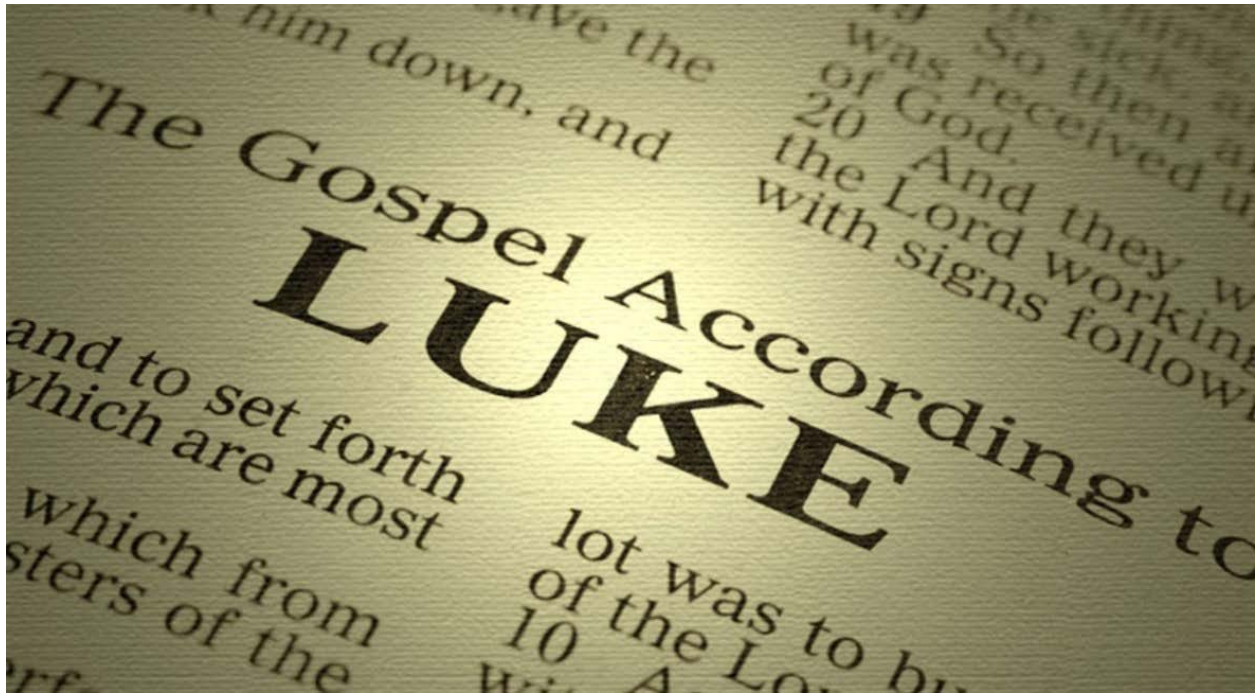


Luke 11, Part 1



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Luke 11, Part 1
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Introduction to Luke 11.1-13

Jesus taught that prayer can lift us to the heights of majesty and holiness, enwrap us in glory and mystery, unveil the vast sweep of Kingdom life, survey all the blessings of God, commit all our needs to Him, and remind us of His grace and of our need to be gracious to others. Prayer should be engaged with such a sense of urgency and constancy that praying without ceasing and in the fullness of joy becomes the norm.

We must get this right. What we need above all else is communion with our heavenly Father, in the Name of His Son and our Savior, and in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

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We hope you find this study of the gospel of Luke instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Learning to Pray

Pray Psalm 25.4, 5.

Show me Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You *are* the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

Sing Psalm 25.4, 5.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

Make me to know Your ways, teach me Your paths, O Lord!
My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Read and meditate on Luke 11.1.

Preparation

1. What did the disciple ask Jesus to do?
2. What prompted him to ask this?

Meditation

Is it possible that this disciple had never prayed before? Not likely. But he seemed to think that he and his colleagues needed some additional instruction. They saw John teaching his disciples to pray, and they had been with Jesus and watched Him pray – as in this instance – many times before. They must have felt that, compared to how Jesus prayed, and even John’s disciples, something was missing in their “prayer life”.

So it is with all of us. Prayer does not come naturally to us. We must learn to pray, and the precondition for learning to pray is *wanting* to learn to pray, like this disciple. Only God can teach us to pray, and He may use a variety of means to help us improve in this most foundational Christian practice. Jesus’ example and teaching provide the core curriculum on prayer, and here in the first part of Luke 11 we get to sit in on one of His most extensive teachings on this subject.

We can learn much about prayer from Luke 11.1-13. Our prayer life can be richer, more satisfying, more filled with the sense of Jesus’ Presence, more brimming with Holy Spirit power, more consistent and constant, more resolute and complete, and more infectious if we will pay careful attention through the next 12 verses of this chapter.

But first we must ask ourselves: Do we want to learn to pray? Or are we, like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day, content with our prayers being customary, ritualistic, and perfunctory? When it comes to prayer, this is one of the most important areas where we need to “hear Him”.

Do you want to?

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

Yes, we do. We all long to “hear Him” teach us how to pray.

We want our prayers to elicit the same response in our own hearts, as the two on the road to Emmaus experienced in theirs, while talking with Jesus: “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (Lk. 24.32)

Communion with the Lord in prayer is found in the Word of God, guided by the Spirit of God. And in that

time of communication, we are infused with the power to live out His will in our Personal Mission Field—the power to discern His will, the desire to learn His Law, and the gift of faith to serve Him to the end (Ps. 119.112).

As the hymnwriter penned:

*More about Jesus let me learn, more of His holy will discern;
Spirit of God, my teacher be, showing the things of Christ to me.*

*More about Jesus; in His Word, holding communion with my Lord;
Hearing His voice in every line, making each faithful saying mine.
(Eliza E. Hewitt, 1887)*

We have the words of young Samuel to guide our request as we seek to learn more about prayer: “Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears” (1 Sam. 3.10).

“Teach us to pray” (Lk. 11.1).

For reflection

1. What would you like to learn more about or better where prayer is concerned?
2. What’s the best part of your prayer life at this time?
3. How can believers help one another to pray more and pray better?

I think that one of Jesus’ disciples was conscious in himself of human weakness, which falls short of knowing how we ought to pray... Are we then to conclude that a man who was brought up in the instruction of the law, who heard the words of the prophets and did not fail to attend the synagogue, did not know how to pray until he saw the Lord praying “in a certain place”? It would certainly be foolish to say this. The disciple prayed according to the customs of the Jews, but he saw that he needed better knowledge about the subject of prayer. Origen (185-254), On Prayer 2.4

Pray Psalm 25.11-18.

Pray that the Lord will give you a greater and more constant sense of His Presence in your life, and that this will encourage you to seek Him more consistently in prayer.

Sing Psalm 25.11-18.

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

For Your sake, Lord, forgive. All they who fear You, Lord,
shall know Your blessings day by day and follow in Your Word.

Your friends are they who fear and seek Your holy face;
Your covenant with them You share and save them by Your grace.

Be gracious, Lord, to me; my heart is weighed with woe.
My troubles and affliction see; let my transgressions go.

2 Prayer Matrix

Pray Psalm 72.7-11.

In His days the righteous shall flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him,
And His enemies will lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and of the isles
Will bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba
Will offer gifts.
Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;
All nations shall serve Him.

Sing Psalm 72.7-11.

(Martyrdom: *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*)

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures.
Let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low.
Let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

Read Luke 11.1, 2; meditate on verse 2.

Preparation

1. How should we pray concerning God?
2. How should we pray concerning the Kingdom of God?

Meditation

Jesus' teaching in prayer begins with rote memorization: "When you pray, say..." So important, so comprehensive, and so fraught with power are these next few words, that Jesus commands our saying them just as He has given them.

This does not mean we do not embellish and enlarge on these words, only that we do not omit them. Setting God's Name apart for honor and glory and majesty (Greek: ἁγιασθήτω *hagiastheto* – "let it be sanctified"), and seeking the advance of His Kingdom on earth are not just the way to *open* our prayers. These provide the footprint, the foundation, even the matrix for all our prayers. All prayer is to be directed upward to God, so that all our prayers must be ultimately intended to exalt His Name, celebrate His attributes, enlarge our vision of Him, and strengthen our faith in and love for Him.

At the same time, all our prayers must likewise be Kingdom prayers, prayers that seek above all else the Kingdom and glory of God (1 Thess. 2.12) through the progress of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14.17, 18), beginning in ourselves and our Personal Mission Field.

Think of your prayers not as a list but as a spreadsheet or matrix. All the columns point upward to honor and glorify God. All the rows point forward, for the progress of the Kingdom. Whatever your prayers may be, let them fall within this framework. Glorify and honor God and seek His Kingdom and righteousness in every

prayer, for every person or need, and at every opportunity.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

This Prayer Matrix is not a movie, nor is it a mathematical chart, but it is a situation within which something else originates, develops, or is contained. And that would be how our proper prayer originates, develops, and is contained in our hearts and minds for the purpose of communicating with our heavenly, hallowed, sanctified, and perfect Father.

As we are communicating with Him, we seek first and foremost His Kingdom and His perfect will. We desire nothing more than that His will be done here on earth, in our lives, as it is always done in heaven.

It is often helpful to put ourselves in perspective as we adopt a healthy attitude toward someone else. In this case, that Someone is God. Paul, in his discourse on human relationships, speaks a word to employers and their employees. He states, “And you, master, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him” (Eph. 6.9). He reiterates the same in Colossians 4.1, “Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.” In both cases, the point being, we are to be kind to others because we have a Master in heaven who is kind to us and expects much from us. “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good” (Prov. 15.3). This is a helpful reminder as we seek fervently to hallow His name through our obedience to Him (Ex. 20.1-17).

Knowing Who He is also puts this prayer in a proper perspective. King Nebuchadnezzar had a refreshing view of God after his foray into the animal kingdom and his repentance and restoration. He recalled: “And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and His kingdom is from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
and among the inhabitants of the earth.

No one can restrain His hand or say to Him,
‘What have You done?’....

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven,
all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice.
And those who walk in pride He is able to put down” (Dan. 4.34, 35, 37).

You God, are Hallowed and Holy.

Let Your Kingdom come to rule in everyone and everywhere.

Let Your will be done throughout Your creation.

Just like it is majestically done constantly and eternally in heaven. (Lk. 11.2)

“Arise, O LORD, do not let man prevail; let the nations be judged in Your sight.

Put them in fear, O LORD, that the nations may know themselves to be but men” (Ps. 9.19, 20).

For reflection

1. What do we mean by saying verse 2 provides a “matrix” for our prayers?

2. How does the Kingdom of God come on earth as it is in heaven?

3. What can you do to make sure the will of God is the guiding force in every aspect of your life?

Therefore it is prayed here that the name of God might be hallowed by everyone together; that is, that it might be recognized by

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everyone everywhere that it is most just and perfect, and that by virtue of such it might be held and announced. Its excellence is so lofty, superior and more than wonderful that nothing may be united to it. François Lambert (1487-1530), *Commentary on Luke 11.5*

Pray Psalm 72.15-20.

Pray for the Kingdom of God to come on earth – in you and through you and throughout the world– so that righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit will increase unto the praise and glory of Jesus Christ.

Sing Psalm 72.15-20.

(Martyrdom: *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*)

Let Christ be praised and all the gold of Sheba be His right.

Let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

And let the earth abound with grain, let fields His fame proclaim.

And may our King forever reign and nations bless His great Name.

Now bless the God of Israel Who wondrous works performs.

And bless His Name, His glory tell both now and forevermore!

3 Give, Forgive, and Keep

Pray Psalm 147.1-3.

Praise the LORD!

For *it is* good to sing praises to our God;

For *it is* pleasant, *and* praise is beautiful.

The LORD builds up Jerusalem;

He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.

He heals the brokenhearted

And binds up their wounds.

Sing Psalm 147.1-3.

(St. Ann: *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the Lord!

With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The Lord builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.

The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

Read Luke 11.1-4; meditate on verses 3, 4.

Preparation

1. What should we seek from the Lord?

2. What is required of us as part of that seeking?

Meditation

Let's remember that the general overall thrust of prayer is upward and onward – upward, to praise and honor and glorify God in whatever we pray; and onward to further His Kingdom and will on earth as in heaven.

So when we ask the Lord for our “daily bread” – the gracious provision of all our material needs – we do so that we might praise and thank Him the more and use every good gift He provides to further His rule of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. If we fail to give thanks for God's daily bread, we short-circuit that aspect of our prayers, for the grace God grants us in His every good and perfect gift to make us more thankful and worshipful (2 Cor. 4.15). And if we do not use those gifts to further His Kingdom, then we will consume them upon ourselves and make them into idols.

Likewise, when we seek forgiveness of sins, it is that we might exalt the Lord for His goodness and love and, in so doing, be better equipped to forgive those who have sinned against us. The burden of sin lifted and the grace of God at work for restoration, the glory of God will be manifest, and His rule will advance in and through us.

And of course the purpose of the evil one is to deny praise to God and to thwart the progress of His Kingdom. The devil leads us into temptation, as we saw in Luke 4; God sustains and keeps us when temptation arises, that we might grow through temptation into more of the likeness of Christ, rather than fall through it into sin and disobedience.

Whatever God gives, whenever He forgives, and as often as He keeps us, it is that He might be praised and His rule might advance in and through us.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Give us day by day our daily bread.”

“Forgive our sins.”
“We forgive others.”
“Keep us from evil.”

To give is to freely transfer the possession of something to someone, and to cause or allow someone or something to have something. As God graciously and daily sustains us.

To forgive is to cancel a debt. An additional definition is to cease to feel resentment toward someone else.

Since God does not feel resentment, our forgiveness of others shouldn't have anything to do with our feelings either; but rather everything to do with appreciation to God for the complete forgiveness He bestows upon us (Rom. 5.8). We, too, must cancel the debt of the perpetrators in our own lives. Feelings aside. It is a business transaction between us and God which has very little to do with the people who hurt and abuse us.

God cancels our huge debts. We cancel, likewise, the debt of others. All those extraneous feelings will simply wear us out and are clearly not a godly characteristic.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities...” (Ps. 103.2, 3). Forgiven.
“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1.9). Forgiven.

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4.32). We must forgive.

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (Col. 3.13). We must forgive.

In the midst of these intense dealings with God about His forgiveness of us and our required forgiveness of others, His pervasive grace and mercy permeate the whole: He keeps and sustains us to do His work.

“The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season.
You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.
The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.
The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth” (Ps. 145.15-18).

Give. Forgive. And “keep...in perfect peace, [those] whose mind is stayed on You, because [they] trust in You” (Ps. 26.3). And they also do what You require (Ps. 119.166).

For reflection

1. Why is it so important to give thanks to God for all our “daily bread”? What are we saying to Him if we don't?
2. If we don't forgive others who sin against us, should we expect God to forgive us? Explain.
3. When temptation confronts you, how can you find a way of escape into the safe keeping of the Lord?

In many places in Scripture we are commanded to cast all our cares on God, and he promises most liberally on his part that we shall want for nothing. Therefore in the exact rule for prayer, it was necessary that a request concerning the innumerable necessities of this present life should also be commanded. Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), An Ecclesiasticall Exposition upon Saint Mathewe 6.8

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Pray Psalm 147.6-13.

Thank and praise the Lord for all His daily blessings. Make a point to thank and praise Him throughout the day as He brings His blessings to mind.

Sing Psalm 147.6-13.

(St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past)

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.

Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

He brings refreshing rain to earth and feeds the beasts so dear.

He puts in man's strength naught of worth, but loves those who God fear.

O praise your God, Jerusalem, O Zion, praise the Lord!

He strengthens those who trust in Him with blessings from His Word.

4 Persist

Pray Psalm 55.16-19.

As for me, I will call upon God,
And the LORD shall save me.
Evening and morning and at noon
I will pray, and cry aloud,
And He shall hear my voice.
He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me,
For there were many against me.
God will hear, and afflict them,
Even He who abides from of old.

Sing Psalm 55.16-19.

(Bread of Life: *Break Thou the Bread of Life*)

Lord, I will call on You, answer and save! Noon, morning, evening too, my voice I raise.
Grant me Your peace, O Lord; answer my foes! All who reject God's Word He overthrows.

Read Luke 11.1-8; meditate on verses 5-8.

Preparation

1. Who does Jesus encourage in these verses?
2. What does He promise?

Meditation

One of my favorite passages on persistence in prayer is from Isaiah 62.6, 7:

I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;
They shall never hold their peace day or night.
You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent (literally, "take no rest"),
And give Him no rest till He establishes
And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Jesus may well have had these verses in mind as He instructed His disciples about persistence in prayer. Prayer is an act of faith and an act of obedience. Our heavenly Father delights to find each of these in us, so it's no wonder Jesus encourages us to "stay at it" when it comes to prayer. Later, He will say we should not "lose heart" in praying (Lk. 18.1). Persistence in prayer will mean persistence in sanctifying the Name of the Lord and in seeking the progress of His Kingdom.

God is not "troubled" by our persistence. He knows that prayer is an excellent exercise for keeping focused on Him and the Kingdom and for strengthening our soul. He also knows that prayer is the best way to realize and enjoy His Presence. Prayer, in short, is good for us. Yes, it can be hard work, given the frailty of our flesh and the many distractions that come at us continually. But the more we pray, the stronger we grow in thoughts about God, love for Him, and the values and priorities of His Kingdom. And the more we can know the holy pleasure of peace and joy that come from being in His Presence (Ps. 16.10).

So isn't it great to know we have a heavenly Father Who doesn't say, "Don't bother Me with your petty requests!?" How glorious, comforting, and encouraging to have as our Father Him Who says instead, "Bother me all day long. I love you."

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Prayer is a lot like forgiveness. Feelings should not be involved. It is an “act of faith and an act of obedience.”

To prove this point, Jesus was using two friends as the characters for His story. Friends should feel something for one another. Right? Maybe love, or concern, or empathy? But no, this friend’s care level was very low. He did not feel enough of anything to crawl out of bed to get his friend a loaf or two of bread. But because his friend was persistent, nagging, irritating, and downright obnoxious he got up and met his need for sustenance.

We mustn’t think that God sees us in this way; but because of the exaggeration of these characters, we clearly get the point. Persistence pays off. Diligence in prayer is an admired quality. Laziness in prayer is as unacceptable as it is in the rest of our lives. As Solomon wrote:

“Because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks” (Eccl. 10.18).

“The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor” (Prov. 21.25).

“The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth” (Prov. 26.15).

“Why is there in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom, since he has no heart for it?” (Prov. 17.16).

“The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man’s precious possession” (Prov. 12.27).

Laziness in any endeavor is never a good look. However, diligence and persistence in prayer will be well-pleasing to God. It is what He is looking for in us. We have been given free rein to be as irritating, nagging, and obnoxious as we can possibly manage; and really, how often does that opportunity come along?

“And let us not grow weary while doing good [and while being faithful, obedient, persistent, and diligent persons of prayer], for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Gal. 6.9). “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks...” (1 Thess. 5.16-18). Positively persistently!

“For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5.18). To persist!

For reflection

1. What do you think persistence in prayer should look like in your life?
2. What obstacles can keep you from being persistent in prayer? How can you overcome these?
3. How can believers encourage one another to be persistent in prayer?

Christ encourages fervency and constancy in prayer. We must come for what we need, as a man does to his neighbor or friend, who is kind to him. We must come for bread; for that which is needful. If God does not answer our prayers speedily, yet he will in due time, if we continue to pray. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 11.5-8

Pray Psalm 55.20-23.

Bring your trials, doubts, and fears to the Lord in prayer. Cast them on all Him, and call on Him to give you the strength you’ll need today, that you might not be moved from Him.

Sing Psalm 55.20-23.

(Bread of Life: *Break Thou the Bread of Life*)

Many assail, O Lord, many betray. See how they draw their sword across my way.

Take up my burden, Lord; strengthen and bless! Let judgment by Your Word their souls distress.

5 The Promise of Persistence

Pray Psalm 13.1, 2.

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
Having sorrow in my heart daily?
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

Sing Psalm 13.1, 2.

(Melita: *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*)

How long, O Lord, O Lord, how long will You forget me and my song?
How long will You conceal Your face and keep from me Your precious grace?
How long must I my soul consult? When shall my weary heart exult?

Read Luke 11.1-12; meditate on verses 9-12.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus say we should do in prayer?
2. What did He promise?

Meditation

Jesus enlarges on His previous teaching about being persistent in prayer by using three verbs to extend and clarify His meaning.

“Ask” is the first, by which we make our requests known to the Lord. “Seek” extends ask, for example, by our coming at the Lord with the same question expressed in various ways, or by doing so at different times of the day. “Knock” suggests making a noise to announce our presence and be granted entry into the dwelling-place of God.

Each of these is a further elaboration of the idea of praying with persistence. And note the promises: They who ask will receive; those who seek will find; to those who knock “it will be opened” (v. 10). Jesus does not say precisely *what* we will receive, find, or gain entry to. The emphasis is on assuring us that God will hear and reply to our persistence in prayer.

As we will see in verse 13, Jesus leaves to the last point in His teaching that which clarifies what we must seek through persistence in prayer and what we may expect to receive. In verses 9-12 He wants us to be greatly exercised in prayer, looking upward and striving onward in all things at all times. God will teach us how to pray and what to expect, but only as we persist in asking, seeking, and knocking in prayer.

This makes prayer, which is the quintessential Christian discipline, also one of the most important learning environments in the life of faith. For the more we persist in these ways, the more God will strengthen our practice of prayer, and we will come to know what is proper to seek and expect from Him. Thus, our prayers will become both more consistent and more fruitful as we persist in seeking what God promises to give us in prayer.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD...” (Is. 1.18).

And Jesus is inviting us to do the same.

He asked: What father, when asked, would give his child a stone to eat instead of bread? Or a serpent in place of a bite of fish? Or a scorpion as a substitute for a scrambled egg?

If we carefully reason that question out, we most assuredly will come up with the answer: “Well, no loving father would do that to his beloved child”.

So we know with assurance, through careful reason: this is how our Father in heaven hears and answers our prayers.

Thus, we add our voices with the psalmist:

“Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name!

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:

Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

The LORD executes justice for all who are oppressed.

He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.

He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.

For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”

“But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them” (Ps. 103.1-14, 17, 18).

We will start with persistent thankfulness and praise for a plate full of bread, fish, and eggs!

For reflection

1. God knows how best to answer our prayers. Does that mean He will always answer them the way we might like? Explain.
2. What are the keys to persisting in prayer? That is, what do we need to do to become more persistent in prayer?
3. How do you expect God to answer your prayers?

By this eloquent sentence Christ exhorts us to diligent devotion in prayer, promising that God will very graciously listen to our prayers of supplication and those which are beneficial for our salvation will be satisfied superabundantly. Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), Commentary on Luke 11:9.15

Pray Psalm 13.3-6.

Praise God for His constant care. Rejoice in His Presence with you always. Offer this day to Him for His glory, and declare your trust in Him for all you do.

Sing Psalm 13.3-6.

(Melita: *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*)

Exalt not, Lord, my enemy; Lord, hear my prayer and answer me!

Give light unto my weary eyes; let not death claim me for its prize.

Let not my foe rejoice to say that I have fallen in the way.

Luke 11, Part 1

Yet I have trusted, Lord, in You; Your lovingkindness sees me through.
My heart breaks forth in happy voice; in Your salvation I rejoice!
Thus I will sing triumphantly: "My God has dealt full well with me!"

6 What to Seek in Prayer

Pray Psalm 16.5-8.

O LORD, *You are* the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You maintain my lot.
The lines have fallen to me in pleasant *places*;
Yes, I have a good inheritance.
I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel;
My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.
I have set the LORD always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.

Sing Psalm 16.5-8.

(All to Christ: *Jesus Paid It All*)

My portion and my cup are You, my Savior dear;
You help and hold me up and ever keep me near.

Refrain v. 11

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand.
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

I bless Your Name, O Lord; my mind instructs each night;
You teach me by Your Word and guide me in the right.

Refrain

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.
But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.

Refrain

Read Luke 11.1-13; meditate on verse 13.

Preparation

1. What does our heavenly Father want to give us?
2. How may we realize that promise?

Meditation

What does God want most of all for you? To be healthy? Happy? Wealthy? Untroubled and content? Secure in your job and your relationships? Have a good church and faithful friends?

Remember: the operative word here is not *want* but *most*.

Most of all, God wants you to know Him (Jn. 17.3). That means that He wants you to be *full of Him* (Eph. 3.19, 20). Most of all God wants you to *dwell in Him and He in you*, to *abide in Him*, and to *rest in Him*. This is because in God's Presence is fullness of joy, and at His Right Hand are pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16.10). We cannot imagine anything better than *fullness of joy* and *holy pleasures forevermore*. In this time between the resurrection of Jesus and His return, that means being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5.18).

We keep seeking the wrong things from God in prayer. Or rather, we seek the right things but only incompletely. Whatever temporal thing or condition we may seek from the Lord cannot compare in the slightest to the joy and pleasure of His indwelling Presence, increasing in and transforming us to be more like Jesus (2 Cor. 3.12-18). So whatever you seek from the Lord, seek His Presence – His Spirit – and more of it,

because when you receive and realize that, you'll probably forget about whatever else you requested.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

As Christians, we think that we must put behind us all boasting and braggadocio. We must be meek and mild, quiet and unassuming. But this might be a wrong assumption. In what way, you're thinking? Well, in the matter of prayer. I think we can say, unequivocally, with much boasting: All our prayers are answered! All of them. All the time. Every one. Answered!

How so? Jesus said as much in this passage: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Lk. 11.13) When our prayer is to be filled with His Holy Spirit, that prayer will *always* be answered in the affirmative. Because this is what God wants most of all for us. As Jesus said before He ascended: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28.18, 20).

And then Jesus told His disciples to "wait for the Promise of the Father...you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" ... And "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1.4, 5, 8).

God's children, through all of time, have been recipients of this Promise: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them" (Ezek. 36.27).

Jesus prayed this prayer for us: "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (Jn. 14.16, 17). Most assuredly, Jesus' prayer for us was and is answered!

Paul, though, adds in a little zinger in Romans 8.9: "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." If we belong to Him and pray to be filled with His Spirit, then we are His and will have that prayer answered. If we don't, then we're not. It's just that simple.

"God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts..." (Gal. 4.6).

"By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 Jn. 4.13).

Wanna be a braggart who always has their prayers answered?

Then ask for the Holy Spirit—to be daily filled with Him to the full—for His glory and the edification of yourself and others. Seek the Spirit, ask your heavenly Father for Him, and receive the Answer. Every time.

For reflection

1. What makes the Holy Spirit such a desirable goal for our prayers?
2. How can you know when you are filled with the Holy Spirit?
3. God wants to give you His Spirit, but He insists that we ask. When should you ask for the filling of God's Spirit?

But if, among human beings who are otherwise evil, natural devotion can do so much that they are generous with their children seeking necessities, how much more will your Father, who is the Father of spirits, who is by nature good, impart to you from heaven this good Spirit, which will bestow all good things if you ask for them from him? Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), *Paraphrase on the Gospel of Luke 11:13.16*

Luke 11, Part 1

Pray Psalm 16.10, 11.

Meditate on Jesus, exalted in glory. See Him there in all His majesty, splendor, and might, looking upon You with His unfailing love. Speak to Him of your love for Him, and of how you long for His coming.

Sing Psalm 16.10, 11.

(All to Christ: *Jesus Paid It All*)

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,
You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.

Refrain v. 11

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand.
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

7 Get This Right

Pray Psalm 119.17, 18.

Deal bountifully with Your servant,
That I may live and keep Your word.
Open my eyes, that I may see
Wondrous things from Your law.

Sing Psalm 119.17, 18.

(Open My Eyes: *Open My Eyes, That I May See*)

Open my eyes, Lord, let me see
wonderful truths to transform me.
I am a stranger here in the earth;
hide not from me Your glorious worth.
Deal with your servant graciously
that I may live obediently.
Open my eyes, Lord, let me see glory divine!

Read Luke 11.1-13; meditate on verses 1, 13.

Preparation

1. How important was prayer to Jesus?
2. What are the main points of His teaching about prayer?

Meditation

We must not be satisfied for our prayers to be merely a part of our Christian life. Something we do at some point during the day because, well, we should. Every Christian knows about prayer and knows that we should pray more than we do. And do it better.

But there it is. For perhaps most of us, our prayers could be described as perfunctory, powerless, and pitiful.

This is not what God intends. Prayer is *the* defining discipline of the Christian life, the practice every Christian must seek to improve (v. 1) and the means by which more of God's Presence and power become real in and through us (v. 13).

Jesus taught that prayer can lift us to the heights of majesty and holiness, enwrap us in glory and mystery, unveil the vast sweep of Kingdom life, survey all the blessings of God, commit all our needs to Him, and remind us of His grace and of our need to be gracious to others. Prayer should be engaged with such a sense of urgency and constancy that praying without ceasing and in the fullness of joy becomes the norm.

We must get this right. Do we depend on such things as our church, the preaching we hear, our Bible study group or other Christian friends, or our built-up bank of Christian knowledge to give meaning and substance to our faith? While such things can help and should be part of our Christian journey, what we need above all else is communion with our heavenly Father, in the Name of His Son and our Savior, and in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

That is, we need to pray as Jesus taught and as those first believers prayed. Make it your daily prayer to get this right, and your Christian life will never be the same.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

There is something so sweet about the scene portrayed in Luke 11.1.

Jesus was in a certain place, praying. Maybe it was a favorite “certain place”, a bit like Daniel’s, who prayed consistently and daily, multiple times, by his open window. In fact, his enemies knew exactly where to find him doing this thing because he did it so faithfully. “And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Dan. 6.10).

So Jesus was in this certain place praying, and His disciples knew exactly what He was doing, and did not interrupt Him. They were polite and showed Him great respect by honoring His space and time with His heavenly and dearly loved Father, God.

And the disciples found this sight to be so pleasing, that “when He ceased” they immediately asked Him to teach them how to do what He was doing. Please, teach us how to pray!

Jesus even went so far as to suggest a way that the disciples could find a “certain place” of their own. “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matt. 6.6).

David wrote about such a place: “For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock” (Ps. 27.5). “You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (Ps. 31.20).

God, when speaking about the temple that Solomon built, said “My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place” (2 Chron. 7.15). We can assume that now, since we are without that beautiful temple, God will still see and hear us in the secret places of prayer in which we choose to meet with Him. The only warning we receive has nothing to do with place but has everything to do with the condition of our heart. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Ps. 66.18). “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Is. 59.1, 2).

And the remedy? “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1.9).

Jesus wants us to have the same sweet relationship with the Father that He has. He showed us what it should look like, He taught us words to say; we are warned of the pitfalls of sin, and we are told how to fix it. And best of all, in the certain place that we choose, we ask for His Spirit. And He gives it. Jesus said, “And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (Jn. 17.26).

Why would we not want to get this right?

For reflection

1. How do you feel about your own prayer life? Could it be improved? Which of Jesus’ teachings in Luke 11.1-3 most apply to you?
2. Why is it a good idea to pray with other believers? Do you have a prayer partner or a prayer group?
3. How do you expect your prayers, for more of God’s Spirit, to be answered in your life?

“Lord, teach us to pray,” is a good prayer, and a very needful one, for Jesus Christ only can teach us, by his word and Spirit, how to pray. Lord, teach me what it is to pray; Lord, stir up and quicken me to the duty; Lord, direct me what to pray for; teach

me what I should say. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Luke 11.1*

Pray Psalm 119.19-24.

Does your soul break with longing for the Lord? Ask Him to make it so. Do you find great delight in being with Him and in His Word? Pray that it might be so. Do you know fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore while communing with Him? Plead with God to help you get prayer right!

Sing Psalm 119.19-24.

(Open My Eyes: *Open My Eyes, That I May See*)

My soul with longing breaks for You;
all of Your judgments I would do.
For You rebuke the proud and the cursed,
who from Your Law have strayed, and worse.
Take from me all contempt, O Lord,
for I have kept Your holy Word.
Lift all reproach from me, O Lord – my soul renew!

Princes oppose me day by day,
for I continue in Your way.
I will Your statutes hold in my mind.
What great delight in them I find!
Lord, let Your testimonies be
light on my path to counsel me.
Lord, what delight You bring to me out of Your Word.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What role does the “Lord’s Prayer” play in your prayer life?
2. How much is prayer a part of your life throughout the day? What could you do to improve in this?
3. What are you doing to learn more about prayer and how to improve in and enjoy it more?
4. Why should you make gaining more of the fullness of God’s Spirit the goal of all your prayers?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from our study of Luke 11.1-13?

For prayer:

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