

Text: Psalm 121

Theme: It's Okay to Ask

October 22, 2017

How many of you have ever been afraid to ask a question in front of the class at school, at a training conference, or a webinar? Asking questions creates an interesting dilemma. We want to know the answer, but we're not always sure that our question is the proper question or that it's the best time to ask our pressing questions. In this familiar Psalm, we learn why it's okay to ask and what we gain by asking.

I. Our loving Father has invited us to ask. A. But we are still reluctant to ask. 1. We're reluctant because we think God is too busy for our petty problems. Here we find an instance where common sense gets in the way, where human logic clearly doesn't work. In our minds, God has seven billion people to take care of, wars to settle, natural disasters to tend to, plagues and poverty to solve. Logically, God is incredibly busy, so busy that He surely doesn't have time for us. And because we've determined, inaccurately I might add, that God is far too busy, we're hesitant to ask, reluctant to bring our concerns because we've decided we're wasting our time.

2. We're reluctant to ask because we simply forget. How many times have you realized afterwards that there was a better solution if you had only asked? Or how many times have you tried to figure it out yourself because you forgot there was another option? Some days, our independence gets in the way, makes us brain dead to our lifeline, to our loving God who is waiting for us to ask. Our reasons may differ, but we've all found ourselves in situations where asking God wasn't the first or even second thing that crossed our minds, situations where asking never crossed our minds until after we had needlessly struggled through our situation.

B. Even though we are slow to ask, why does God invite us to ask? 1. He invites us because He is our source of help. The Psalmist begins by saying, "I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from?" With those words, the Psalmist already implies that God is our help. We face situations every day where we need help. The older we get, the more complicated life gets. At this very moment, God knows every situation you are facing, every thought that is stirring in your mind, every struggle, and that's a good thing because He wants to help. He's waiting for you to allow Him to help, to ask believing He is your perfect source for all the right answers.

2. God invites us to ask because He is the creator of all things. "My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." Isn't that a given? Don't we already know God created the world? Then, why does that statement matter to us when we need help? As Creator, nothing is impossible. There are no limitations. Because God created the world, God can handle anything that happens in His world. So God says, "Come to Me. Go ahead and ask. It's okay. I created this world. I can solve any problem that exists in My world. Ask and it shall be given to you." Because we know, because we believe God can, we ask the Creator to step in on our behalf.

3. God invites us to ask because He is constantly watching over you. In verse three, it says, "He will not let your foot slip - He who watches over you will not slumber." What's one of the basic tenets of a slumber party? God invites us to ask because God is always awake. If you could see God in person, if you could see Him walking beside you, watching over you while you were awake and asleep, would you

be reluctant to ask all your questions? Because God is constantly aware of your every need, He says, "Ask. I'm waiting for you to trust Me. Lay your situations before Me. Pull out all the stops and believe I will show you the next best step forward."

4. God invites us to ask because His presence is eternal. The Psalmist ends the Psalm saying, "The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." If God chooses to be with you always, isn't it logical that He wants you to talk to Him, to share your concerns with Him? How many of you would spend days with your friend and never speak a word? God is eternal; His presence is eternal. He is your eternal friend. Wherever you go, whatever you face, He is ready to listen, ready for your next question, your next request. Because God is always with you, it's always the right time to ask whatever your mind wants to ask Him.

C. Knowing God invites us to ask, what do we gain by asking? 1. We gain the assurance that He will get us through our situation. The words are familiar, "Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you. He will never let the righteous be moved." You and I, we have faced a tough situation, times when we wondered how we would get to the other side. As we ask, God says, "Keep asking. Keep believing. Keep trusting. Keep leaning on Me. Keep expecting Me to work all things for your good and when the moment is right, I promise that you will see My greatness at work for you." Knowing God will get us to the other side - it's a perfect reason to keep asking.

2. As we ask, we gain the confidence that God cares about us. With seven billion people in the world and disasters occurring every day, it's easy to think God doesn't care. But the Psalmist writes elsewhere, "Cast your cares on the Lord for He cares for you." Which part of that statement is most encouraging to you? Knowing God cares is a great thing, but it's those last two words that have the greatest impact on us. He cares for you. Seven billion, seven thousand, seventy, or seven. When you ask, God turns to you and says, "You have My full attention. Nothing and no one matters more to Me in this moment than you and your concerns."

3. As we ask, we receive God-directed, God-approved relief. Suppose for the next month God promised to answer each of your questions out loud. How comforting would it be to hear God's answer? God may not answer with audible words, but He does answer and His answer is always God-directed and God-approved. It may not be the answer we expected or requested, but our comfort comes in knowing His relief, whether approved by us or not, always arrives stamped "God-reviewed, God-approved." Because we know our relief, in whatever form it arrives, is God-approved, we find the strength to press on to the other side.

4. Asking a question in front of the class or in front of your peers or co-workers can be unnerving. But each time we stand before our God, great and mighty as He may be, He gently says to us, "_____, it's okay. It's okay to ask." Amen.