

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

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Date: 27 August 2023

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[0 : 00] Before the preaching of God's word, please take your Bibles and turn to the book of Luke, Luke chapter 11. The Gospel of Luke, chapter 11. And I will read verses 1 through 4.

Luke chapter 11, verse 1. This is the word of God. One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.

He said to them, When you pray, say, Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation. Amen. Let's hear the word of God preached.

Well, this is my first time back into the pulpit preaching, since I've been in France and Switzerland. And though I have reported in Wednesday evenings the Lord's kindness and his many answers to prayer, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your many prayers for me.

[1 : 18] And just to say again that God heard those prayers and answered abundantly. There's nothing greater that you could give to your minister than your prayers.

To know that my name is heard at the throne that rules the universe is a sweet blessing. Some of you know that at the family camp in France, I was asked to speak on lessons that I am learning from the loss of my wife five years ago.

There is so much to share that the difficulty was really in paring it down to just two sessions. And some of you have asked if I would preach here what I preach there.

Perhaps we'll do that sometime, though I have already said here many things that I said there. But for the next several weeks, what I would like to address is a subject that I touched on briefly there, but I want to address more fully with you all, and that is the subject of communion with God in prayer.

Because I would have to say, above all things, that has been the difference maker in my life for the past five years. And having tasted the joys and the benefits of it, I want you to share an increased communion with God as well.

[2 : 38] And I believe that is the Lord's aim in this passage of Luke 11, 1 through 13, is where we're going for the next several weeks. The Lord is out to help His disciples to pray, and He does it not only by giving them instructions on what to say and how to pray, but He does it as well by giving them promises to prayer and sweet motivations to the same.

So for today, we're going to just see two things. First, a request, and then a model prayer. And we'll simply barely get started with that model prayer.

Notice, first of all, I trust you have your Bibles open. Luke 11, 1, the request. One day Jesus was praying in a certain place.

When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples. The request is clear.

Lord, teach us to pray. We want to learn to pray like you pray. Now, what was it that prompted such a request from the disciple?

[3 : 58] I believe four things. Let me mention four things. First of all, they had heard Him pray. You know, the Lord Jesus often prayed aloud. Indeed, there's reason to believe that even His private prayers were often spoken aloud and overheard by His disciples.

That certainly was the case in John chapter 17. The psalmist speaks of crying aloud to the Lord. Hear my voice.

Literally, crying aloud to the Lord. And I believe that was our Savior's practice in the main. Look back just a page at Luke 10, where we find that the 72 disciples that He sent out to preach in His

name have returned with joy.

And said in verse 17, Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name. And then the Lord replies to that with important instructions. But right in the midst of His instructions to them, He just breaks forth in joyful prayer to His Father in heaven.

Verse 21, At that time, Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You've hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.

[5 : 23] Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure. You see, He just suddenly prays in the midst of His instruction of them. And they heard Him.

And so it appears here in Luke chapter 11, verse 1, that Jesus was praying aloud, and His disciples were listening, as was often the case. And when He was finished, what they heard prompted this request, Lord, teach us to pray.

So they heard Him pray. Secondly, they saw His priority of prayer. They saw its importance to Him, just how much He prayed, His habit of prayer.

Mark opens his gospel by recording one long day of ministry of our Lord Jesus, lasting long after sunset.

And then he says, very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where He prayed.

[6 : 30] Simon and His companions went to look for Him. And when they found Him, they exclaimed, everyone is looking for you. As if to say, come on, Jesus, done with this.

We need to minister. They're waiting to see you. But the disciples learned something that morning about Jesus' priority of prayer.

That before He spoke to men, He would first speak to His heavenly Father. Luke's gospel says so much about Jesus' prayer life, not just here in Luke 11, 1, but in chapter 5, verses 15 and 16, we read, the news about Jesus spread all the more so that crowds of people came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. This wasn't just a one-off thing. It was His habit. There were always more people to teach and to heal, but even that ministry, important as it was, must be put on hold for this communion with His heavenly Father.

Chapter 6 and verse 12, one of those days, Jesus went on a mountainside to pray, and He spent the whole night praying to God. It was the night before choosing 12 of His followers to be His apostles, to live with Him and to be trained to carry on His work once He was gone.

[8 : 01] Luke 9, 18, once when Jesus was praying in private and His disciples were with Him, He asked them, who do the crowd say that I am?

There He is, praying in private, in private from the multitudes, but His disciples are with Him. And later in chapter 9, verses 28 and 29, it says, about eight days after Jesus said this, He took Peter, James, and John with Him and went up on a mountain to pray.

And while He was praying, His appearance was transfigured and His glory shone out like lightning. It was impossible to live with Jesus and to miss His important priority of prayer.

It was seen in His habit of set times of prayer, up early, out alone with His Father, but also in His praying without ceasing as He carried on that conversation with His Father many times during the day, right on the spot, would speak to His Father in heaven, living in open, ongoing fellowship with Him.

Surely that had its effect too upon these men to say, Lord, teach us to pray. But then they saw His delight in prayer, thirdly.

[9 : 24] This was no wearisome duty that Jesus endured. It was a high privilege He enjoyed. It was heard in the way He prayed. We saw it in chapter 10 and verse 21.

It was His fullness of joy that sent Him running to His Father to rejoice in His presence for His ways of hiding His truth from the proud, wise men of this age and revealing them to childlike spirits of humble men.

He rejoiced. Prayer for Him was often the overflow of His joy and they could not have missed the way He must have returned from those seasons of prayer with His Father, refreshed.

Joy and delight in His God. Yes, it was also to the Lord that He turned in His deepest sorrow as we see in Gethsemane and heard this morning pouring out His heart to His Father in heaven.

But prayer was one of the predominant features in the life of our Lord Jesus. Now I hesitate to speak of it as His prayer life lest we think of it as something different from the rest of His life because for Jesus His prayer life was His life and His life was His prayer life.

[10:45] There was no distinction in it. It permeated His life as He lived this life in ongoing communion with His Father and surely this attractive aspect of our Lord's life drew from these men the request Lord teach us to pray.

And then lastly they saw the effects of prayer. Perhaps they connected the dots between His extraordinary communion with God and His extraordinary character and life and ministry. that His communion with God was what accounted for the remarkable way that He moved among men and lived and ministered to them.

They saw that connection and longed for it themselves. Whatever it was perhaps all four of the above these men that Christ chose to be with them saw something most desirable in His praying and it squeezed from them this request.

Teach us to pray. Let me ask you is prayer a distinguishing mark in your life?

[11:59] That if somebody could follow you for a week a month they would come to the conclusion that among the top three things they would say about you one of the things that marks you you're a man you're a woman of prayer.

Is it a priority a clear priority in your life as it was in our Lord? Is it a privilege you enjoy and that you make use of often?

Now you see prayer is a sign of spiritual life just as it's natural for a newborn baby to cry so it's natural for the one who's been born again of the spirit to pray because that's one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit why he lives within us it's to prompt us to pray it's to move us he's called the spirit of adoption by which we cry Abba Father it's because he puts that instinct in us to cry to our father even as a babe cries for its mother let me give you three other examples besides our Lord Jesus that prayer is a clear sign of spiritual life that spiritual life lived in perfection in our Savior but we see this in Saul of Tarsus do you remember that great persecutor of the Christian church when he was converted the resurrected Lord met him on the Damascus road as he had been planning to round up the

Christians and to haul them 500 miles south to Jerusalem to put them in prison there and the Lord met him in a blaze of glory from heaven and it left him blind and he goes blind into Damascus and while he's there the Lord told one of the believers in Damascus a man named Ananias to go and baptize Saul of Tarsus and he told him where to find him and remember how terrified Ananias was Lord he's come here to persecute as we've heard all about what he's done in Jerusalem and now he's come here do you remember the words that the Lord gave to Ananias to calm him down and to convince him that Saul of Tarsus is not the way he was he has been changed he has he's become a new man he's been saved even as you

Ananias and what were those words well Jesus told Ananias behold he is praying what what does that have to do behold he is praying here's something to stop and draw aside and look at something worthy of marveling at Saul is praying well what's so special about that of course he's praying he's a Pharisee and we've seen how Pharisees just love to pray they prayed often no they often said their prayers but they did not pray Saul is really praying that's what Jesus is saying to Ananias he's he's now praying as a son to his father given access through faith in Jesus Christ the only mediator and so for the first time in his life

[15:46] Saul is actually praying he's talking to God and knows that God is listening that's a sign of spiritual life that's a sign that Saul had been converted you may often say your prayers but do you really pray is it real communion with the living God just as you talk to your spouse a living person your son your daughter your mom your dad your friends that you talk to God we see it in Saul of Tarsus and then there's Peter he's going for a walk on the water for Jesus called him to come to him and he puts the one foot out on the water and it holds him and he puts the other foot on the water and he starts to walk toward Jesus and then he looks at the way the wind is whipping up the waves and he begins to sink and then Peter cried Lord save me Peter was not saying his prayers

Peter was praying wasn't he you say but he could see the Lord and we can't well that's true enough but by faith we are enabled with Moses to see him who is invisible Hebrews 11:27 faith is being sure of what we do not see so we are just as certain that God is listening as we are when we see people listening to us talk faith gives us that certainty of what we do not see and we believe that God exists and that he is the rewarder of those who earnestly seek him that's the power of faith it

assures us that the unseen Lord really is on that throne of grace ruling over the universe and he has mercy and grace to help us in our time of need therefore we're not just saying prayers but we're really talking with our

God the living God is that a reality with you that when you speak you know God is listening that's a sign of spiritual life given by the Holy Spirit or thirdly think of Billy Bray that vile British coal miner who had a foul mouth and a hot temper and was often in fisticuffs with the other miners he was converted and thereafter as the miners were lowered down into the mine in the morning Billy Bray would get down on his knees before them and say oh father if someone must die in the mine today let it be me because now through faith in your son I'm ready to meet you but these men are not he was a man of prayer he really believed that God was listening to him and so he became a preacher and whenever faced with any dilemma he would say

I must go and tell father I must tell father about this just as much as you might hear something at work and say I must go home and tell my wife about this I must go and tell my parents I must go and have and have a word that's the instinct given by the spirit of adoption but it's also something that we can nourish and grow in even as Billy Bray did so we can't help but see this was a distinctive mark in the savior and an attractive mark at that is it such with you those living in close communion with God live distinctively Christian Christ like lives and whatever our level of communion with God whether we're just beginning or we've been praying for years it is a sign of spiritual life and health to have this request on our lips

Lord teach me to pray teach me to pray we're not done learning to pray yet so that's the request then the model prayer is given what what follows is is something called the Lord we call the Lord's prayer and Jesus says when you pray say when you pray say now father hallowed be your name your kingdom come and so forth this is a very elementary way of teaching it's the way we teach our children isn't it say this and then say that repeat after me and we put the very words into their mouths that they then speak themselves that's how Jesus introduces this when you pray say and then he tells us what to say so there's nothing wrong with praying this prayer word for word as long as you make it your own by truly meaning what you say but at the same time this prayer is a pattern for prayer for even the most experienced prayer warriors a pattern to give direction and content to our prayers because it covers the kind of things that we are to pray for it's like an outline of prayer that you then fill in with your own particular requests and it's clear that the exact wording is not the important thing to our

[21 : 35] Savior as this is a shorter version of the same prayer that in other places like the Sermon on the Mount he gave a fuller form of prayer so instead of father there it's our father who art in heaven you see but if it's the very words that Jesus is wanting us to get perfect then why does he cut it short here he's just telling this these are the things you that you are to pray when you address God it's a pattern and it helps frame our prayers with the important categories that we should then unpack with the particulars of our lives so it's been called the Lord's prayer it could also be called how to pray like Jesus that's what these disciples were after they heard him pray and they wanted to learn to pray and this is Jesus answer now we'll not understand

Jesus prayer life unless we appreciate the full incarnation of God the Son that Jesus Christ is God as much as the Father is God he is the eternal Son he shares the one divine nature with the Father and with the Holy Spirit he is God but he's also man he became man in the incarnation that means he became one of us just like us the only exception is sin that means he had a physical body like ours he had a soul like ours and unless we appreciate that we won't understand why Jesus prayed so much it's because he is a real man like us in every way except for sin that he made prayer a priority and so he becomes a perfect example for us in prayer it's not as

God that he becomes an example to us in prayer no it's as a man he becomes an example to us in prayer because we're not God we're men and women we're human beings and here's the perfect human being and so the eternal son of God the creator without whom nothing was made that has been made became a creature a dependent creature just like you and me dependent on the father that's why he needed to be strengthened in Gethsemane as we saw in Sunday school and God sent an angel to do what to strengthen him because he's a man and he gets weak he's tired and that's physical and emotional just like you and me and we won't understand why is Jesus praying like this unless we know he is like us dependent on his father and not just for food and drink yes for that we see that in his first temptation in

Matthew 4 but also dependent for strength spiritual strength to glorify his father to speak the right way he ought to respond to all the mistreatment in the way that he ought he's seeking God for grace to help him in his times of need even as we though he is without sin well have you noticed that out of this whole prayer there's only one petition that Jesus doesn't need to pray and that's forgive us our sins that's because he is sinless but otherwise these are petitions that the Lord Jesus would pray and I trust that will make the prayer and Jesus more precious to us so this is the Lord's prayer even as it is the disciples prayer for us to pray like Jesus with only that one exception now this will instruct us then as to what was on his heart as he walked among men and what ought to be on our hearts as we pray so he begins with the address father and this address helps us identify who this prayer is for who does it belong to let me ask you men who are the only people in the world that call you father well you say it's my children that's right only they address you as father and though many unbelievers are reciting this prayer today in their church liturgies it clearly belongs exclusively to those who are the children of

God by faith in Jesus Christ John 1 12 for as many as received him to them he gave the right to become children of God even to those who believe on his name only those who trust in Jesus and his atoning work on the cross to save them from hell and to give them eternal life only they can rightly pray this prayer father so it's identifying who this prayer belongs to it belongs to those who are believers true with true saving faith in Christ now before our new birth before trusting in Christ to save us God was not our father Jesus said to unbelievers in John 8 44 you're of your father the devil yes that's what he said you are of your father the devil and you show it by what you want to do he says you want to carry out your father's desires

[27 : 53] Satan Satan's desire is to sin and that's the way you are and you show like father like son he was a murder from the beginning not holding to the truth for there's no truth in him and when he lies he speaks his native language for he's a liar and the father of lies yeah that father didn't do us any good he hates God and he hates everyone made in his image and he lied to us and he deceived us and he destroyed us oh but then in Jesus Christ we were set free from his family we were set free from his bondage and we were adopted into the family of God with Jesus as our elder brother and God as our father so that now we can rightly talk to God the living God the creator and sustainer of all things and say father father that's the way Jesus prayed he always addressed

God as his father with one exception and we heard it again in Sunday school didn't we it was when his father turned his face away and treated him not as his beloved son but treated him as the sinner under his wrath and only then does he pray my God my God instead of father long before God was our father he was for all eternity the father of God the son there never was a time that the son of God was not the son of God the father and after rising from the dead you remember he appeared first to Mary Magdalene and as soon as she saw him she fell at his feet and clung to his feet and remember what Jesus said do not hold on to me for I have not yet returned to the father go instead to my brothers and tell them

I am returning to my father and your father to my God and your God you see God is first the God and it's only by us being joined to Jesus by faith that his God and father becomes our God and father if his then ours as well so father it emphasizes the intimacy of our relationship with God and this warm fatherly fellowship is what we were made for it's what we were saved for it's what we lost in the fall and what Christ has won for us at the cost of his own blood a precious privilege to come to almighty God as his beloved children to have free access to the sovereign of the universe at all times as our father knowing that his heart is all for us that he cares for us and he pities us as a father pities his children what a difference that should make in all of our praying that we can say as Billy said

I've got to go talk with father and I know that he hears and he cares and he delights in the prayers of his children you know when you come to God in prayer child of God he never says oh not her again not him again no the the prayer of the upright is his delight his delight he takes pleasure he would say to the angels look she's coming back to me again he he takes pleasure in the prayers of his children so let's learn then from the address in prayer that our relation to God his father is meant to color every petition that follows everything we come asking it's to be tinged with this reality that this God that I'm talking to is my father it should give us confidence and intimacy to our communion with him to unburden our hearts and to tell him all so at any time any time that we would pray any time that we give to remember before we pray who it is we're talking to is not wasted time it's important that we think this God is my father in Jesus

Christ well after addressing God as father Jesus says then say hallowed be your name and I think rather than trying to hurry on through these requests we're going to save that for later next week Lord willing do do you really pray I want to ask you that today do you pray to God or do you just say your prayers real prayer we've seen is a mark of spiritual life it's a mark that the spirit of adoption dwells in you the one who comes to help us to pray and to convince us that

[33 : 44] God is our father and he's waiting to hear us as his children we saw it as a mark of conversion in soul of Tarsus it's the very instinct that the spirit of God puts in the children of God Jonathan Edwards said sooner say that a man can live without breathing than to say he is spiritually alive without praying and it may be just this mark of a believer that would expose someone here this morning that whatever your profession is if you do not pray you're not a Christian you're not ready to meet your God this is a mark a mark of spiritual life prayer is as natural to the child of God as breathing is to a living person this was part of his sermon on

Job 27 10 called hypocrites deficient in secret prayer and in that sermon Edward shows how the hypocrite when he gets into trouble may cry out to God in prayer but since he has no delight in God as his father when his troubles are not so severe he quits praying and in doing so he proves himself not to be one of God's children but someone who's just taking what is the children's privilege and trying to make it work for him if that's you this morning you need not to pray try to pray more that is not the answer you need Jesus Christ because God is the God and Father of Jesus Christ and as you are joined to Jesus Christ by faith his God and

Father becomes your God and Father and his Holy Spirit will be put in you that will prompt you to go to God in prayer well I trust that God will take this and cause us to examine ourselves are we able to pray this prayer you see we're going to launch into the Lord's prayer and we're going to see the petitions that are only a true child of God can really pray these petitions so be sure that God is your Father be sure this prayer is your prayer and then even though we've not got into it let me encourage you who are believers children of God to pray through the Lord's prayer every day this week you can start just by saying the words themselves pause at the outset to remember that this amazing

God is your Father in Jesus Christ that this is your privilege and let that idea of him being your father tincture color everything that you ask of him and personalize the requests what you're asking of him let this be the template of prayer let it be the outline and then you have these these in this prayer it's five petitions two God word petitions and three man word petitions and let that be the outline and then fill it in as you pray for each one hallowed be your name pray for God's name to be exalted even as we did in our song be thou exalted oh Lord oh should God's name not be exalted for giving his own son that when we needed a savior he did not spare his one and only son but delivered him up to the hellish cross to suffer and die in our place oh then

Lord let your name run to the ends of the earth and be lifted up and exalted that sinners might come to know you and make your way pray we prayed this morning didn't we for the extension of the gospel this good news about our great God over in New Chattel that's that's praying hallowed be your name your kingdom come so put your own particular request then under each one of these heads and may your time with the Lord Jesus and the father and the spirit of prayer be precious pray with me now father we thank you that in our savior we not only see him who is God and in seeing our Lord Jesus we learn what God the father is like we thank you as well that he's a real man as real humanity as we are not one less human than we and that in so seeing him live in the gospels that we can learn why it is that he prayed the way he did oh forgive us that we mere humans and not sinless humans like he is but rather sinful humans that we would think that we could get on in our day and get on with our life without praying and seeking mercy and grace to help us in our time of need so teach us from our savior the priority the habit the ongoing communion with you and teach us to delight in it that it wouldn't be something that we check off as our box completed but would be something we want to carry on with throughout the day and teach us as well then that indeed the kind of lives that we live depend upon the grace given in answer to prayer thank you for your your kind heart toward us that welcomes us that would even delight when we come in prayer also forgive us our sins and cleanse us and pour out upon us a spirit of prayer as a congregation and as individuals as families let the spiritual life that we see in our savior be more vibrant among us and in us we ask in

[40 : 33] Jesus name and to his praise amen