

## Wednesday Evening Bible Study

September 11, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

*Teach Us to Pray*

Topics – Luke 11:1 - 13; The Lord's Prayer; The Model Prayer; teaching on prayer

Text – Luke 11:1 - 13

Congregational Reading – Luke 11:1 - 13

### Introduction (v. 1)

We turn now to a passage in Luke's Gospel, which will instruct us regarding our prayer life.

#### Illustration

When all else fails, read the instructions.

I have lived the better part of my life by that little axiom and, to be perfectly honest, it usually works for me. Boxes labeled "Some Assembly Required" don't intimidate me; I rarely have any trouble figuring things out for myself. Occasionally, however, I get in over my head and need help.

One Christmas Eve, after the kids were tucked away, I dragged a box from its hiding place, unpacked and arranged all the parts, and began assembling a kit with the cool efficiency of a surgeon. The pieces came together with ease as the finished product started to take shape—at least as I had it in my mind's eye. In time, however, it became obvious that the work of my hands didn't look like the product on the box. With dawn approaching, I admitted my failure and then searched for the instructions in the trash. Humbled and teachable, I started reading from the top of the page where, to my dismay, a sarcastic sage had written in very small, inoffensive type, "Now that you have made a mess of things, please start over and follow these instructions."

After over fifty years in pastoral ministry, I can say with confidence that most people approach life the same way: "When all else fails, pray." It is part of our fallen, selfish, proud disposition to do things our way, and only when the consequences of failure overwhelm us do we seek help.<sup>1</sup>

I think we can all relate to that story. We often neglect prayer until the bottom falls out in our life, and then we are literally screaming to Heaven for God's help.

We are not given the geographical location in the text, but it is possible that this teaching on prayer in the first thirteen verses in chapter eleven took place in or near Bethany, which is where we last left Jesus at the home of Mary and Martha at the end of chapter 10.

Jesus was practicing prayer in the presence of His disciples. Note – Jesus was not publicly praying here, but because His disciples travelled with Him, they would often observe Jesus in more personal and private moments.

Illustrate – Men's Retreat – the men spend time together, sleeping in the same bunkhouse, or in the same room. We see each other's private habits.

Notice here that disciples are observing Him, and want to model what He was doing. They often observed Jesus in communion with His Father, and they wanted to learn to be able to do that as well.

They cite John the Baptist as another example, stating that John had also taught his disciples how to pray.

### I. The Model for Prayer (vs. 2 – 4)

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<sup>1</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Luke* (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 3) (p. 314). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

Jesus teaches the disciples the model prayer, which is also found in Matthew 6:9 – 13. This is commonly called the Lord’s Prayer, but in this prayer we do not see Jesus actually praying to His Father, but rather, He is giving His disciples a pattern for praying that they can use in their prayer time. (Note – a good example of Jesus praying for His disciples can be found in John 17.

In this model prayer, we can see certain principles that should be included in our prayer time as well.

#### A. The Principles of Worship and Praise (v. 2)

When we pray, let us be sure to begin by worshipping God – “hallowed be thy name,” praising God, and thanking God.

1. We worship God for Who He is. These traits about God are often referred as His attributes. Some of God’s attributes are incommunicable or natural, meaning that they belong only to Him. These include:

#### Natural Attributes (from Doctrinal Synopsis Paper)

**God is omniscient**, or all knowing. He is infinite in his knowledge, and is not bound by barriers of time (Isaiah 40:28; 46:9, 10; Job 11:7, 8; 37:16; Psalm 147:5; 1 John 3:20; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Romans 11:33). God dwells outside of time, but can enter into it to. God knows everything about nature, history, and human experience.

**God is omnipotent**, or all-powerful. He is all-powerful in both the natural world (Genesis 1:1-3; Nahum 1:6, 7) as well as within the spirit realm (Job 1:12; Luke 22:31, 32; Revelation 20:12; Daniel 4:35; Hebrews 1:14). God’s omnipotence is only limited by His other attributes. For example, God cannot lie, sin, deny Himself, or do anything absurd or contradictory to Himself, like *make a rock too big for Him to lift*. Omnipotence also is an indication of sovereignty. He created all things, and sustains (Colossians 1:17) or upholds all things (Hebrews 1:3). God’s sovereignty over His creatures does not, however, negate the free will that they possess. God could certainly force His will, but chooses rather to give men choices. Yet, He still sovereignly works out His will through the free choices of man. It takes an infinitely big and powerful God to do that. Spurgeon stated: “God is a Sovereign, and of all attributes, next to his love, God is the most fond of displaying his sovereignty.”<sup>2</sup>

**God is omnipresent**, or everywhere present. This does not mean that God is everything as the pantheist believes, but He is everywhere. God is infinite in relation to space. (Jeremiah 23:23, 24; Psalm 139:7-12; Ephesians 1:23; Acts 17:24-28; Matthew 28:20; Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13)

**God is eternal**. He is without beginning or end. Humans will exist forever in the future, but everything, save God, had a moment in time when they began to exist. God is immortal, which means there was never a time when He did not exist. (I Timothy 1:17; 6:16). Nor will there ever be a time when He ceases to exist (Isaiah 43:10).

**God is immutable**, or unchangeable (Malachi 3:6). He does not need to change, because He is already perfect (Malachi 3:6; I Samuel 15:29; Psalm 102:26, 27; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8; Isaiah 40:28; Hebrews 7:24, 25). From a human perspective, the attribute of immutability is very important and also comforting as it ensures that God will not change in any of His other attributes. For example, He will never change His mind about loving.

The Bible does, however, record that God “repented” (Genesis 6:6; Jonah 3:10). The word, “repent,” has sometimes been defined as “the changing of one’s mind.” However, since God is sovereign, His plan has

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<sup>2</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, *“The Two Talents,”* in The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons, vol. 4 (London; Glasgow: Passmore & Alabaster; James Paul; George John Stevenson; George Gallie, 1858), 82.

not actually changed, but only the unfolding of His plan as seen from our perspective has changed. "In other words, God's "repentance" is only from our viewpoint; therefore, it is only apparent repentance as His eternal and unchanging plan is worked out in history."<sup>3</sup>

**God is self-existent.** God did not cause Himself. God is the uncaused, first cause. He is the Necessary being. God is completely independent of anything but Himself. God is self-sustaining (Colossians 1:17). He is the "I AM," or self-existent One (Exodus 3:14; John 5:26; Romans 11:33-35).

God also has communicable moral attributes, which can be communicated to man.

### The Moral Attributes

The moral attributes of God are the attributes, which are relative to man. These are the attributes that are communicable and thus, can also be seen in man (albeit imperfectly). These attributes can be divided into three broad categories: holiness, love, and truth.

**God is holy** (Leviticus 20:7; 1 Peter 1:16). His holiness can be clearly see in His hatred for sin (Hab. 1:13; Job 34:10; Pro. 6:16), and his delight for that which is holy (Proverbs 15:9). God's holiness is also manifested in His perfect justice, which includes both rewards and retribution (1 Sam. 2:3; Ps. 97:2; Zeph. 3:5; Deut. 32:4; Micah 6:8). His holiness is also visible in His righteousness (Ps. 116:5; 145:17; Jer. 12:1; Jn. 17:25), and wrath (Ps. 7:11; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 1:18).

**God is love** (1 John 4:8; John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; 4:16; Matthew 5:45). God loves His Son (Matthew 3:17; John 5:20; 17:23, 24), the believer (John 16:27), and the sinner (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). God's love can be seen in His mercy (Psalm 103:8; Ephesians 2:4; Luke 1:50, 72; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Titus 3:5), grace (Ephesians 1:6, 7; 2:7 - 9; Titus 2:11; 3:4 - 7), longsuffering (2 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 2:4), goodness (Romans 8:32; John 16:27; Psalm 25:6; 52:1), and faithfulness (Deuteronomy 7:9; Isaiah 11:5; Psalm 36:5; Lamentations 3:22, 23; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 10:23; 2 Corinthians 1:20; James 1:17; 1 Peter 4:19). God's love does not negate His attributes of justice or holiness, however. Love sometimes will have to punish.<sup>4</sup>

2. We praise and thank God for what He has done for us.

Think about all the Lord has done for you since you got up this morning. He fed you, clothed you, and housed you; He protected you; etc.

#### B. The Principle of Petition (v. 3)

1. Ask for things pertaining to His Kingdom
2. Ask for the needs of others
3. Ask for your own needs

#### C. The Principle of Propitiation (v. 4)

This has to do with the cleansing of sin through confession. Confession should be done as soon as a sin is committed, but during your private prayer time it would be wise to confess (and forsake) any unconfessed sin.

*"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."* (1 John 1:8-10)

#### D. The Principle of Protection (v. 4)

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<sup>3</sup> Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

This is really part of our petition, but we also must recognize our dependence on God's protection.

1. We need to be protected from the evil within ourselves.
2. We need to be protected from the evil that wants to hurt us from without.

## II. The Model for Persistence (vs. 5 – 8)

Jesus now gives a parable to illustrate the need for persistence in prayer. He gives another parable illustrating this truth in Luke 18:1 – 8:

*"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"*

## III. The Mandate for Persistence (vs. 9 – 10)

Now, Jesus gives us the principle supporting the Parable. The verbs used in these verses are in the "present tense, active voice, and imperative mood." It carries the idea of continuing to ask, seek, and knock until you receive the request.

*"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." (James 4:2)*

Keep asking until God answers your prayer (yes or no); or changes your request.

"I am persuaded that we are all more deficient in a spirit of prayer than in any other grace. God loves importunate prayer so that he will not give us much blessing without it. And the reason that He loves such prayer is that He loves us and knows that it is a necessary preparation for our receiving the richest blessings that He is waiting and longing to bestow." (Adoniram Judson)

## IV. The Middle (Central, Underlying) Principle (vs. 11 – 13)

We serve a good God who loves us and wants to give us good things. God loves you. He wants to bless you. Just ask Him.