

## **Ask,,,Knock**

When Sim & I were preparing for this service we decided that we wanted to do something positive and encouraging rather than reflective and soul searching this time. However it is sometimes the positive passages in the Bible that I have the most trouble with and find hardest to accept for myself.

We were drawn to these readings (Luke 11,5 -13; Psalm 34,1-10) about asking and receiving. Luke's gospel encourages us to ask and you will receive, ...seek and you will find.. it even goes so far as to say that everyone who knocks will have the door opened for them. The psalm that we read states that those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

It all makes me very uneasy! These are the sort of passages that I often end up skipping over or throwing out because they make my head spin with 'how comes?' and 'what abouts?'...'how come x didn't receive from the lord?' ..what about z who seeks the lord and yet seems to be very lacking in good things'..etc etc

When I was living in Cambodia there was a devastating fire one night in the squatter village where two of the families we worked with lived. Hundreds of families lived in wooden shacks piled in and on and around every available inch of mud between the banks of the Meekong and the busy Phnom Penh city centre. The fire swept through the place in no time and by the morning the entire settlement was near enough raised to the ground. When the fire started however, the young son of one of the families I knew, who must have been around 6 or 7 years of age, started to pray to God that his house would be saved. Sure enough the fire came right up to their house and all the houses around them were burnt down but their house was left untouched. The boy asked and received from the Lord.

But what about the other family? They were Christians too, they had faith too and yet their house was burnt to the ground. Did they not pray? Did they not pray hard enough? Did God not want to answer their prayers?

When I stumble with these questions and cant find answers, I tend to put the problem to the back of my mind , or try to bury it. Unfortunately that means that I tend to bury thoughts about the first family too, to write off what happened, negate it. If God can't help both families did he really help one of them? I struggle to intellectually work out how what happened doesn't match up to my preconceived ideas of how God ought to operate, and so can't allow myself to accept God's goodness and faithfulness even when it stares me in the face.

I need to allow myself to somehow keep struggling with my understanding of God and justice but to hold onto the truth too..in this case, a child asked and God answered his prayers. What about the truth in our everyday lives? We have to allow ourselves to believe that God does want to answer our prayers .. That God does want, and know how, to give us good gifts. That God wouldn't give us snakes if we asked for fish or scorpions if we asked for eggs. That God does want for us to ask and live in faith.

God show us how to ask and seek and knock, and help us to recognise you when you answer us.

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