

Lord, Teach Us To Pray

Scripture: Luke 11:1-13

Objective: Appreciate the importance of prayer and choose to spend more time in conversation with God.

Golden Text:

Luke 11:9

9 "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. NIV

1. Introduction

- a. In our last lesson, Jesus officially called His 12 Apostles
 - i. In today's lesson, we see Him instructing them
 - ii. We get to sit at His feet with the 12 and learn what He taught them
 - iii. Luke records what he learned by interviewing the Apostles
 - iv. He describes for us an intimate session of instruction in the important subject of prayer
 1. There have been many books written on "How to pray"
 2. But this is the ultimate authority on the subject
- b. First, our martyrs of the week
 - i. This week we look at what is happening just north of our missionaries, brother and sister (Neil and Jennifer) Lawrence (of Kenya)
 - ii. We look at what is happening to Christians in Ethiopia
 1. Thousands of Christians have been driven from their homes in fear
 2. One has been killed and many others have been injured
 3. Muslims are rioting against them
 4. Hundreds of Muslims have been arrested
 5. All because a Christian was falsely accused of desecrating the Koran
 6. In a similar incident, a Christian was sentenced to jail for three years last November
 - a. It is said that he wrote the words "Jesus is Lord" on the pages of a Koran
 - b. He claims to have written it on a piece of cloth
 - c. The facts don't matter
 7. Tempers have been boiling for months
 - a. Christians have been hearing threats and rumors of murder plots against them
 8. Many have fled

- a. Although Muslims comprise only 33% of the population, in some areas they are 90%
- 9. Pray for the Christians of Ethiopia
- c. Now, let's turn to our lesson for today
- 2. Follow Christ's Pattern
 - a. The Learning Process

Luke 11:1

11:1 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." NIV

- i. In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus speaks to His disciples about prayer by contrasting it against two kinds of prayer
 - 1. The custom of the Pharisees
 - a. Arrogant and self appreciating prayer
 - b. On display in public places
 - i. In the synagogue
 - ii. Or on the street corner
 - c. Declaring their thanks that God had not made them
 - i. As the Gentiles
 - ii. Or as uneducated (Jews)
 - iii. Or as woman
 - d. Staking a claim or privilege
 - 2. The custom of the Gentiles
 - a. Long and flowery
 - b. Intended to impress God
 - c. Relying on the individual's spiritual insight and wisdom
 - 3. Here as in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus taught them to come before the Father in a conversational mode
 - a. Telling them to abandon the style and approach of the Pharisee or the Gentile
 - b. Seek out a private place for prayer
 - c. Speak the truth to God
 - d. Seek out the Father in prayer
 - e. Pray so as to
 - i. Acknowledge Who God s
 - ii. Acknowledge the holiness of God and by contrast our unrighteousness by confession
 - iii. Plead for His objectives and will to be accomplished and surrender to His rule
 - iv. Give thanks
 - v. Celebrate His glory, power and dominion

b. The Heavenly Father

Luke 11:2

2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come." NIV

2 And He said to them, When you pray, say: Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come. Your will be done [held holy and revered] on earth as it is in heaven. AMP

- i. You may notice a difference in the NIV and the King James
 1. I have also included the Amplified version
 2. The last part of this verse is not found in all of the Greek translations
- ii. By the time this narrative by Luke addresses this teaching session with the Apostles, Jesus' ministry has demonstrated many supernatural miracles
 1. Changing water into wine
 2. Demons cast out
 3. Impossible healings of a long list of diseases and human conditions
 4. Even raising the dead son of a widow
- iii. But as the public ministry of Jesus grows more and more impressive,
 1. the private life of Jesus begins to show an ever greater reliance on prayer,
 2. private prayer in seclusion
- iv. The disciples could not help but notice the correlation between prayer and spiritual power
 1. They had been witnesses to his consistency
 2. They knew that he resorted to a certain place
 3. They knew that he went there often
 4. They knew that he went there when it would have been more convenient to rest
 5. They knew that he came back from His prayer time rejuvenated and energized
- v. They began to ask Him for instruction in prayer
 1. They wanted to model themselves after Him
 2. This is a good thing we would do well to emulate
 3. It appears that Jesus actually waited until they asked before teaching them on this subject
 - a. He did not impose it on them
 - b. He chose to set them an example that drew them to the place where they wanted what He had
- vi. In the Jewish culture, the name of God is sacred
 1. They were forbidden to speak it out loud
 2. The person of God is viewed as unapproachable

3. The people are kept away from the meeting place with God
 - a. They are quite happy to keep it this way
 - b. Only the priest could approach God
 - c. Then only with fear and rigorous rituals of cleansing and preparation
4. When Moses returned from the mountain with his face aglow, they pleaded with him to cover it
 - a. They were afraid to look on one who had been in God's presence
 - b. The thought of being in God's presence terrified them
- vii. Jesus instructed them to think of prayer in terms of coming into the presence of their father
 1. This is a radical departure from all that they had been taught
 - a. Not only were they to approach God
 - b. But they were to find Him in a private place of their choosing, not the temple
 - i. Matthew 6:6
 - ii. Jesus told them to go into their private room and close the door

Matt 6:6

6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you NIV

- c. There were to be no elaborate rituals of cleansing and preparations
 - d. No ash and sackcloth
 - e. No special clothing
 - f. It was not to be exclusively for a select group of priests
2. Their Heavenly Father
 - a. Still reserved in a place they could not approach
 - b. Still aloft
 - c. Yet, very much their Father
3. But a father whose name was still holy and sacred
4. A father who is also king.
 - a. In possession of His own domain
 - b. Above all and answering to none
5. In the same breath that we invoke this relationship (Father) we acknowledge His sovereignty
6. Considering what we are and who He is
 - a. This relationship should not seem possible

- b. That the holy king over the cosmos should choose to be our parent
- c. That He would even acknowledge us as sons
- d. Considering His perfection and our imperfection
- e. His power and our powerlessness
- f. This part of the prayer speaks to us as much as it speaks to Him
 - i. Assuring us
 - ii. Lifting us
 - iii. At the same time humbling us

c. Provision and Protection

Luke 11:3-4

3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation." NIV

- i. The prayer moves through three different focus areas
 - 1. Personal needs
 - 2. Others needs
 - 3. Moral purity
- ii. The first part of this portion of the prayer reflects on God's provision of manna to Israel
 - 1. There was no other source of sustenance for them
 - 2. They were completely dependent
 - 3. It was enough
 - 4. It was there every say without fail
 - 5. This association speaks to trust
 - a. The Apostles were to trust the Father as Israel was suppose to trust Him
 - b. He was always trustworthy
 - 6. It was daily bread
 - a. Not weekly
 - b. Not monthly
 - c. Just as their prayer communion was to be daily
 - d. A source to sustain them
- iii. This part of the prayer speaks to the necessity of dealing with the sin that separates us from God
 - 1. We are ever in need of forgiveness because of our imperfection
 - 2. And God has made provision for this by graciously transferring our guilt to an innocent who pays the price for us
 - a. In their case, they were still looking to the Passover Lamb
 - b. They did not know that Jesus would become their Passover Lamb

- c. We know that Jesus has borne our guilt and suffered our death
 - 3. For this reason we can come before the Father and ask Him for forgiveness with an expectation of being forgiven
- iv. In this part the focus shifts to others and how we are to reciprocate (to God) by forgiving those (others) who owe us
 - 1. Whether it is by an offence
 - 2. Or those who make themselves to be our enemies
 - 3. Or any claim or right we may justly assert against another
 - 4. We are to drop it, just let it go
 - 5. By putting it into the prayer, we make this behavior a part of our relationship with the Father
- v. The last part of this prayer has to do with our persistence in faith in walking the walk, our moral purity
 - 1. The fact remains that we are in the flesh
 - 2. The flesh is a source of temptation to us
 - 3. James explains how this works:

James 1:13-15

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. NIV

- 4. Our devotion to God is continually challenged by temptation
- 5. This prayer is intended to focus us on the lead of God
 - a. Which takes us away from sin
 - b. Jesus was showing them a walk that lead away from their sinful past
 - c. We are to desire to follow this new walk as well
 - d. It starts with admission of our sins
 - e. It is sustained by recognition of our need for continual cleansing fellowship with God

1 John 1:7-9

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. NIV

- f. This is why regular, frequent prayer is so vital
- 3. Persist In Prayer
 - a. A Poignant Parable

Luke 11:5-7

5 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, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 "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. NIV

- i. The urgency of the circumstance in this parable is lost on us
 1. Our culture does not place the emphasis on hospitality that the middle eastern cultures do
 2. Perhaps because of the desperate necessity of life in this primitive environment
 3. The obligations of hospitality were profound
 - a. Every man felt an absolute obligation to be hospitable
 - b. This meant that every traveler could rely on strangers for assistance
 - c. It meant that every man with any mean must be responsive when the occasion arises.
 - ii. The utility of the parable as a teaching tool for the apostles was great
 1. Jesus uses their sensibility towards the customs around hospitality to teach them about the efficacy of prayer
 2. The circumstance His parable describes is tense
 3. The host is caught without means
 4. The friendship with the neighbor is pitted against the obligation towards the traveling friend
 5. The tension is deliberate
 - a. Jesus is using it to communicate deep truths about God's response to our prayers
 - b. The unresponsiveness of the neighbor brings familiar secret thoughts to the surface
 6. There are many prayers we have prayed that seemed to go unanswered
 - a. Who among us wants to admit this?
 - b. Even to ourselves
 - c. It is a source of tempting doubt
 7. The parable forces us to come to grips with this reality
 8. There are many times when we think God has answered as the neighbor did
- "Don't bother me. The door is already locked," (Luke 11:7)*
9. So what **do we do, just go away?**
 10. Or **do we persist** in pleading and insisting that our human friend and neighbor assist us in this important matter?

b. Human Versus Divine Hospitality

Luke 11:8

8 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. NIV

- i. The tension of the parable brings the student to the conclusion that persistence is proper and effective
- ii. The friendship is a sound basis for persistence
- iii. The relationship forms a context that enables and empowers the one in need to insist
- iv. The result is an uncomfortable but effective form of motivation

4. Expect God's Best

a. Prayer Proverb

Luke 11:9-10

9 "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. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. NIV

- i. We have a relationship with the Father that forms a context that enables and empowers us to ask
- ii. Since we are not asking man who is limited in what he can do
- iii. We are asking God who has no limits
- iv. If we are following the model for prayer that Jesus has just taught, what we ask for will fit into a framework
 1. Honoring God the Father
 2. Seeking our needs
 3. Seeking to fulfill the needs of others
 4. Seeking moral purity
 5. Celebrating God's glory, power and dominion
- v. Every prayer we may have occasion to pray can follow this model
- vi. Our relationship with the Father justifies the kind of persistence displayed in the parable
- vii. In teaching this truth, Jesus gave His apostles a catch phrase that helped them to understand and memorize the truth
 1. Seek
 2. Knock
 3. Ask
 4. Receive
 5. The door will be opened
- viii. The mysteries of God are opened to the believer who persistently pursues God

b. The Goodness of God

Luke 11:11-13

11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 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!" NIV

- i. Jesus takes the truth in the teaching to a new level
- ii. This passage has to do with the faithfulness of God in His answer
- iii. We may not receive what we have asked for when we pray
 1. Instead, we may get what we need
 2. This is the irony of our relationship
- iv. We ask in our imperfection
- v. God answers in His perfection
- vi. The highest prayer we can pray is for the Holy Spirit
 1. This will bring us into communion with the Father
 2. It is the will of the Father and the Son that we the Holy Spirit
 3. It is the will of the Father and the Son that we ask
- vii. The clear message of this teaching of Jesus is that we should be asking and expecting for God to give us His Spirit