

Lord Teach Us to Pray

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 March 2022

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 11, and we're going to be reading verses 1 through 13 tonight. 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. Jesus 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.

Then he said to them, Suppose one of you has a friend. And he goes to him at midnight and says, Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.

Then the one inside answers, Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.

[1 : 09] I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you. Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. And to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?

Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Let's listen to the preaching of God's word. Our Lord Jesus Christ was a man of prayer. It was as natural to him to commune with his Father in heaven as breathing.

[2 : 16] It was his habit, we're told, to get up very early in the morning while it was still dark and to go off to a solitary place where he prayed.

On other occasions, there were others present with him when he prayed. We have that in John 17 as the disciples listened to their master pray. What must it have been to hear the Lord Jesus pray? The perfect son in perfect harmony with his perfect Father and enjoying this perfect fellowship with him.

On this occasion, here in Luke 11, the words of his prayer are not recorded. What he was praying as he prayed to his Father. But their effect, the effect of their words, at least on one of them, the disciples, is recorded.

Because when Jesus was finished praying, then this man said, Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples to pray. To hear Jesus pray was to want to learn to pray from him.

[3 : 28] That we might pray like he prayed. So let's come tonight with that request on our hearts that was on the heart of this man.

Lord, teach us to pray. And our text can be divided up into two parts here in Luke 11, 1 to 13.

First, he teaches us how to pray. And then secondly, he stirs up a heart to pray. To begin with, he teaches us how to pray. Those are verses 2 to 4.

And what follows is taught on other occasions what we call the Lord's Prayer. This seems to be a shortened version of it, but in other places it's given more fully. And he says, when you pray, say. Say. This is very elementary teaching, isn't it? It's the things that you mothers do with your young children. Say this, dear.

[4 : 28] Dear Jesus. And you lead them through. You tell them what to say. And so here is our Lord in a very elementary way telling us what to say.

Repeat after me. Putting the very words into our mouths. So, though in the one sense it's a very elementary prayer for the youngest convert, there is in this prayer a pattern for prayer for the most experienced prayer warriors to give direction to our prayers.

To tell us the kinds of things that we ought to be praying for. Let me just mention some of the lessons on praying that are found here. And the first lesson is intimacy.

How are we to pray to God? We are to say Father. Which is to recognize that this great God, the Most High, the Creator of the ends of the earth, is our Father.

That He has adopted us as His sons and daughters. And that should give us great confidence and intimacy to come into His presence.

[5 : 35] Knowing we have access at any time, at any place. If Jonah can pray in a place like this, the belly of a fish, then we can pray wherever we are.

We have, through Christ, this access to the King of Kings. And so, what we can learn from that is that as we go to prayer, any time reminding ourselves who it is we're praying to is not wasted.

Let's remember, we're coming to our Father as we pray. A second lesson is first things first. You notice, before asking anything for us, we're asking for Him.

Hallowed be your name is our first concern. We want to see your name lifted up. We want to see you exalted, respected, held in high honor.

Your name not misused, like we hear it so often. And not misused or profaned by me, who bears your name. I bear the name of God. I was baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[6 : 46] And I'm praying that I would not misuse your name, but that I might lift your name high. And then we seek His kingdom.

Your kingdom come. Indeed, this is something that our Lord says we should do first as a priority.

Seek first the kingdom of God. And that firstness and that priority comes right here and meets us in our prayer life.

The first things that we need to do is to seek His name being exalted, His kingdom being done here on earth as it is in heaven.

And then the third lesson is us instead of me. It's just over and over. Us, give us, forgive us, lead us. It's not saying that we never ask anything personally for us, but that's to never be the end of our praying.

It's not just me. I'm to be remembering that I'm a part of a family of God. And so my concern is not only for me, but for the larger family of God.

[7 : 52] And I pray for my brothers and sisters as well. Unselfish praying. And then a fourth lesson is that when we pray like this, it puts us on praying ground.

If you make these things the stuff you pray for, you're going to find that a lot more of your prayers will be answered. And why is that? Well, it's because these are the things we know that God delights to answer.

This is what is called praying according to His will. Praying for the very things that He's told us to pray for. And if we know that He hears us, we know that we have the things that we've asked of Him.

And so it's like praying the scriptures. It's like praying the word of God. We're on praying ground when we do that. And so John 15, 7, Jesus says, If you abide in me and my words abide in you, well, then you can ask anything that you want and it will be done for you.

Why is that? Because everything you want will now be the very things that God wants. Like His name, hallowed, His kingdom coming more and more to our hearts and into the world.

[9 : 08] And His will being done and our sins forgiven. Daily bread, not led into temptation but delivered from the devil. Pray these things and you're on praying ground.

You will see more and more of your prayers being answered. So take the template of the Lord's Prayer and make it your own. And fill it out with your own personalized needs and the needs of your brothers and sisters.

Here in the church, over in Ukraine, wherever God's people are, we can take this model prayer from our Lord. It'll help get us out of our ruts in prayer.

Where we just tend to go down the same track over and over each time we come. And this prayer will lead us to go down paths that we maybe haven't gone down in a while.

It's a healthy instruction in teaching us how to pray. Well, let us take the very prayer that our Lord gave us. That's the first part of our Lord's answer to this question and request.

[10:10] Lord, teach us to pray. But notice having spent three verses on how to pray, the Lord Jesus then spends nine verses stirring up a heart to pray.

Three verses on how to pray, nine verses on stirring us up to pray. And I think there's a lesson in that itself, isn't there?

In the very amount of emphasis that he gives in his teaching, is Jesus not telling us that even greater than our need to know how to pray is our need to have a heart to pray?

What good is it to know how to pray if we don't actually pray? That's what he's saying. Charles Bridge is right. It's not that men are busy and have no time to pray, but that they're worldly and have no heart to pray.

I need more heart to pray, more encouragement to pray. And our Lord, by his very division of the amount of teaching that he gives, shows us that he knows that's our problem.

[11:22] He knows that we struggle with a heart to pray, and so he lays the emphasis of instruction on giving us that heart to pray. Can you not see the Savior in that, in his tenderness towards you?

You don't have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with you in your weakness. Yes, your worldly weakness that is too busy with the things of the world to pray. He pities you, and he comes alongside, and he's wanting to help you overcome that slackness to pray.

And so he's out to give us a heart to pray. And I think it's true that when we have a heart to pray, we generally have no trouble praying.

What I mean is when you feel your need to pray and see the willingness of God to answer that prayer, your heart tends to find a way to express that thanksgiving, that crying out, just that, Help, Lord!

And sometimes there's more prayer in that two-word prayer than ten minutes of other saying our prayers. It's a heart to pray. And the Lord is here wanting to stir up a heart to pray.

[12:36] He's out to overcome a worldly unbelief in prayer. A worldly unbelief. What do I mean by that? Well, I mean what the world means.

What do we gain in praying? Why should I pray? What good does it do to pray? And so the world doesn't pray. They see no value in it. And that's just plain old unbelief.

But we can struggle with that too. We can wonder, Well, what would I gain by praying? And so our Lord, knowing that we struggle with it and we can have this sneaking suspicion that God is reluctant to answer our prayers, that we might have to feel like we're twisting his arm to overcome that reluctance, that's so far from the truth that our Lord Jesus levels all of his guns on that as it were in this last section on prayer and he blows it out of the water.

Don't ever think again that your Father in heaven is reluctant. To hear and answer your prayers. So he knows how slow we are to believe. The willingness of God.

You remember Hebrews 11.6 says that without faith it's impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him, that's language for prayer.

[13:55] We come to him in prayer. And anyone who comes to him must believe what? First that he exists and that he is the rewarder of those who earnestly seek him.

That he actually rewards those who come to him. That no man goes away empty when they come and knock on his door. So the Lord knows we struggle with that unbelief and so he's here trying to encourage us and stir up our hearts with the generosity and the absolute delight that God has in answering prayer.

More willing to give than we are to ask is the reality. So let's look at the second part of his instruction. As he stirs up a heart to pray, it's verses 5 through 13.

How does Jesus stir up a heart to pray in this passage? Well, he gives two parables showing us his willingness to answer prayer. And in between those two parables, he gives us six promises to answer our prayer.

I saw it as these two parables being the two sides of a hamburger bun. So there's parable number one and here's parable number two.

[15:13] And in between are these six Big Macs of promises. That's the outline of verses 5 to 13. A parable, then six promises to answer prayer and another parable.

Now these two parables, we have one, the first one is about a friend and the last one down in the bottom is a parable about a father.

First the friend, then the father. And both of these parables are talking about hypothetical situations that never occur. This just isn't the case.

They don't exist. Hypothetical friends and hypothetical fathers that aren't in the real world. And it's important for us to understand that if we're to get to the heart of what Jesus is teaching us in these two parables.

So let's look at the first of them. It's verse 5 and it reads, suppose one of you has a friend. I think a better translation, it's that of the King James, the ESV, the ASV, is who of you shall have a friend like this guy?

[16:18] He's going to explain this friend. And he's asking, who of you should ever find such a friend like this? And what is that friend like?

Well, a guy, a friend where you would go to him at midnight and say, friend, lend me three loaves of bread because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me and I have nothing to set before you, before him.

So I'm beating on your door at midnight because Michael and Andrew have suddenly shown up unannounced at my house and they're hungry. This was before emails and telephones to let us know they're coming and when they're coming.

And so I need three loaves of bread, two for Andrew and one for Mike and I to split. I don't have any. I'm knocking on your door. There's no mire open all night to shop.

My friend, I'm asking for a favor. Now remember often houses in those days were one room houses and maybe the kids were just all rolled out there at the feet of the parents and everybody's in there and they're all asleep on the floor on their bedrolls and so you, my friend, are on the inside and you answer through the door or the window, don't bother me.

[17:37] The door's already locked and my children are in bed with me and everybody's put down for the night so it's just impossible for me to get up and answer your request for three loaves. I can't get up. I can't.

It's impossible. I can't give you anything. You see what Jesus is saying? Who in the world has a friend like that? They don't exist because if he treats you like that, you know he's not what?

A friend. Right. Friends don't treat friends that way. A friend loves at all times, even at midnight. A friend loves, especially at midnight, especially when his friend is found to be in need in a time of need.

That's what friends are for, right? So Jesus is ridiculing the very idea of a friend ever denying a request in this way.

Verse 8, he says, I tell you, though he wouldn't get up, perhaps, to give him the bread and because he's his friend, yet because of the man's boldness, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

[18:45] I think what he's saying here is even if your friend wasn't feeling especially friendly at the moment, after all, you woke him up at midnight, yet he's still going to give you the bread, he's still going to give you what you asked, because after all, you've come asking him in a very pressing moment of need, even at midnight.

In other words, therefore, he would get up and he would give you whatever it was that you needed. Your asking for his help at such an hour shows how much you expected from his friendship.

It showed how highly you regarded his friendship, that you would have the guts to knock at midnight and to look to that friendship to provide you with three loaves.

No true friend would ever turn you away. And so having treated him as a friend in your asking, he will treat you as his friend in his giving. And how does that help us pray?

Well, because our Lord Jesus is saying that you have a far greater friend in heaven than any friend on earth. He's arguing from the lesser to the greater.

[20:03] If you're friends on earth who are less than perfect and who may feel inconvenienced at times by your asking, yet, if even they would get up and give you whatever you needed when knocking at midnight, how much more then will your perfect friend in heaven, your best and heavenly friend, give you all that you need?

And not just to get rid of you for bothering him with your request at some inconvenient hour. No, never, never that. But rather because he's such a true friend in need.

And because as a true friend, he loves at all times and he loves to answer prayer. So you go and knock at the door of heaven and you'll find the door to open.

And you go and ask at that house and you will receive. And you come to your heavenly friend and seek and you will find and so on.

For everyone who asks, receives. And he who seeks, finds. And to him who knocks, the door will be open. You see, the certainty of those, I don't have six hands, I'm not the six-hand man, but the certainty of those six promises to prayer, one after another, ask, you'll receive, seek, you will find, knock, six times.

[21 : 30] The certainty of those promises rests on who it is that you're asking. It's your father or your friend, excuse me, we'll see your father, but for now, it's your friend.

And there's not a friend that you have on earth that wouldn't get up and give you what you want. And your father is so much greater than that. Well, maybe it's not three loaves of bread, maybe it's wisdom you need.

You're going through a trial and trials expose our ignorance and the fact that we weren't made to face trials without God and so we need wisdom and so we come and we ask for wisdom and we have this promise that if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God and if you're lucky, his arm might be twisted enough to overcome his reluctance such that he may give you a meager portion of wisdom to get by in a pinch.

No, that's not how it reads, is it? But we sometimes think that God's that way. Maybe he'll just give us a little bit here or there if we're lucky and but rather he says if any of you in your trial are finding that you're perplexed and wondering what to do, lacking wisdom, he should ask God and what we've just learned from Jesus is that that God is our best friend.

He should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, without ever upbraiding. Oh, it's you again? You were just here last week.

[23 : 00] I gave you wisdom. What are you doing? Here's a little more and I'll scam. Never. No, he gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to him.

He loves to answer prayer. He's honored that you would come and cast yourself upon him as this great friend in heaven. So when young King Solomon is looking at a nation as a young man and finding himself king and God says you can have whatever you want, ask and he says oh, give me wisdom that I'll know how to administer the kingdom for your glory and God didn't just give him a meager portion of wisdom did he?

He made him the wisest man on earth. He loves to answer prayer. Our friend in heaven is as generous as he is rich.

His heart is as rich as his storehouses are rich. So open your mouth wide and I'll fill it he says. So you see what Jesus is doing here in this first parable.

He's stirring up a heart to pray. How? By opening up the heart of our friend in heaven and just how good he is and how eager he is and how willing he is to answer prayer.

[24 : 18] And so if we just believed his delight in giving to his friends we'd be found knocking at his door whether at midnight or in the morning wherever our point of need showed up we'd be knocking on that door and we'd be asking with much more faith and seeking with much more confidence of receiving.

It's yet to be seen how much God will do for the man or woman who takes him at his word and treats him as your best friend in your asking.

Well we've had the top bun and the six quarter pounders the promises this friend in heaven will answer and open when you knock.

And now we come to the second and the last parable to stir us up to pray and this is about fathers but remember it's the same idea these are hypothetical fathers that don't exist and so our prayer hearing God is even more intimately joined to us than a best friend best friends are wonderful but here's a more intimate bond father child father son father daughter he's our compassionate father and that's what Jesus is wanting us to learn about God that will help us to have a heart to pray once more he points to the human relationship of fathers just like he did about friends and he says in verse 11 which of you fathers if your son asked for a fish we'll give him a snake instead or if he asked for an egg we'll give him a scorpion again he's making the point such fathers don't exist and once again he's using the argument from the lesser father to the even greater father verse 13 if you then though you are evil you fathers know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your father in heaven give the Holy

Spirit to those who ask him how much more will he give good gifts to his children and not something harmful how much will he much more will he not give the best and highest gift possible the Holy

Spirit the third person of the glorious Trinity give him to you to dwell in you in all of his ministries to us he's come to be the very life of God in the soul of man what better gift could we have than the Holy Spirit in all that he is to us his ministries as comforter when our hearts are broken as encourager when we're growing weary and doing good as teacher and illuminator as we come to his word and we want to understand and get to know our God as guide through life the Holy Spirit is the empowerment to live a supernatural life to overcome the down pull that down drag of the flesh and to put sin to death to fill us with the Christ like fruit of the

[27 : 29] Spirit patience kindness goodness self control the Holy Spirit is sanctifier to enable us to put to death as I said the misdeeds of the body and to obey the commands of God this is the work of the Holy Spirit working in us to will and to do what pleases God making us careful to keep his commands the work of the Spirit to shed abroad God's love in our hearts to make us overflow with hope and expectancy of good to assure us that God is our Father that he really is this Father that delights to give good gifts that's the work of the Spirit the Spirit of adoption giving us that assurance that God's our Father the Spirit to help us in our weakness and that weakness Romans 8 26 says is often seen in our prayer life that we don't know how to pray as we ought and the Spirit helps us in our weakness with groans that words can't even express he who searches the heart knows the mind of God because he always knows the mind of the Spirit because the

Spirit always intercedes in accordance with God's word he's here to help us to pray in our weakness to equip us support us supply us with all we need he's here to glorify Christ by revealing him to us in his word and on and on we go there is so much more to know of the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life that I will never be done asking for the Holy Spirit and this is the promise if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly father give this best of gifts the gift of the Holy Spirit in all of his multiplied ministries to us that's that's the father when we needed a savior he did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all so great is his love and delight in giving to us well then if he's given us his own son how will he ever withhold anything good from us well he won't because the

Lord is a sun and a shield the Lord gives grace and glory and no good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly and he knows we need the Holy Spirit that's why when Jesus rose from the grave and ascended into heaven he received from the father the promised Holy Spirit and poured him out upon us we need the spirit and he he knows what we need and the father gives him as gift to his son purchased by his son for us that he might pour him out upon us so the point again is that God the father is a far better father than any of us fathers ever were or are he's better than any human fathers that we've ever had and some of us feel we've had the best we could ever wish for but again it's the lesser to the greater this love of a father for his children encourages the children to go to their fathers when they're in need and to ask them for things that they could never ask anyone else and I know

I've I've told you this before but there was a time when we were late for one of our children's events at the school and we were hurrying to get out the door but we needed ten bucks to get in to the event and we couldn't find ten bucks in the house so that's how poor it was at that moment so I called my father who lives right across from the school and just said dad we're on our way to the school we're going to stop by could you have ten bucks for a poor son and he said yeah I've got it when I pulled in the alleyway he was standing there in the alley with a ten dollar bill in his hand I barely slowed down rolled down the window grabbed it said thanks dad and off we went I was in need I didn't think twice about is it a problem for me to ask dad for ten bucks and I don't think he thought twice about giving it to me that's our father in heaven and if I can think that of my human father who is sinful and evil as Jesus is saying to us here if you being evil you're not perfect and yet as a father you know how to give good gifts to your kids that there's this special love he's put in the hearts of fathers even unregenerate fathers know how to give gifts to their children there's something even implanted in the hearts of the image of God for their children or something but if that's true how much more will your heavenly father so I need to think more highly of my father in heaven and of his generosity so that I won't think twice when I have a need that it will just be as automatic go call call father ask father because he delights to give to me and that's what Jesus is doing here we're free to ask him things that we couldn't ask anyone else and to know his father heart moves him to give good gifts to his children again if he gave his son what else would he withhold as a father has compassion on his children so the

Lord has compassion on those who fear him and you know the tender spot you have in your hearts dads for your kids how can we imagine for a moment that we're better fathers and outstrip God in his generosity to his kids no he's the father from whom all fatherhood is derived he's he's the one father who epitomizes what fatherhood is all about and should look like he's the perfect model the perfect example of what father should be he's the father of compassions every single compassion he's the father of it and the God of all comfort it all comes from him every bit of it that's found in earthly fathers comes from him how much more than does he give and delight to give good gifts to his children well that's what he wants us to know and that's what Jesus is that's part of his answer to the request teach us to pray okay

[34 : 23] I'll give you three verses on how to pray but let me give you nine verses on things to encourage your heart to pray so that you'll not just know how to pray tuck it away in your pocket and never get to the throne of grace I want you to come I want you to come and to pray and so he piles the these two parables he piles up six promises reminding us we have a friend and father in heaven who gives far greater gifts to us than any of our earthly fathers did so when you pray even more important than how to pray and the right words to use is just to remember the heart of your heavenly father the heart of your heavenly friend toward you and that should run us should chase us running often to knock at his door at the midnight hours of our lives and to seek and to ask with confidence that my father loves me my best of friends will not fail me are you talking to your best friend when you pray are you talking to your most gracious heavenly father when you pray is it conscious that's what I mean when I say to pause before we pray and to remember who it is that we're praying to is not wasted time but rather will stir us to pray and we owe it all to the

Lord Jesus don't we we owe it all to the Lord Jesus Christ it was only through his life his death his resurrection that his God and father became our God and father and that God has become our best friend instead of our worst enemy it's it's the Lord Jesus who by his blood has opened up a new and living way for us to enter in to the most holy place and to come right in and to talk to God father son and holy spirit it's our savior's blood bought privilege let's more make more use of it it's that valuable that he would shed his blood if it's that valuable that the father would give his son it's that valuable that he'd send the holy spirit to be our helper in prayer then let's make more use of it and what's true of our father in heaven and of his delight to answer prayer is true of his son the Lord Jesus because the radiant the son is the radiance of God's glory he is the exact representation of his being is our father in heaven willing to answer then Jesus is no less willing to hear and answer prayer so we're going to sing what a friend we have in

Jesus what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer come my soul thy suit prepare Jesus loves to answer prayer he himself has bid you pray here it is he's bid you pray and therefore will not say you nay it's number 533 what a friend we have in Jesus let's stand as we sing together let's pray Lord Jesus we we're thankful that you not only sought out solitary places to pray alone with your father but that you prayed in the presence of others and that this man having heard you actually asked you to teach him and his fellow disciples to pray and we're the beneficiaries of that man's desire to pray as we have been able to to hear your your words about prayer both how and and how to stir up our hearts to pray we can't help but believe that we well we understand why it was you were finding communion with your father to be as natural as breathing because you knew the father and you knew his heart you know him perfectly you came from heaven you came from the bosom of the father for all eternity you knew his love and his delight in you and so it was so natural for you to turn to him when in need when in want and when you know when he was full of joy and to share that joy with you and whatever the state of his soul Lord Jesus we see just how naturally it was for natural it was for you to run to your father and you want us to know him and so you've come to teach us what the father is like to exegete him and to open his heart up that we could we too could be drawn into this wonderful fellowship with our father in heaven thank you father for being such a friend forgive us of our low views of you thank you that you are a father like none other oh please chase out our our low thoughts and give us high thoughts chase out our little ideas of you and give us big ideas of your goodness and greatness and so teach us to pray we pray even this week may we be found more often knocking at your door and that with confidence of a son that with the confidence of a friend who knows who you are to us we ask it in Jesus name amen amen