



The Parable of The Friend at MIDNIGHT

(Luke 11:5-13)

Don't you love friends that come around at midnight?

I am sitting here with my night-owl friend, who I rang at midnight and invited over. Now he is sitting here watching me record some of my parables during the night hours. Exactly one hundred and eleven minutes worth of memory is left on my video recorder. I feel that this is a much-anointed time to be preaching this. So, it is midnight...and here we go.

"Which of you shall have a friend and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey and I have nothing to set before him;' and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you?' 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.

"So I say to you, 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 he who seeks finds and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

I always appreciate an illustration.

I consider a friend is someone with these two qualifications. A friend is someone who has invited me to their place for a meal and who has accepted my invitation to do likewise. A friend is also someone that I would feel comfortable in asking for a loan of up to three hundred dollars for an emergency flight. This friend would not pester me when I would pay them back. Instead, they would be asking me how soon do I have to have the money and into what account should they deposit it.

Now, if we haven't been to each others home and if I couldn't see myself asking for such a loan, then without question, I do not see them as a close friend. I have not asked any of my friends for that amount, but I know the people of whom I could ask if the need should arise. Many of them have given me some money at times and have displayed a gracious attitude which indicates to me that I could ask them for their help if pressed. What if you were home at say 11:30pm and some people arrived in your city from another state? They also intend driving through to another state but the driver needs to rest up for the night. He is starting to fall asleep at the wheel. They have phoned you, because they are not too far from your place. Imagine their whole family has turned up hungry and you have nothing in your house to feed them. They want to stay in

your house and they are both tired and hungry. You can put them up okay but how are you to feed them at such a late hour?

Do you have a friend who you can wake up at midnight? I am now just talking personally now. Do you have a friend who you can wake up at midnight and borrow forty dollars to buy a few pizzas? Or go down to the local all-night convenience store and buy some food? Do you have such a friend who would not be upset with you?

Remember that little boy who gave five small barley loaves to Jesus? Take note, those were not five loaves of bread but five barley buns! They were not wheat, but barley. They were a poor boy's food and they were his lunch: He had five buns and a couple of fish.

In this parable, both the evening and morning meals were required for a family. This is substantially more than what that little boy had. But Jesus was in control that day and that little lad's lunch stretched to feed five thousand men and their families and still there was plenty left over! Back in those days, the loaves were not a small request. It was enough to feed a family for a couple of meals, perhaps with some olives or something else.

You might go round to an acquaintance's place and knock on the door and he says, "Look, my kids are in bed." Now, I reckon if a person has their children in bed with them, they must be poor. Obviously, they live in a one bedroom house with just one bed in it. Many families live like this. They might be three children in bed plus the parents. Therefore, getting up out of bed, putting the light on and going downstairs could definitely disturb the whole family.

How many friends do you have who you can wake up in the middle of the night, disturb the sleep of the whole family, yet would not be cranky or put-out about having to help you? Come on, count them. Can you think of just one person?

We all have a friend and His name is Jesus Christ. He is awake all the time. He doesn't have a family in bed with Him. This is the friend that the parable is directing us to. We thought that Jesus was talking about a friend down here, but it's actually Him telling us that He is a friend that supplies all our needs and He is never put out by our requests.

I remember one day, I was homeless and I was living in a homeless shelter. I kept on meeting a Christian friend who kept on finding money on the road all the time – not only coins but notes as well. Whenever he saw me, he told me what he had found. I was always giving to the poor. Living in a big city, homeless people would come up to me and ask me for money, so I could never refuse them. (I am extremely mindful that what I do for others, I am doing it for Jesus.) Needless to say, I couldn't keep money in my pocket for long. So even two days after receiving my pension, I would almost be broke. I would have given my money away and I would then be forced to live on free food and accommodation myself, until my next pay day. Anyway, I decided to do as my friend does: I was going to look for some money just for myself.

One time, I really wanted to see a particular movie and buy a pizza but I had no money. I said to the Lord, "Please Lord, let me just find twenty dollars today. You know I have given all my money away and I really feel like a treat." Then I walked around the whole night, not looking people in the eyes. If you have read my other parables, especially the "Light on the Hill" parable, you will know that I am always talking to people. I always walk up to people saying "Hello." So, it was very hard for me to spend the whole night looking down at the road for money rather than looking at the people and greeting them in my usual fashion.

I searched for hours for God's hidden twenty dollars but couldn't find it. "Ah well, Jesus doesn't want to give me to have it tonight." I said to myself. I had never asked Him for money before. In fact, I hardly ever ask Him for personal treats.

At the end of the night, I saw a homeless friend sitting in a Chinese restaurant. I went in and said: "Hello!" I had been given a loaf of bread from a food van. I sat next to him and asked: "Do you have some wine? I have some bread and we could have Communion together." He removed a bottle of red wine from his bag and collected two glasses from the restaurant. He poured the wine and I broke off some bread. Both of us just sat and gave thanks and said a short prayer each. It was the best Communion I had ever had. We chatted and he offered me some of his meal. I said, "No, I have just eaten."

This man used to in the streets even when it was raining. We went outside and he said, "Before you go," he reached into his back pocket and pulled out his wallet and gave me a fifty dollar note. I tried to press it back to him but he insisted that I take it because God had told him to give it to me. I walked away crying. I asked Jesus, "Lord, is this the twenty dollars I asked you for?"

Jesus said, "Yes."

I went in to McDonald's and I bought a super-sized Coke for three dollars and fifty cents. On the way out of McDonald's, someone said, "Have you got spare change?" So I gave him my one dollar fifty change..

Then, a girl came up to me and said, "Do you have two dollars sir? "

I felt compassion for her and I said, "How much do you need?"

She said, "I really need twenty dollars." And I gave her my twenty dollar note.

I looked in my wallet and I had twenty five dollars left. This was enough for pizza the next day and to go to the movies as I wanted to. That was one of the three times that I actually asked Jesus for something and you know what? He delivered it through a homeless man, who had just wanted to bless me. When I gave the girl

the twenty dollar note, she broke down in tears and hugged me. She hugged me with one of those hugs where you try to let go but the person doesn't want to. Three or four times you try to pull out of the hug but you realize that they are overcome with emotion and they want to keep holding you. Well, we were hugging for perhaps over a minute whilst she cried. I was quite emotional by then as well.

"Why would you give me this?" she asked.

I said, "Jesus would give you this. Jesus loves you." That was a testimony.

You know, Jesus loves us. Whilst He does not want to give us our lusts, He does want to give us our heart's desires. However, He says quite clearly in the Gospels, "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

Jesus loves us. He loves you. He wants to provide for your needs. Don't be afraid of asking Him. Don't be afraid of seeking His will for your life and pursuing it. Don't be worried about asking Him to provide for your material needs. As He said, "Does a child ask his father for bread and the Father give him a stone?" (Luke 11:11)

When Jesus was publicly baptized, the Spirit of God led Him into the wilderness to overcome the devil, before He could begin His ministry. During His forty days of temptation, Jesus was extremely hungry. The devil tried to tempt Jesus in His weakness and said: "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." (Matthew 4:3) Because Jesus had to fully identify with Adam, therefore He could not use His Divine nature to solve His hunger so He replied to the devil: "Man should not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (v 4)

Bearing that in mind, you will see here in Luke 11:11, Jesus is saying the opposite. Does a person ask for bread and the Father give them a stone? The Father loves you. Jesus loves you. One of the best ways I know to prosper in His Kingdom is to read all these parables and apply them in your life.

So often we think that we are annoying God with small requests. So often we think that God is too busy and He is too important to bother with the problems in our life. We think somehow that we are not good enough, not important enough and that we would be giving God a headache with our prayers. Jesus says differently. He says that we are to feel free to come to Him with any request as often as we wish. I pray that you will go to Him with your requests now.