

## “Jesus Teaches about Prayer”

July 19, 2020

Luke 11:1-13

### I. Introduction

Without a doubt, prayer is important. **Romans 12:12** says, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” **Ephesians 6:18** says, “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” **Phil. 4:6** says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” **1 Thessalonians 5:17** says, “Pray continually.” Prayer is so important that Christians are to always be in prayer.

Jesus modelled that attitude—He was a Man of prayer. So far in Luke we have seen Him pray at His baptism (**Luke 3:21**), before He chose the Twelve (**Luke 6:12**), when the crowds increased (**Luke 5:16**), before He asked the Twelve “Who do you say I am?” (**Luke 9:18**), at His transfiguration (**Luke 9:29**) and at the returning of the seventy (**Luke 10:21**). As we read the other Gospels we find that Jesus prayed at other momentous times, like at the feeding of the 5000 (**Matthew 14:19, 23**) and before the raising of Lazarus from the dead (**John 11:41-42**), but He also prayed at ordinary times—in the mornings and the evenings (**Mark 1:35**), and before meals. He often prayed alone (**Luke 5:16**). Because prayer was important to Jesus and because John the Baptist had taught his disciples, “one of his, i.e., Jesus’, disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’”

Luke’s account of this model prayer is a shortened version of the one recorded in **Matthew 6:9-13**—the one we recite almost every Sunday morning. The two accounts were given on different occasions. The one in Matthew’s Gospel was in Galilee; the one recorded by Luke occurred later in Judea. In either case, Jesus wasn’t teaching the exact words or magical words one should say—just before He gave the Lord’s prayer in Matthew Jesus warned in **Matthew 6:7**, “And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”

## II. The Lord's Prayer

This is called the “Lord’s Prayer,” not because Jesus prayed it, but because He taught it. There is nothing wrong with praying this prayer personally or as part of a congregation as long as we think of what we are praying and pray from a believing heart that is sincere and submitted. But we must guard ourselves that we do not recite these words mechanically and not really mean them or even think about them.

In either case, Jesus wasn’t teaching the exact words to say—He was giving a pattern or model for prayer. Both records of the Lord’s Prayer have two major parts—the 1<sup>st</sup> has to do with God’s glory and the 2<sup>nd</sup> has to do with man’s needs. The order is important. God is to have first place in everything, including our thoughts and our prayers. This is God’s proper place. When God is given His proper place, all other things will fall into their proper place as well.

### A. God’s Glory

**1. The Addressee** From the beginning, the Prayer reminds us to whom we are talking: “Father”—“our” is not in the Greek in Luke’s account. Not everyone can call God “Father,” only those who have come to be His children through faith in Jesus Christ—turn to Romans 8:12-17. If you are one of God’s children, then you can come to God as a gracious loving Father. Like the father in the Prodigal son, He is waiting with open arms to welcome you (Luke 15:11-31). Notice, too, in the Lord’s Prayer, there are no singular pronouns; no words like *I*, *me*, or *my*. When we pray, we need to remember that we are part of God’s family of believers. When we pray, we are asking God’s blessing for all of His people not just one person.

**2. 2 Petitions for God’s Glory** In this shortened version, Jesus gave 2 petitions directed at God’s glory. **A) The first is “Hallowed be your name.”** *Hallowed* is an archaic English word which means to “make holy.” Or as one commentator wrote, “*Hallowed means to treat as holy or separate or different from all other names; let God’s name be given a position which is absolutely unique.*” To hallow God’s name is

to revere, honor, glory, and obey Him. (This is the meaning of the first 3 commandments. The OT Israelites went so far as to not even say Jehovah—Yahweh, just to be safe.)

In Bible times “*name*” signified more than just a title. It includes the nature, character, and personality of an individual. Psalm 9:10 says, “Those who know your name trust in you.” Psalm 20:7 says, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.” In Exodus God gave some of His attributes—turn to Exodus 34:5-7. This is just part of the “Name” of God.

**b) The second petition is “your kingdom come.”** When one becomes a Christian, he gives up his self-centered living and selfishness and submits to God. The lordship of Jesus Christ means to submit to Him as King and acknowledge His absolute, sovereign authority. To see God’s kingdom triumphant and His rule seen on earth is the believer’s desire and prayer. The believer is praying that his or her will, plans, goals and concerns all be used to advance God’s kingdom here on earth as sinners turn to Him—1 Timothy 2:4 says, God “wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” This is advancing God’s kingdom. The child of God is also praying for Christ’s return in power and majesty; the kingdom that is prophesied in Zechariah 12-14 and in the latter part of the Book of Revelation.

**B. Man’s Needs** Once everything is in its proper place, i.e., once God’s person and purpose are recognized as being supreme, then Christians are to bring their requests or petitions to Him—man’s needs.

**1. First, we can ask Him to provide our physical needs** but not our greeds: “Give us each day our daily bread.” “Bread” includes all our basic materials and physical needs such as food, housing, clothing, health. It focuses on the staples necessary to maintain life not a greedy demand for luxuries. **2. A second need is “forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone who sins against us,”** i.e., forgiveness of sins. There are 5 different words used for sin in the New Testament. Matthew used the word debt which means “failure to pay what is due or a failure in duty.” Luke used a different word which means “to miss the mark.” All these words stand for failure before God.

When we became Christians, we were pardoned from our sin. But none of us is perfect and

we need to continually ask for forgiveness of sin. That's what Jesus was getting at when He washed the disciples' feet—turn to John 13:6-11. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." BUT Jesus added that we must do more than just confess our sins to God. We must forgive others, then God will forgive us; BUT if we refuse to forgive others, God will refuse to forgive us. If we pray this prayer while not forgiving others, we are asking God not to forgive us!!!

The standard is set for us in Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." If we have agape love for others, forgiving them will not be a problem. By the way, not forgiving others doesn't mean we will lose our salvation, but it does mean that when we see God, we will not hear "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Psalm 66:18 reminds us, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;"

**3. The third need is "And lead us not into temptation."** This is a request for spiritual protection. The Greek word for temptation, πειρασμός, (peirasmos), has to do with testing or proving. It means to test a person's strength, and loyalty and ability for service, e.g., Abraham in Genesis 22 and Jesus in the Wilderness in Matthew 4. Temptation is not designed to make us fall. God doesn't want us to sin—He hates sin. In James 1:13 we read "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone." It is designed to make us stronger – more Christ like and better men and women. That is why James 1:2, 3 says Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

If we honestly look at ourselves, we know our weaknesses and inclinations to sin (and so does Satan). This is a plea to God for protection. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." We are never free of the danger of sin. Someone has said that "Nothing gives temptation its chance like over-

*confidence.*” But we can be delivered or rescued from evil or the Evil One—James 4:7 says “**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**” Psalm 119:11 says, “**Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.**” We must rely on God for our physical needs, for forgiveness of sin, and also for victory in all our spiritual battles of life.

### **III. Closing Comments**

**A. The Parable** Jesus finished His teaching on prayer with some closing comments beginning with a parable. In this parable, Jesus did not say that God is like the grouchy neighbor who resisted getting up and waking the household for his neighbor. Jesus was saying just the opposite. If a tired, selfish neighbor finally met the needs of a bothersome, bold friend, how much more will a loving Heavenly Father meet the needs of His own dear children. Unlike the neighbor, God never sleeps, never gets impatient or irritable, is always generous, and delights in meeting the needs of His children. The friend at the door had to keep on knocking in order to finally get what he needed, but God is quick to respond to His children’s cries. In Isaiah 65:24 God said, “**Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear.**”

The point is: If persistence finally paid off for the man as he beat on the door of a reluctant friend, how much more will persistence bring blessing as we pray to a loving Heavenly Father! We are the children in the house with Him. Our Father in heaven doesn’t just answer prayer to meet the needs of His children, but to meet them in such a way that it brings glory to his Name. “**Hallowed be thy name.**” When God’s people pray, God’s reputation is on the line. The way He takes care of His children is a witness to the world that He can be trusted.

**B. A Promise** The parable led to a promise, “**So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.**” Jesus Christ commanded believers to storm the gates of heaven boldly, and aggressively: ask, seek, knock. To make sure everyone heard, Jesus repeated Himself: “**For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.**”

This promise is not a blank check granting people whatever they wish, it is centered on Jesus' teachings in the Lord's Prayer—God and His Glory must be the focus. James wrote about the same issue—**turn to James 4:1-3**. Those who pray with a proper, God-centered focus will receive what they desire, but the selfish requests of the greedy will not be granted.

**C. A Final Thought** Jesus closed with a final thought: Because God knows us and loves us, we never need to be afraid of the answers that He will give. As He had done earlier, Jesus argued from the lesser to the greater: if an earthly father gives what is best to his children--a fish not a snake; an egg not a scorpion—surely the Father in heaven will do even more. As **Ephesians 1:3** says, **“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”** This includes the Holy Spirit and His gifts—blessings beyond measure.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

It has been said that the purpose of prayer is not to get man's will done in heaven, but to get God's will done on earth. Prayer is not telling God what we want and selfishly enjoying it. Prayer is asking God to use us to accomplish what He wants so that His name is glorified, His kingdom expanded and strengthened, and His will done. We need to walk and talk with God frequently, continually. We tend to go to Him in our moments of need and dependence, but if we are wise, we will recognize that we are always in need of Him. He is fully aware of and sensitive to our requests. He wants us to pray constantly and to intercede for one another. God expects boldness from His children when it comes to spiritual requests. But recognize that God doesn't promise to give us whatever we desire, only what we need.

We are so busy and hectic that we often think all we have time for is a quick *“check in”* with the Father above. In fact, however, the more hectic the pace, the more difficult the times, the more we need Him. If Jesus took time to pray at hectic times—His baptism, the Transfiguration, the cross—shouldn't we be just as quick to go to our Heavenly Father in prayer? The disciples understood this, this is why one of the few specific requests to be taught something was how to pray. In this time of the pandemic and how to move

forward, in this time of civil and financial unrest, make prayer your first order of business not the last. In Psalm 91:14-15 we read, “‘Because he loves me,’ says the LORD, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.’” Make prayer and God’s glory top priority in your life.