

“Teach Us to Pray”

Luke 11:1-13

We started a couple weeks ago with a look at the subject of “prayer,” and we read these verses then. As was stated, this is not an exhaustive study on prayer, but, more to the point, a study on how prayer applies to our lives. This text demonstrates that truth.

We looked at the passage in Matthew 6, preceding the Lord’s Prayer, and saw what Jesus taught on how NOT to pray, how TO pray, the result of praying right, and the rewards in prayer. In the passage in Luke that we read, we will consider more on what Jesus actually taught on prayer.

This is a separate occasion from what is called “The Sermon on the Mount” (in Matthew 6), in which He taught primarily the same thing to the same disciples. In Matthew 6, Jesus was teaching what true prayer was as it related to what the Pharisees taught about prayer. It is an odd thing that the disciples didn’t understand prayer from what Jesus said at that point. However, He didn’t admonish them here – He answered their question with the same thing He had already taught, but He gives an illustration in this passage not found in Matthew that I believe will help us in understanding prayer a little better.

Prayer is surrender--surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boathook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.

E. Stanley Jones, *Liberating Ministry From The Success Syndrome*, K Hughes, Tyndale, 1988, p. 73.

I. A PATTERN TO FOLLOW – VS. 2-4

A. *The first thing to make mention of here is that every prayer we pray in our devotional "alone time" with the Lord should contain the ingredients given here.*

B. *I believe that one of the errors we make in prayer is not praying as Jesus taught. This isn't to be prayed in repetition, but our prayer is to be prayed with the contents of the "Lord's Prayer."*

"The peculiar and abridged form in Luke," says Meyer, "is a proof that the apostolic Church did not use the Lord's prayer as a form" (as found in Alford's commentary).

C. *One thing that I believe is important here is the order of the points of this prayer. I say that the order is important because of the fact that the order is the same here as it was in Matthew 6 and since they are two separate events given at two separate times then it would be good to consider the importance of the order.*

1. Know who we are praying to and His position to us – "Our Father"
2. Recognize where He is – "which art in heaven" – He is where He has all that we need at His disposal

3. Realize and recognize His holiness – “Hallowed be thy name” – this is a very important point to make for it will help us recognize our own sin and shortcomings compared to His holiness and it will help us stay humble in our dealings with other
4. Pray for the success of the Gospel in the world and look for the return of Christ to set up His kingdom on earth (the Millennium) – “thy kingdom come”
 - a) Our prayer life must always contain, first and foremost, a desire of God to save souls
 - b) Most of those that teach personal soul-winning as paramount to a believer’s right standing before God usually miss this part of the model for our prayer life. Jesus taught the disciples to pray for the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth (pray for the souls of men that they would be saved) before He commanded them to give the gospel to every creature.
 - c) We must pray BEFORE we go, or we might as well not go
 - d) Also, involved in this point is the desire every believer should have for the return of Christ

2 Timothy 4:8

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

5. Our prayer should contain a desire for the will of God to be done on earth just as it is

in heaven. Again, this is an area that is most often forgotten. If we would pray for the will of God to be done then we would be more apt to be aware of what that will is for our lives and follow it – maybe that's the point here.

6. The next point differs slightly from Matthew 6 – here it says, “give us day by day our daily bread” and there it says “give us this day our daily bread”
 - a) There is no real significance except to point out that Luke's account makes it more specific that our prayer for needs is to be one that occurs every day – not just a broad-spectrum prayer once in a while.
 - b) Also, of note here is that our prayer for our needs is to be one of just that – our NEEDS not our wants or desires necessarily
 - c) If we pray not just daily for our needs, but as this also teaches, we are to pray for our “daily bread” – not an over-abundance of things, not a gluttonous hoarding of things, but this speaks to a simplistic lifestyle where we trust God for things on a daily basis, not a lavish lifestyle where we hoard food in the freezer and then forget to pray for our daily needs.
7. Of course, we are to pray for forgiveness – this is one that most everyone does do, I would hope anyway.
 - a) This is to be done for restored fellowship
 - b) The sin that would condemn us is already forgiven when we trusted Christ – this is prayed to restore fellowship with the Father

1 John 1:3-9

³ That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

⁵ This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

8. Not only are we to pray for forgiveness for our sins but we are to also have proven ourselves compassionate and caring in forgiving those that wrong us. I believe a point to be made here is that if we are unwilling to forgive others then our prayer for forgiveness and restored fellowship will be hindered.
9. Along with the previous two points is the final part of the "Lord's Prayer" as it is

given by Jesus in Luke where Jesus is teaching the disciples to pray for victory not just over sin but from sin – “lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil”

- a) The Bible says that God doesn't tempt us to sin, so that's not what it's speaking to here
- b) The last phrase clarifies the first and it is pointing to an aspect of our prayer life that isn't usually prayed – that God keeps us from sin and temptation
- c) Maybe if we prayed this part of the prayer more, we would have less difficulty with sin

D. The last part of the prayer in Matthew is missing in Luke (“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen”). No reason is given other than that part of the prayer is more praise than prayer and the disciples were only requesting how to pray here.

E. One other thing to note – this isn't an all-inclusive list on prayer necessarily since there are other passages of Scripture that give us other things to pray for, but it is a list of the basics or minimum that our prayer should contain. In other words, if our prayer DOESN'T contain these things then it is not a biblical prayer (remember, this is only referring to that alone-time prayer in our devotional life, not things like prayer at the dinner table – that's a prayer of thanksgiving).

II. THE PATTERN ILLUSTRATED – VS. 5-8

- A. This is a much-misappropriated passage of Scripture – it is often used to account for why it seems that God doesn't answer our prayer – it isn't to be used that way***
- B. This was given to illustrate the pattern just given on prayer – and to give it a deeper meaning to the disciples***
- C. One thing to keep in mind is that this is a parable and not every point of a parable is all that important – the importance lies in the overall truth taught in the parable – in this case the point would be in our boldness in prayer***
- D. Most of the time this parable is interpreted as meaning that all we have to do is just keep "pestering" God with prayer and He will give us what we want even if He doesn't want to – that is NOT what it is teaching***

1. The first thing to see is that the one doing the praying was more concerned about the "friend" that came to him than he was for himself – vs. 5
2. Second, we need to understand that the long journey the "friend" would have been on would have caused him great trial and he wasn't just hungry – he is represented as being near to the point of starvation – vs. 6
3. Also in verse 6 is seen something that is pointed out in the model prayer in verse 3

where Jesus said to pray for “daily bread” – the man here that was asking didn’t have anything to offer his friend – it represents the believer that is in a position of absolute dependency on the Lord – are we in that position?

4. One error many make here is thinking that the man in the house represents God
 - a) This is a parable and not every point is to be considered critical – this is one of those points
 - b) God is not to be likened to a sleepy man in bed that can’t be bothered by his “friends” – that would go against Scripture. God is actually to be contrasted with the sleepy man. It would have gone against the culture for the sleepy man to refuse help – and that is why Jesus asks the disciples the question in vs. 5 if any of them would have a friend that would do such a thing. They, of course, would not have such a friend, nor imagine such a thing happening.
 - c) The point is, neither would God do such a thing
 - d) God is ready and willing and waiting to supply our needs
 - e) What this is representing is that if we have been praying for a long time for something then either stop praying (you already have the answer) or change your prayer for God knows best what we need
5. We then see, vs. 8, that the praying man received what he needed (not what he

wanted but what “he needeth”) because of his “importunity”

- a) There is another passage in Luke 18:1-8 about an “unjust judge” and a widow that came to him and received what she asked for because of “her continual coming” – this is not to be compared to that – that is a whole other issue
- b) The word “importunity” means without shame, audacity, recklessness or disregard for consideration by the one making the request, boldness
- c) There are two illustrations in the Bible for this type of prayer – when Abraham prayed for Sodom (Gen. 18:23-33) and the Syro-Phoenecian women in asking Jesus to heal her daughter of the demon that plagued her. In both of these instances, it shows that God was there to hear and prepared to answer.
- d) The point of the parable is that in our prayer life, following the pattern set by Jesus’ own example and His teaching here, we are to be bold and persistent when we pray – we are not to quit praying no matter what. That doesn’t mean to keep praying about the same thing over and over – that means we are to be faithful in our prayer life, following the pattern set forth here, praying for those things that God wants us to pray for – and we are not to stop.

[1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)

¹⁷ Pray without ceasing.

E. So, put this all together, keeping this illustration within the context of the

prayer pattern (it is all one paragraph), we are to keep praying and realize that the God we are praying to is willing and waiting to help us and that if we don't receive the answer we were expecting then consider that an answer, of sorts, and change the prayer, but don't stop praying. God promises to answer – that's the next point.

III. THE PATTERN GUARANTEE – VS. 9-13

- A. The pattern given here has a promise to it – a guarantee, if you will – that if the pattern given here is followed, then we can be confident that we will have the answer to our prayer***
- B. The problem is that we don't follow the pattern that Jesus gave***
- C. Considering the previous point and illustration in the parable, our close fellowship and daily communication with God (the persistence in prayer) will allow us to call on Him in time of need and know His will in our prayer and we will receive what we ask for***
- D. This passage is very similar to what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 7:7-11 – I have previously preached on that passage but since it was over a year ago it will be good to refresh our minds on these verses – that message was entitled "The Elements of Prayer" – vs. 9***

1. The asking of prayer – "ask"

- a) This is the basic element of prayer – defining the need, desire, want, etc. first
- b) The definition of “ask” in this verse is a word that means to beg or call for, a request from an inferior of a superior – a child of a parent, a beggar from the giver, a man from God
- c) We must ask first, before we do anything else
- d) The tense of the verb here, as well as the words “seek” and “knock” are in a form that means this is something that once we start we are never to stop

2. The accuracy of prayer – “seek”

- a) This is the second element of prayer – seeking the Lord's will in the matter for which we are praying
- b) The word for “seek” is a simple one and simply means to look for
- c) We can have no power in our prayers until we know that it is God's will that we pray for what we are praying for
- d) This is the most important aspect of prayer – seeking the Holy Spirit in the matter

3. The attitude of prayer – “knock”

- a) The third element of prayer
- b) The word “knock” simply means to rap at a door for entrance
- c) How serious are we about what we want?

- d) This isn't about God showing His power by making us wait, but it is about Him showing to us that we need to be serious in what He wants us to pray for
- e) It shows that we are convinced that what we are praying for is going to come to pass, and nothing will keep us from getting what we ask for

E. The guarantee from verse 9, and the guarantee for the pattern of prayer that Jesus gave, illustrated by the boldness of the friend in need, is in verse 10 – if we ask, we'll receive; if we seek, we'll find; if we knock, it will be opened

F. That guarantee is then illustrated in verses 11-13

1. This is also a parable, of sorts (we know a parable, in one sense, when there are no names used, and when it is used to illustrate a point), as was the praying friend in verse 5-8
2. In this parable, or illustration, the general truth is that God is not some mean-spirited bully in the sky waiting to NOT answer our prayers to show His power, but is quite the opposite – a loving Father that is just waiting to help us when we need it
3. The issue here is that of the father providing for the needs of his children
 - a) The things mentioned – bread, fish and eggs – are indicative of things that are needed

- b) The daily bread spoken of in the pattern for prayer given
- c) God knows our needs before we ask but it is still part of the pattern to ask, not just to get those needed things but also (and more importantly for the believer) to recognize who it is we are to rely on for those needs

Matthew 6:8

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

- 4. Verse 13 then asks if we that are “evil” – that is, that are sinful by nature – know how to do good for our children, “how much more shall your heavenly Father” – it’s not a comparison to what we are like as much as it is to emphasize what He is like
- 5. “Give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him” – in Matt. 7:11 Jesus, in the previous discourse where He gave this, says “give good things”
 - a) If you put these two together – since this obviously the same teaching that Jesus gave there – you will find that the ultimate prayer life will go beyond asking for things (material and physical things either for ourselves or others) and will be that which invokes the “good things” of the “Holy Spirit” in our lives and the lives of others
 - b) This has nothing to do with the indwelling Spirit – we are promised that at salvation – we don’t need to pray for that. Nor is it the filling of the Spirit – that is something that we are to “do” (Eph. 5:18)

Ephesians 5:18

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

- c) This is speaking of praying for the “out-working” of the Spirit in our lives, the result being the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- d) The Apostle Paul prayed on several occasions that are recorded for us in the NT and in those prayers this is clearly seen. He didn't pray for things, he prayed for a greater work in the lives of those he was teaching – Phil. 1:9-11; Eph. 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Col. 1:9-12

Philippians 1:9-11

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Conclusion: The Bible has a great deal to say about prayer, and all of it can be summed up by this lesson on prayer that Jesus gave. If our prayer life isn't

following this passage – at the very least – then we are not going to have the right kind of fellowship that we need with our heavenly Father.

“We pray for certain things (money, healing, a job) and God does not answer. It may be that He cannot trust us with these things until our Christian character has grown. No father would give a child a sharp knife or a loaded gun, no matter how much the child begged. No mother would give her little daughter the keys to the family car or the privilege of playing in the medicine chest. God cannot put things in our hands until first He prepares our hearts. He uses things as tools to build our Christian character, not as toys to entertain and pamper us.”
(Warren Wiersbe, *Windows on the Parables*, pg. 74)