints, those who’ve been made holy by the Holy Spirit. But we’re also sinners, burdened by the weakness of our sinful nature until death (when the sinful nature is cut off from us) or Christ’s second advent, whichever comes first.

The Latin phrase for this twofold reality is *simul justus et peccator* (“simultaneously justified and sinners”). Christians are both saints and sinners at the same time. Christ has atoned for our sins and the Gospel has been preached to us. God has given us faith to trust in Christ and the Holy Spirit who empowers us to do good works. We love God and we love our children, so we give our children the things they need. It might not always be what they *want* (my kids would love to eat popsicles for every meal!) but it’s always what they *need*.

Our Father in heaven is the very definition of “Good!” Therefore, we know that He’s a better parent than we are! He loves us more than we love our kids and He withholds nothing from us. He has given us the greatest gift of His Son for our redemption and with Him gives us all things (Romans 8:32). This includes the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13), daily necessities (Matthew 6:33) and finally, heaven itself (Hebrews 10:1).

All we need to do is ask Him! For Christ says, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7:7-8).

Prayer: Father in heaven, You give only good things to us. Increase our trust and confidence in Your goodness. Amen.