

Let's Pray: What We Should Pray

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[0 : 00] The first reading is taken from Luke chapter 11 verses 1 to 13 on page 1042 of the Red Church Bible.

That's Luke chapter 11 beginning at verse 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. He 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. 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.

[1 : 30] 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. 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?

And the second reading is just over the page in chapter 12, starting at verse 22. Then Jesus said to his disciples, Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.

Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens. They do not sow or reap. They have no storehouse or barn, yet God feeds them.

[2 : 40] And how much more valuable you are than the birds. Who of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

Consider how the lily grows. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith?

And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink. Do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Thank you. Thanks very much. So keep your Bibles open, please, at Luke chapter 11. Over the last couple of Sundays, we've been looking at the whole subject of prayer. We've looked at who we pray to, that God is our Father, and we simply come to him as children, asking for help.

[4 : 01] And last week, we looked at how we pray. And this morning, we're going to finish off, as we focus, in particular, verses two to four, on what we should pray.

And because he is our Father, and because we are his children, let's ask for his help now, as we look at his word together. Father, please help us.

Please pour out your spirit upon us, so that we understand your word with our minds, that it would fill our hearts and our lives, changing us, so that you increase, and we become less.

Transform us, so that our lives revolve around you, and your priorities, and your desires. and teach us, to live in line with you, and with what you want.

Father, through your word, teach us, what to pray. Amen. Well, in the 16th century, the scientist, Galileo, changed how we, understand the world, and how it works.

[5 : 43] He proved the theory, that the sun, did not revolve around the earth, as previously thought, rather, the earth, revolved around, the sun.

In other words, the sun, is at the very centre, of the universe. Now, our natural inclination, as people, is to think, that we, as human beings, are at the centre, of the universe, and that God, revolves around us.

In other words, God is there primarily, to meet, my needs, and, my wants. So, when we come to pray, we pray, as if it's, all about me, my concerns, and, my desires.

prayers. But, like the scientific discovery, in the past, we need to change, we need to, reorientate ourselves, and have a proper, understanding, of, prayer.

You see, although we think, we're very important, and I'm sure we are, all very important people, we are actually, not, the centre, of the universe. God is.

[6 : 54] In other words, God doesn't revolve, around us. Rather, we revolve, around him. He sustains us, not the other way around.

And our natural focus, is when we pray, is to pray with me, at the centre. centre. So, it's, very common, I guess, for us to pray about, my health, or my job, or my exams, or my money.

And it's good to pray, about our needs, and concerns. But they're not, the centre, of prayer. Like the disciples, here in chapter 11, we need to be taught, what, to pray.

So, in verse 1, after Jesus, was praying, the disciples, come to Jesus, and they say, Lord, teach us to pray. And Jesus' answer, is very simple.

It's what we now call, the Lord's Prayer, in verses 2 to 4. And it changes, the focus, from, me-centred prayers, to, God-centred prayers.

[8 : 08] So, what we're going to do, is we're going to look at, this, prayer, the Lord's Prayer, as a framework, for how we should pray, God-centred prayers.

So, the first thing, we're going to look at, praying for God's desires, in a God-centred way.

So, when we start, we start with, verse 2, Father. We're reminding ourselves, at that point of conversation, with God, that we have been invited, to join, our relationship, with Jesus, in his relationship, with the Father.

Father. The intimate, and personal, relationship, Jesus enjoyed, with his Father, is now, our relationship, to enjoy. But let's remember, our Father, is not our big buddy.

He is, as we read in chapter 10, verse 21, last week, that he is Lord, of heaven and earth. He's the all-powerful, all-ruling Father.

[9 : 22] Nothing is outside, of his control. He is, the Father is, the centre, of the universe. So, as we come to pray, we reorientate ourselves, around the Father.

So, we want, what the Father wants. We begin to pray, what the Father desires. So, what does the Father want?

What does he, desire? Well, when we pray, we pray, verse 2, hallowed, or holy, be your name.

It's about his name. This isn't about us. And when we're talking, about a name, we're talking, about somebody's, character, or somebody's, reputation.

Their name, is tied up, with the kind, of person, that they are. So, this is a prayer, that God's name, that his reputation, and his character, would be set apart, from every other name, and every other person.

[10 : 32] Because that's what, holy or hallowed means. It means to be, separate, or distinct. So, this is all about God's name. It's all about his character, and his reputation, being made known, being set apart, being different, to everyone else, and everything else.

Jesus. But how do you and I, make God's name holy? Surely God is holy already, so how do we, make it holy?

Well, when we come to, Jesus in faith, we are welcomed, into, God's family. When we trust Jesus, we are invited, into his family.

We have access, to the same father. But more than that, because we are now, in his family, or because we've been, adopted into his family, we now have, the same name.

We bear, the same name. So keep your finger there, in Luke chapter 11, and go to, Ephesians chapter 3. Ephesians chapter 3.

[11 : 40] I think this will help us, understand, how we have his name, if we are his, children, through faith, in Jesus. So, Ephesians chapter 3, and verse 12.

Ephesians chapter 3, and verse 12. It says there, in him, or in Jesus, and through faith, in Jesus, we may approach God, with freedom, and confidence.

Verse 14. For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family, in heaven, and on earth, derives its name.

You see, we have been given, his name. We've been invited, into his family. So we now, have that name, so we, his children, are to reflect, his character, and his reputation, so that, his name, is made known.

So when people, look at us, they'll think, God's name, the Father's name, this is who he is, this is what he is like. Now, sometimes in sport, a name, like Nike, or Adidas, or something like that, will sponsor, a player.

[13 : 11] That means, they have been given, the name, of Nike. They are to represent, that name, on the sports field, and when they play, in competition.

They are to show, that Nike, makes better, and greater, sports equipment, than everybody else.

And in the same way, we have been given, the family name, of God.

We bear, his name. So we, as his children, are to reflect, his character. In other words, our lives, are to show, how great, and how awesome, how magnificent, God is.

So this is a prayer, that is asking God, that he would change, our character, he would change, us, so that God's name, is made famous, not ours.

We're wanting, to promote, the name of God, not our name. We want people, to know him, not us. That's a God, centered prayer.

[14 : 20] And when we pray, also verse 2, we pray, your kingdom, come. And when we're talking, about a kingdom, we're talking about, well, there must be a king, and if he is king, then he must rule over lands, and he must rule over people.

So this is a prayer, a great, big prayer, that God's rule, his kingship, would be recognized, in every nation, across this world, and in every person's life.

Go back to Luke, chapter 4. Luke, chapter 4. Here, Jesus is at the beginning, of his ministry, and he's been doing, these amazing miracles, signs, and wonders.

He's been healing, the sick. He's been demonstrating, his power, and his authority, over demons, and over the forces, of evil. And naturally, it's attracting, a huge, big crowd.

But here, Jesus makes his priority, clear. At verse 42, of chapter 4. Luke, chapter 4, verse 42.

[15 : 37] At daybreak, Jesus went out, to a solitary place, and the people, were looking for him, because they wanted, more miracles. And when they came, to where he was, they tried to keep him, from leaving them.

But he said, I must preach, the good news, of the kingdom, of God, to other towns, also, because that is why, I was sent.

I must tell people, about the good news, of the kingdom. And the good news, of the kingdom, is that Jesus, is God's chosen king.

That Jesus, came into the world, the God man, to renew, and restore, this broken world. So when he healed, the sick, and when he raised, the dead, and when he cast out demons, he was giving people, a glimpse, of what God's kingdom, would be like.

A world, without pain, or suffering. A world, without death, or evil. It was the kind, of world, that people long for, and people dream of. But how do people, actually enter, into this kingdom?

[16 : 46] How do you get, a part of this kingdom? Well, if we look at Luke, chapter 5, verse 31, Jesus makes it, very clear, how that happens.

He's been spending, a lot of time, with people, who the religious people, don't want to associate with. They're called, the sinners. People like you, and me. And so, in verse 31, of chapter 5, Jesus said to them, it's not the healthy, who need a doctor, but the sick.

I haven't come, for people, who think they're good. I've come, for people, who know, that they need help. Verse 32, I have not, come to call, the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

You see, we enter, into God's kingdom, when we recognize, that we are, rebellious sinners, who've turned, against God's rule. We have removed, God from the centre, and we've put ourselves, at the centre.

We live, as if God, revolves around us, as if God is there, to meet my needs, and my wants. And so, this is a call, to repent, and to put God, at the very centre, of our lives, to make him, the ruler, of all that we do.

[18:04] So, this prayer, that we have, in Luke chapter 11, your kingdom come, is a prayer, which is simply asking, for God's rule, in our lives, to put him, at the very centre, of our lives, that his rule, would be demonstrated, in us, and through us.

But more than that, as we begin, to tell the good news, of the kingdom, to other people, that they too, would repent, and turn to him, and make Jesus Christ, their king, and their lord, of their lives. So, we're praying, for God's desires, that his name, is made famous, that his name, is known, throughout the nations, and that his rule, would come, in people's lives.

It's not about us, it's about him, and his kingdom. So, we are praying, about God's desires, his name, and his kingdom.

So, does that mean, that God, isn't interested, in my needs? Does God, not care about, my health, or my job? Does God, even want us, to pray, about our concerns?

[19:23] Is he, is he even, interested in us? Well, of course, God does. He is our loving father, that's what we've been looking at, in Luke chapter 11. He takes, delight, when we, as his children, come to him, and bring our requests, and ask him, for things.

But when we pray, for our needs, we need to pray, for our needs, in a God-centered way, not a selfish way. So, when we pray, for our needs, here's what we're to pray.

Verse 3 of chapter 11. When we pray, we pray, give us this day, our daily bread. Now, if you're like me, in any way, when you're hungry, maybe yesterday afternoon, you were sitting down, you go to the fridge, and you root around, for a bit of food.

And if there's nothing, in the fridge, well, you go down to Dunn's, or down to Barry Collins, and you go and buy some food. If we haven't got food, we don't tend to pray, give us this day, our daily bread.

we just go buy it. But the point is, we should. Because when we pray this prayer, we are recognizing, that the source, of all the food that we eat, and all the food that we buy, is God.

[20:52] He's the source. He's the one who gives life. He's the one who sustains all life. He's the one who makes the rain fall. He's the one who makes the sunshine, that makes everything grow.

You see, if God were to remove his hand, from this world, we'd have nothing. So this is a prayer, that shows my complete, and utter dependence, on God.

That I need God, and that without him, I would simply die. Because God is, after all, at the very center, of the universe. He holds everything together, and I need to be reminded, of that on a daily basis, as I sit down, to my shredded wheat, in the morning, when I sit down, to my spuds, in the evening, I need to be reminded, that this came from God.

But praying this prayer, also helps us, to focus, on his name, and his kingdom. Have a look at Luke, chapter 12, verse 22.

This was part of our second reading. Luke, chapter 12, verse 22. Jesus said to his disciples, therefore, I tell you, do not worry, about your life.

[22:22] And who of us, don't worry about life, eh? I tell you, do not worry, about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. Life, is more than food, and the body, more than clothes.

So consider, the ravens. We don't have too many ravens, come down into our garden. We have a few, sparrows, and things like that.

So consider the sparrows, if you like. They do not sow, or reap. They have no storeroom, or barn. Yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable, are you, than birds?

You are his children. So how much more valuable, are you, than the birds, that land down in your garden? Verse 25, Who of you, by worrying, can add a single hour, to his life?

Since you cannot do, this very little thing, why do you worry, about the rest, about food, and all of these things? God knows, what our needs are.

[23:32] So we are to come, independent, and stop worrying. Verse 29, And do not set your heart, on what you will eat, or drink.

Do not worry about it. For the pagan world, runs after all such things, and your father, knows that you need them. But, seek his kingdom, and these things, will be given to you as well.

You see, we are to pray, this very simple prayer, for our daily bread, trusting, that God will provide, for us, so that, we can focus, and give our attention, to God's kingdom.

kingdom. You see, most of us, myself included, spend our time, worrying about the future. What are we going to eat? What are we going to wear?

What about all those bills, that I have to pay? What about saving, for a pension, and a retirement package? What about my future, and all these things? And, well, we give our time, to building up, our own little kingdoms.

[24 : 42] Making sure, that we are all, so secure, and that we are, all so well protected, that any eventuality, that might come upon us, well, we'll be okay. In fact, we have become, so secure, we don't need, God, anymore.

We're so, protected in our life, we don't need to pray, give us this day, our daily bread. But that's being, me centered, rather than, God centered.

We simply pray, give us today, our daily bread, for today, not for the next week, but for today, so that we can focus, on God's kingdom, which will last, for an eternity.

Seek his kingdom, and these things, will be given to you, as well. So we pray, independence, asking God, to give us, our basic, daily needs, so that, we can give, our resources, and time, and energy, to his kingdom.

And when we pray, for ourselves, verse 4, of chapter 11, we pray, forgive us our sins, for we also, forgive everyone, who sins, against us.

[26 : 07] In case, you haven't realized yet, we all continue, to sin. And so, we continue, to need, to come to God, and ask for forgiveness.

In fact, seeking forgiveness, is a sign, that we are, God's children. It's not something, we do once, and then forget about it, as something, in the past.

It's an ongoing, daily exercise. It's a child, coming to their father, knowing that, they need forgiveness. It's a little bit, like marriage.

If I fall out, with Kirstie, and we sometimes do, we're still married. We're still bound, to each other. But the point is, the relationship, isn't what it ought to be.

And so, we need to come, and ask for forgiveness, so that, that relationship, is restored, and it's everything, that it should be. And in the, same way, when I sin, it doesn't mean, that somehow, the father, has shut me out, of his presence, and he doesn't want, to talk to me anymore.

[27 : 15] No, the relationship, still exists. He is still my father, and I am still, his child, but the relationship, is not what it ought to be. So I come to him, asking for forgiveness.

And when I ask, for forgiveness, it has this, amazing, knock on effect. Look at verse 4, the second part. You see, when we ask God, to forgive us, of all of our sins, we do so, for we also, forgive everyone, who sins, against us.

You see, the sign, or the evidence, that I have been, forgiven by God, is that I now, begin to forgive, others, who sin against me.

It's the sign, it's the evidence. So if I hold something, against another person, if I don't forgive them, if I continue, to hold a grudge, against that person, and won't forgive them, then I need, to go back, to the cross, and look at Christ, and see, how God, has forgiven me, in Christ.

And when I see, what he has done for me, I cannot, withhold forgiveness, from another person. So this is a prayer, about me, yes, and my needs, yes, I need forgiveness.

[28 : 41] But this is a prayer, saying, Father, forgive me, so that, I can forgive, like you. Forgive me, Father, so that, I am gracious, and compassionate, and merciful, like you.

So that when people, see my life, they will begin, to see something, of your character, in me. They will see, how merciful, and compassionate, you are, because I, am compassionate.

So this prayer, is essentially, yes, it's about our needs, forgiveness, but it's about, us becoming, like God.

So we need to pray, for God's desires, we need to pray, for our needs, and then finally, we need to pray, that our prayers, continue to be, God centred.

Look at the conclusion, to this prayer, in chapter 11, verse 4. That little phrase, at the end, and lead us, not into temptation.

[29 : 53] This is like, a summary, of the whole prayer. The focus, is all about, praying God centred prayers, not me centred prayers. And the temptation, is always to think, that life is about me.

Our natural drift, is to remove God, from the centre, and put me, at the centre, and pray things, for my wants. God, do this for me, do this now, I want this, I need this.

So this is a great, prayer to pray, lead us not, into temptation. It's not about me, I don't want to be tempted, into, it's about me.

I want it to be, about God. Now of course, it doesn't mean, that we will never, be tempted.

Temptation, is part of, the Christian life.

Luke 4, tells us all about, how Jesus was tempted. So we are not asking, that we will never, be tempted. Rather, in this prayer, we are asking, that we would be able, to resist, temptation.

[30 : 59] That we would, stand up, under the pressure, to put me, at the centre, and to push God out. So in conclusion, this is a prayer, that God, that God remains, central.

That he increases, and I become less. It's a prayer, that every time, I am tempted, to promote my name, and want things from me, and things to be done, my way, I stop, and I pray, holy be, your name.

We want the name, of God, to be made famous. And it's a prayer, that every time, I'm tempted, to build my own, little kingdom, and secure, my own little future, and protect my life, and my world, I simply stop, and I pray, your kingdom come.

Whatever may happen, my health, whatever may happen, to my children, whatever may happen, to my job, your kingdom come, your rule be done, in our lives, and in this world.

So this is, a major, reorientation, to how we pray. We take ourselves, out of the centre, we put God, into the centre, because we revolve, around God.

[32 : 25] We are dependent, on him, and we want, what he wants, and what he wills, for us. So, as we close, let's pray, this prayer, together.

You can keep, your Bible open, and we can read, this prayer, simply together, in response, to what we've just, been looking at. We'll start, with Father, and we'll end, where it says, temptation.

So let's pray, this prayer, together. Father, 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.

Amen. We're going to sing, words that reflect, this very prayer, let your kingdom come, to go.