

Teach Us to Pray - Part 1

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[0 : 0 0] This message, as you would have seen in the bulletin, is the first of three messages that are designed to encourage us to pray. Today, we'll be learning this morning to pray from Jesus.

Next week, we'll be learning to pray from the Apostle Paul. And then the following week, we'll be learning to pray from the Apostle James. And so this morning, we will be looking to the Lord Jesus to teach us to pray.

And to do that, we are turning to Luke chapter 11. We'll be considering this morning, verses 1 through 13. The Gospel of Luke chapter 11, verses 1 through 13.

I'm reading from the English Standard Version. If you have another translation, yours will read slightly differently. But please follow along as I read, beginning in verse 1 of Luke 11.

Now, Jesus was praying in a certain place. And when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples.

[1 : 1 6] And he said to them, And he said to them, And he said to him, And he said to them,

And he said to them, If you, if he asks for a fish, If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Let's pray together. Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, these will be prayer.

Lord, these will be mere words if you do not bring the illumination of your Spirit Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, that you would quicken our hearts and enable us to be attentive to your word.

And I ask that you, through the power of the Spirit, And I ask that you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will bring about the transformation in our lives that you intended to result from this particular portion of your word.

[4 : 0 6] Lord, Lord, Lord, that you would encourage us to pray by teaching us to pray. I pray all over this room, Lord, that your word will bring forth good fruit in all of our lives.

I ask for your grace personally and for your help to be faithful to these whom I love, These whom you love more than I do, and these whom I desire to serve.

So Father, would you do this this morning, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. Some of you might recall that the Lord's Prayer is not just in this passage, but also in another passage of Scripture in the book of Matthew, Matthew chapter 5.

And Jesus taught it on the occasion of the Sermon on the Mount. And so there may be some reminders of the prayer that we have just read here in Luke 11.

So I want to take a moment to highlight some differences because there are some differences between the two prayers. First, the prayer we find in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 was given out of public instruction when Jesus addressed very early on in his ministry, a very large crowd who were gathered together with his disciples.

[5 : 3 4] And Jesus offered it as a pattern of prayer. He didn't give it specifically to be prayed verbatim, but he gave it as a pattern of prayer. And what he says in Matthew 6 and 9 is when you pray, he says, pray like this, pray in this manner.

But here in Luke 11, verse 2, what Jesus says in a private instruction in response to one of his disciples who said, Lord, teach us to pray, Jesus says, when you pray, say.

This is a very important difference to notice, and I think it's important to notice because it helps us to work through this thing that a lot of people wrestle with, whether we should pray the Lord's Prayer verbatim or whether we shouldn't, whether we should only pray it as a pattern and so forth.

So in Matthew's account, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, when you pray, pray like this or pray after this manner. But here in Luke 11, 2, he says, when you pray, say.

And I think what we can learn is that it is okay, it is perfectly okay to use both. It is perfectly okay to use the Lord's Prayer as a pattern where we pray in particular categories, as well as it is okay to pray it verbatim, as we sometimes do when we are together.

[6 : 58] Both are actually fine. You probably have also noticed that there are some differences between the prayers in terms of the wording.

In the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus was giving that pattern of prayer, there's this line, your will be done. That's absent from this account that we have here in Luke 11.

Your will be done is in the Matthew account, but not in this account. But I think we can safely conclude that it is certainly implied when we say your kingdom come, that it is also implied that we are praying for God's will to be done because if God's kingdom truly comes, then his will is truly done.

And then we also see that there's a portion of the prayer that says, and lead us where we read in the account of Luke, and lead us not into temptation, what is absent in this account that is present in the account from the Sermon on the Mount is a prayer to be delivered from evil and deliver us from evil, or in some translations, the evil one.

And here again, it is implied that when we would pray that we be delivered from temptation, not be led into temptation, that it is also implied that we would be delivered from evil as well.

[8 : 37] Now I want us to consider what Jesus teaches us about prayer in Luke 11. And one of the things I want us to see behind this question that this disciple asks is he is not just asking Jesus to teach them how to pray in terms of more like a formula, but he is also asking Jesus, Lord, teach us to do it.

See, I know that we all know that there are things we know to do, but we don't do it. So this is not just a request to teach us how to pray.

It is also a request to teach us to pray. Teach us to do it. Lord, teach us to pray. And I think what we should see from this is that this desire to pray is a normal and natural response for those who would be the disciples of Jesus.

And this desire to pray the way he would have us to pray is also part of that desire. We don't just want to be lifting up words, but we want to be lifting up words as taught by our Lord.

Doesn't mean that we can't learn from other people. We can and we should. But first and foremost, we need to learn to pray from our master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[10 : 06] Disciples must learn to pray from Jesus. And here's the overall lesson that we can learn from what Jesus teaches us in these verses in response to this disciple's request.

Here's what we can learn. We learn to pray by knowing what we should pray and how we should pray.

That's how we learn to pray. We learn to pray by knowing what we should pray and how we should pray.

And those are two different things. If we truly want our prayer lives to be effective and if we truly want to be prayer to be something that we do, then these are the two things that we need to learn from Jesus what we should pray and how we should pray.

And that's what we're going to consider in our remaining time this morning. So let's consider the first one. What we should pray. What Jesus tells us in verses 2 through 4.

[11 : 17] Notice in verse 2 that before telling us what to pray, Jesus tells us that we are to address our prayer to God as our Father. Now we take this for granted.

We take for granted that we address God as our Father. But in Jesus' day, the Jews didn't take this for granted. As a matter of fact, some of them thought that Jesus was actually almost blaspheming or being too familiar with God because they considered God to be holy and revered and distant and they would not even call the name of God.

They wouldn't call his name. And here you have Jesus saying, not only is he saying that we should say Father, but Jesus was actually using a very endearing word for Father.

He was using this Aramaic word, Abba. It's the equivalent of us saying in English, Daddy. We don't really go to our fathers, our earthly fathers, and we address them as Father.

I mean, you may do that, but that's not usual. I think if one of my kids came to me and just said to me, Father, I would like, you think I'm a priest or who you think I am, but why you address me as Father.

[12 : 38] The more endearing term is to say Dad or Daddy, this very intimate word. Jesus is teaching us to pray.

And he says, when you pray, when you pray, say Father. Here's what's interesting. We don't know what John taught his disciples. We don't know.

We do know that he taught them because this disciple said, teach us to pray the way John taught his disciples. Though I have no way of proving it this morning, I would say, I doubt very seriously that John taught his disciples when you pray, say Father.

Didn't do that. Because Jesus had this unique relationship with the Father, and he says to his disciples, you can say Father.

In other words, drawing them into this shared sonship, this belonging to God, he says, when you pray, you should approach God as Father, not as some distant cosmic being, but as your beloved Father.

[13 : 51] And then he goes on and he says, there are five aspects that you should pray about. When you pray, say, these are the five aspects. Jesus teaches us when we approach God that we should specifically pray to him concerning, number one, God's name, hallowed be your name.

We see that in verse two. Number two, God's kingdom, your kingdom come, verse two. God's provision, give us each day our daily bread.

We see that in verse three. We should pray about God's forgiveness. Forgive us our sins, verse four. And then we should pray about God's protection.

Lead us not into temptation. Now, before we look at those aspects of the prayer, I want to ask you a very personal question this morning.

And the question is this. Is God your father? I know to a lot of people that sounds a bit unusual, and the reason it sounds unusual is because of the popular view that we're all children of God and God is everybody's father.

[15 : 09] God is the creator of us all, but he's not the father of us all. And Jesus makes this very clear in John chapter eight when he said to the Pharisees, he said, you are of your father, the devil.

That's who your father is. And some of you may remember a memory verse from last week. John 1, 12, and 13. What does it say? But, I have it written down, but I want to see if I can still remember it.

And I'm going to need some of you to help me. But, to those who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

See, that's where we become children of God. That's where we become those who can call God Father. Because, we were born again. We were born from above.

We were begotten from above. Not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but born of God. That's the way God becomes our Father. So, the question this morning is a legitimate question.

[16 : 35] Is God your Father? That's the starting place in prayer. To settle that issue because, if God is your Father, then we can pray in a particular way that we otherwise couldn't pray.

If God is not your Father, then legitimately you cannot be addressing him as Father. I know you've learned the prayer, and you may say the prayer, but it does not have the effectiveness if you don't have that relationship with God as your Father.

But the good news is, in that verse that we learned last week, to as many, to those who receive them, you receive them, he gives you the right to become a child of God.

born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, not of man, but born of God.

And you, this morning, right where you sit, can look to Jesus in saving faith and say, oh Lord, would you save me?

[17 : 49] Would you forgive me? And he will. And that's the way he'll become your Father. Now notice that the first thing that we pray about after we've settled the issue of to whom we pray, the first thing that we pray about we see in verse 2 which is God's name.

We pray about the holiness of God's name. And really, this is more of a declaration than a petition. We'll see the petition shortly, but this is a declaration and we declare, hallowed be your name.

God's name represents all that he is. And I think we have heard it. You have heard a person say, oh, he has a bad name or she has a bad name or he has a good name or she has a good name.

God's name represents his character. It represents his attributes. It represents who he is. And we pray, hallowed be your name. And when we do, we are praying about God's goodness and his perfection and his integrity.

We're praying that God is perfect in all of his ways. And we're praying that his name is reverent and set apart as holy above and beyond all other names.

[19 : 14] and here what we should see is this amazing contrast where on the one hand we can come to God and say Father, we can say Abba, we can say Daddy.

But on the other hand we recognize that he is other than we are as well, that he is our holy Father. He is, his name is hallowed.

and we say holy is your name. And we, if we are sober, we are mindful that we are unlike him. We are mindful that we are not in and of ourselves holy.

We are mindful that we are only holy as a declaration from God through Jesus Christ. But God is holy in and of himself.

He is perfectly holy. And we say hallowed be your name. And part of this must also include being aware that we bear the name of the Lord Jesus that we are really praying that we would hallow his name in our lives.

[20 : 20] That we would live lives that would not betray the Lord's name. That we would live lives that are consistent with the Holy One by whose name we are called.

We are to be jealous for God's name because his name is his reputation and we are called by that name. Second, we are to pray about God's kingdom and this too is a declaration not a petition.

We declare your kingdom come and in doing so we are declaring this promise of the kingdom of God, this promise that we see in the pages of scripture and that we see fulfilled in the book of Revelation that there is coming a day when the kingdom of God will come in power and in glory and in fullness.

It's praying for the justice and the righteous rule of God and that Jesus will come and make all things new. That he will wipe away every tear from every eye that there will be no more sickness and no more sorrow and no more sadness and no more death.

It's a prayer for God to usher in his righteous rule by the coming of the kingdom of God and the return of Jesus Christ.

[21 : 44] That's the broad prayer that we are praying for and what this does is each time we pray it we are renewing in our minds this promise that God has given to us because it is so easy to get so lost in this world that we forget that it's all temporary and there's coming a day when our Lord will return and he will usher in a new heaven and a new earth.

But part of the prayer not only includes this distant kingdom that we desire to see come but it also calls for measures of the kingdom to be manifested now.

It calls for the advance of the kingdom of God even now. It calls for the advance of the kingdom of God through the church and through the preaching of the word through the spreading of the gospel around the world.

It calls for seeing justice. You know every single time we see justice even though it may not be perfect that is a taste of the age to come that's a taste of the kingdom of God to come.

When we live righteous lives that is a taste of the age to come it is a taste of the kingdom of God. Whenever we touch any aspect of what God promises to bring in fullness now we are able to see a manifestation of the kingdom of God even now.

[23 : 13] So when God heals us no healing is permanent on this earth but healing is a taste of the removal of sickness that the Lord has promised that he will bring when the kingdom of God comes in fullness.

And so when we pray your kingdom come we are being reminded of these things. The ultimate coming of the kingdom of God but also the coming of the kingdom of God now in measures that the Lord is pleased to bring.

And so we pray your kingdom come. One of the other things that we should see from praying these prayers of hallowed be your name and your kingdom come because notice we have not prayed for anything yet really.

We have not asked God for anything yet. But when we pray your kingdom come we are actually positioning ourselves to submit to God's will even as we make petitions in a short while.

we are ready as it were putting this umbrella over everything and we are essentially saying God even in the prayers I am going to pray the requests I am going to make let your kingdom come.

[24 : 28] And if you want to tease that out a bit more let your will be done. We are positioning ourselves and we are shaping the petitions that we are going to bring before the Lord.

And now we come to the first petition God's provision in verse 3. In this first petition we make a request. We ask God for his provision.

We say give us each day our daily bread. This petition is insightful for the whole of the Lord's prayer.

And here is why it is insightful. It is insightful because what it teaches us is that Jesus is teaching us to pray this way every day.

When we pray give us this day. We pray give us day by day our daily bread. What Jesus is saying to us you need to do this every day. We are not praying give us this week our daily bread or this month but every single day we are to be in God's presence before God's face and we are to be praying.

[25 : 38] But not just for our needs we are to be praying hallowed be your name we are to be praying let your kingdom come every single day. And I'd add this when we are praying for daily bread it seems to make sense to pray that at the beginning of the day rather than the end of the day.

Because you pray that at the end of the day you may go hungry all day. But you pray at the beginning of the day you are praying for your provision. So it seems to it seems to point to prayer being at the start of our days.

Now I know for many of us for various reasons this doesn't work if you work shifts and all kinds of other things but I would say this as much as you are able to do it it is wise to carve out the start of your day to pray and in particular to pray in the way the Lord has taught us to pray.

One of the things I've learned in my own life personally is the things I do first get done. Whatever I do first gets done. Now if I don't do it first there's a question about whether it's going to get done after that.

It's kind of like sharing a pizza or whatever else you're sharing. If there are a lot of people in the room and you know that it's not enough to go around what we know is the person who gets the first slice is not going to get left out.

[27 : 06] But everybody else is questionable. but not the one who gets the first slice. So if God gets this first part of our day and we have before him we're praying in this particular way it tends to get done.

So this first request really opens the whole prayer to us because it teaches us that it's a daily prayer. It's a prayer that we are to be praying every day that God gives us breath.

We pray give us day by day our daily bread. Now in our hearing this morning this doesn't sound like a big deal because truth be told while no doubt there will be some of us who may have at some point in time some season in our life been in a situation where it was touch and go each day and we needed to approach each day looking for and praying for our provision and for our food and our needs.

Really I don't think that's the case for most of us. But that would have been the case for these hearers of Jesus. They were not in a situation where they had jobs and they had salaries that paid them every week or two weeks or by the month.

These people were subsidized assistance receivers. They lived day by day. They worked and they got paid at the end of the day but there was no guarantee about what tomorrow was going to bring.

[28 : 42] And so for them hearing these words from Jesus was very different. So how are we supposed to understand this aspect of prayer that Jesus is teaching us to pray to God daily for our needs for our daily bread when we have cupboards that are filled with food, fridges that are filled with food, and perhaps freezers that are filled with food?

How can we really in good faith come before God and pray, give us day by day our daily bread food, when we have an abundance?

I believe the way that we're able to do that, the way we're able to do that legitimately is to really come to the conviction that all that we have comes from God.

To really come to the conviction that he is the source and everything else that we have is a channel and also to have the conviction that tomorrow is a very different day and it could bring very different circumstances.

Although many of us have not lived life in such a way where we've seen night and day shifts in our lives, where today we can have plenty and tomorrow have nothing, it's very possible.

[30 : 12] And the more we understand that, the more we will truly pray in sincerity, recognizing God, my needs are met not because my cupboard is full, not because the refrigerator is full, my needs are met because you are my father and because you meet my needs.

And if you do not meet my needs, my needs will not be met. We have to find a way to get to that place even in the midst of plenty, even in the midst of abundance.

And truth be told, if we see life of what it is, how unpredictable it is, how fragile it is, we would come to the place where we recognize that every single day we are dependent on God for our needs to be met.

Every single day we come before him and we recognize we have nothing except what he gives us. the disciples did not have to labor to come to this understanding because that was their reality.

Brothers and sisters, we must labor to do it. We must labor to do it. We must labor to see our dependence on God in spite of what we may have.

[31 : 31] And let us not wait for circumstances to teach that to us. all that we have comes from the Lord.

And we have to place confidence in no one else and in nothing else. The other insightful part of this particular petition for the whole prayer is it helps us not only to see that this is a daily prayer, it helps us to see that this is a community prayer.

Jesus did not teach us to pray this prayer singularly and solely for ourselves. Now it is fine, yes you can pray, give me this day my daily bread.

You can pray that. But according to Jesus, it can't end there. Because this is a community prayer, we are to pray, give us this day our daily bread.

And so when I'm praying and I'm thinking about my needs, I can't be focused only on my needs. I need to be focused and thinking about the community needs.

[32 : 40] I need to be focused and thinking about the needs of my brothers and sisters. Really what should be coming to mind when I'm praying about my daily needs, faces should be coming to mind, circumstances should be coming to mind.

I should think of particular ones, perhaps that one who is unemployed, perhaps the single mother who is having a hard time making ends meet from the job that she has.

This is not a prayer to be prayed by ourselves, for ourselves. We can pray it by ourselves, but not just for ourselves. We need to pray it as well for others.

We need to pray it with the community in view. And again, not just this particular provision, all of the prayer is a community prayer that Jesus has given to us that we come before him.

We don't just come for ourselves. We come on behalf of the community of brothers and sisters to which he has connected us. And you know, when you think about this particular aspect, all of us have an immediate family, but then we have extended families and distant cousins, and then we are part of the whole world of God's creation.

[34 : 03] But in terms of priorities and loyalties, they really begin in that immediate circle. And in that particular sense, the local church is like that immediate family.

The church that you belong to is that immediate family. I'll tell you, when I'm praying, and by the grace of God, what I'm sharing this morning has been something that by God's grace, grace, and I'm trying to, I can't even think of the point at which, very early on in my Christian life, I began to use this as a daily pattern for prayer.

But when I do that, and I pray, and I pray for this church, I don't think about New Live Hill Baptist Church. I really don't. They don't come to mind. I don't know the people there, but I know you, and you come to mind.

And as we pray for these things, Alexi and I pray this way as well, daily, together, for ourselves and also for this church, for members of this church by name.

And you come to mind, and it's because this prayer is not a personal prayer, but it is a community prayer.

[35 : 20] We are certainly included in it, but it's not confined just to our lives. This is a community prayer. The next petition brings out this aspect of community as well.

In verse 4, we pray for God's forgiveness. We pray, forgive us our sins as we forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

Now again, since this is a daily prayer, this teaches us something. It teaches us that every single day we stand in need of forgiveness.

It teaches us that every single day, whether we are conscious of our need for forgiveness or not, we need to come before God and we need to seek his forgiveness.

Every single day. This tells us that every single day that sin is one of the categories that we think about. And our need for forgiveness is one of the categories that we think about.

[36 : 27] And also, those who sin against us. We think about that as well. We link these two together. We go to God. We pray, would you forgive us our sins?

Here's why. For we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. This helps us also to see that what sin is, is sin is an indebtedness.

Sin is an indebtedness because Jesus, in the first instance, he refers to us praying for us to be forgiven our sins, but in the second, he says, for we forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

Meaning those who sinned against us, they become indebted to us and we need to extend forgiveness to them as well. This is a reality for all of us.

We sin. And every day we stand in need of God's forgiveness. And others sin against us. And we need to forgive them as well.

[37 : 39] So as we think about our need for God's forgiveness, we also think about our need to forgive others as well.

And here's what I would say. We cannot truly, with confidence, pray for God's forgiveness. We can't truly do it if we know in our heart of hearts that we have not truly forgiven others.

There's something in our consciences that just prevents us from doing that. Unless, of course, our conscience is seared, and if our conscience is seared, we probably wouldn't even be praying to God about our own forgiveness as well.

So the fact that we're praying to God for our forgiveness is a clear indication our conscience is not seared. And we cannot, with a clear conscience and a clear heart, pray to God to forgive us when we know that we have not forgiven others.

And I think this is why it said that forgiven people must be forgiving people. Or to say it another way, forgiven sinners must forgive fellow sinners.

[39 : 00] forgiveness. The two go hand in hand. We are to pray daily for our forgiveness. And we are to daily forgive those who sin against us.

What this teaches us is it teaches us to keep short accounts. It teaches us to deal with situations as they come up so that we are able to say to God, you forgive me as I have forgiven others.

And I'm sure that there would be some of us this morning who have had the experience where there are different kinds and weights of sins against us.

There are some sins that are committed against us that we can forgive them rather easily and we are able to move on. But there are some particular sins that go deeper than skin deep and they go real deep and we wrestle and we struggle to forgive.

And even sometimes when we may have mild forgiveness because it's the proper thing to do because we know that it is what God calls us to do, we know deep down in our heart of hearts that we have not truly forgiven.

[40 : 32] And we wrestle with forgiveness. And I think what it should do for us is it should bring us face to face with this issue of sin and forgiveness and think about it in this particular way.

When we who are sinners find it hard to forgive those who have sinned against us. Think about God who is perfect in all of his ways who deserves no one to sin against him but all of our sins are against him.

And yet the innocent perfect God is called upon to forgive sinners like us. And yet he forgives. us.

And we see immediately the difference between him and us. And so what do we do? So look I'm praying then because I know I can't go to God and pray because I haven't forgiven this person.

No that's not what we do. We go to God and we pour our hearts out to him. We go to God and we ask him to have mercy on us. And we go and we ask him to help us to forgive us others the way he has forgiven us.

[41 : 51] And we cry out for his help. We cry out for his mercy. And we do that. And we labor under that. And I can tell you sometimes it takes time. You know, I could remember, I've learned many lessons in my life as a pastor, but I remember one particular time in my own life.

There was a time in my life when I taught on forgiveness. My view was, why don't people just forgive? forgive. You know, God says, forgive, forgive. And that's because the journey that I was on had never really been sinned against in a very deep and lasting way.

And I remember when I experienced that extent of sin against me and how I struggled and wrestled to forgive that individual.

people. And I remember we had a visitor, a visiting pastor who came and he was preaching and the Lord put in his heart to give me a book on forgiveness.

He didn't know what was going on, gave me a book on forgiveness. And I remember I was in such a bad place. He gave me the book, I took it, I thanked him for it, but when I walked in my room, I threw it on the desk.

[43 : 12] Didn't want to read it. But God in his mercy, in time, softened my heart, helped me to see my own sin and how much I had been forgiven and enabled me to forgive that individual.

And so sometimes it takes time. And the Lord knows this. I don't think the Lord is roughing us up and manhandling us on this part of the prayer.

I think he is bringing us to pray this, to bring us to a place of honesty before him where we will not say, forgive me as I have forgiven others and we know we have not forgiven them.

But it brings us to a place to bring this before him and bring our struggles before him and we say, Lord, I know you have forgiven me. I know you have forgiven me of much.

And Lord, I need to forgive this individual. Would you help me to forgive this individual or these individuals? And we bring him before the Lord. By the grace of God, he does and he will change our hearts.

[44 : 31] And then the fourth verse, the next part of the prayer, the fifth and the final petition, is for God's protection. And lead us not into temptation.

Again, another petition. But it's one of the petitions in the Lord's prayer that is easy to misunderstand. Is Jesus saying to us that the Father leads us into temptation and therefore we need to pray and ask him not to do that?

Is that what Jesus is saying to us? No, he's not saying that to us at all. That would be contrary to Scripture. Scripture tells us in James 1.13, God does not tempt us with sin.

He can't be tempted with sin and he tempts no one with sin. He doesn't do that. However, God does lead us into circumstances that will test us.

God does allow us to walk through trials and difficulties and sometimes hard circumstances and the petition gets at that kind of a situation.

[45 : 42] I like the way the English Study Bible explains it in a note in the English Standard Version Study Bible.

This is what it says. The meaning here most likely carries this sense. Allow us to be spared from difficult circumstances that would tempt us to sin.

That's the sense of that particular prayer. Lord, would you spare me from difficult circumstances that would tempt me to sin.

So really, what this part of the prayer is, it is this sober reminder that as we live life in this fallen world, that we will face trials and we will face difficulties and some of those trials and some of those difficulties can cause us to fall into sin.

And so we pray, we're aware of that, soberly aware of that, and so we pray that God will spare us from those trials and keep us. If he doesn't spare us from them, that he allows us to go to him, that he will keep us in the midst of them, that we do not fall into sin.

[46 : 56] Retired pastor and theologian, our Kent Hughes says it this way in his commentary on Luke on this verse. Here's what he says. The operative inequality here is a humble awareness of our weakness.

The very best person is at his or her best vulnerable and easily stumbled apart from God's gracious provision of strength.

temptation. And we are never so vulnerable as when we think we are past a certain temptation. The strongest believers are sure they cannot stand apart from God's grace.

Those who doubt their ability to withstand temptation, those who plead, lead us not into temptation, that is beyond our capacity to withstand.

that's what we're praying when we pray, lead us not into temptation. Now the other part of the prayer which we don't find here but we find in Matthew's account in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 is a teasing out of this or another extension of it, deliver us from evil.

[48 : 19] And when we pray, that we are delivered from evil, we are mindful of the reality every single day of spiritual warfare. We're reminded every single day of the reality that we have a real enemy of our souls and that he is setting traps for our feet.

He wants to ensnare us in sin and so we pray and Lord deliver us from evil or some translations say deliver us from the evil one. This is a daily awareness of spiritual warfare.

And you know what truth be told, sometimes we go into our days and we are indifferent and ambivalent to the fact that there's a real enemy of our soul and he sets traps for our feet every single day.

But every single day we need to be aware that the tempter is going to try to tempt us to sin. He is going to try to bring spiritual harm to us. God will be to the Lord.

Lord, lead us not into temptation. Lord, deliver us from the evil one. It's a community prayer. prayer. So that's what we should pray.

[49 : 33] every day we should pray for God's name to be hallowed, for his kingdom to come, for our needs to be met, for our sins to be forgiven, and for spiritual protection to be extended to us every single day.

And again, not just for ourselves, we pray this for those in our church family as well. And now I come to my second and final point of what Jesus teaches us about prayer in these verses, which is how we should pray.

how should we pray? Or to say it another way, what should be our attitude towards God when we pray?

This is important for Jesus to teach us because the disciples didn't know. When Jesus would say to them, you are to pray to God as your father, they really didn't know what he was like.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is the only one who is revealed to us what the father is like, who the father is like, and apart from Jesus, we will never know. So even though a person may say to you, listen, go and call that person father and go ask him for what you want, you really don't know what that person is like on that scant information.

[50 : 55] salvation. Here's a verse to consider for Matthew 11 27. Jesus says this, all things have been handed over to me by my father, and no one knows the son except the father, and no one knows the father except the son, and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him.

Now this is the scripture about salvation. salvation. It's a scripture telling us that the only people who will know the father are those to whom Jesus reveals him.

The only ones will know the father. We don't decide this on our own. You know the father because of the son's pleasure to reveal him to you.

But this is also true. in terms of knowing God and his attributes and his character and what he is like. And what we see Jesus doing in verses 5 through 13 is Jesus having taught the disciples what to pray, he is now teaching them how they should pray.

And by extension he is teaching us as well. And what he does is he gives two illustrations to teach us how we should pray. How we should approach God in prayer.

[52 : 23] He gives us these two illustrations and his intent is to teach us two particular attitudes that should shape the prayers that we pray to God. The first illustration is found in verses 5 through 8.

And the situation is a desperate one. Here this man, Jesus gives this illustration of this man who has a guest who shows up at his house very late in the night and he has no food to give him, which would not have been an unusual thing.

Remember, they didn't have refrigerators, they were subsistence people, they got their food by day. Even in terms of how we might make extra for tomorrow and put it up, they wouldn't do that because there was no real way to preserve it.

They did it day by day, so there was just nothing left. And so his friend shows up at midnight and he wants something. Now, oftentimes people misread what Jesus says, and if you misread what Jesus says, you're not going to understand what he is saying.

Let's look at what Jesus says again in verses 5-7. And he said to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to say before him.

[53 : 46] And he will answer from within, do not bother me, the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything.

That's two sentences. What Jesus is really saying is this, no friend will do that to you. That's what he's saying. He's saying, which of you who has a friend who will do that to you?

It's a rhetorical question. No friend will do that. First of all, he's a friend. Second of all, you're going to him in desperation. Jesus says, no friend is going to do that to you.

He's not going to say to you that he's not going to help you just because it's too late and you're going to disturb the children. Because really the implication is, look, I have bread, but now I'm getting up because it's too late.

My children are in bed with me, and that would have been normal because they slept on a mat or something. So what's the point? The point that Jesus is making is that this man was bold and shameless.

[54 : 54] See, now he was faced with this dilemma. He either was going to have to refuse his guests, and hospitality in that culture was really important just because of the reality of they didn't have hotels and other places you can go.

Hospitality was important. He was going to have to look at his guests, have nothing to offer him, or he was going to have to be bold and go to his friend at that hour of the night.

And Jesus makes the point, he says, the reason this friend will give it to him is not so much that he is his friend, but because of his boldness, really based on his desperate circumstances and the urgency of his need to get this provision for his guests, that he was going to give it to him.

The ESV says, it says, I tell you in verse 9, sorry, in verse 8, I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence.

That word means bold facedness, not so much perseverance or persistence because the implication is that he wouldn't even have to be buying on the friend's door to say, please, please, please.

[56 : 12] He's going to come out and give it to him. There's not a amount of persistence as much as it is bold facedness to God that hour. Maybe you want to think of it this way.

I know that you've probably been in a situation where it's maybe 1130 at night and you need to call someone, you're hesitating, should I call or should I not call because it's so late and so forth. It was that kind of thing and obviously if you call, then you'd be bold faced to call at someone's house at that hour of the night.

So Jesus is making this point and the larger point that Jesus is making is this. God, that person is your friend but God is your father and not only is God your father, God is gracious.

Therefore, when you ask, ask boldly. You're not putting him off, you're not coming at him at an odd time. When you go to God, you can ask boldly.

That's the point that Jesus makes and that's why he goes on in verses 9 and 10 and he says, that we must ask and we must seek and we must knock boldly, knowing that we are asking and seeking and knocking in prayer of our gracious heavenly father.

[57 : 31] That's how we are to ask God. We are to ask boldly. I know someone might be thinking, wow, I could do that? Well, I'm going to pray and ask the Lord for a Corvette.

I'm going to pray and ask the Lord for this mansion by the lake. Boldly. He's going to give it to me. Well, you can do that.

You can do that. But that's not what Jesus is teaching here. Jesus is teaching us to boldly petition God for the needs that arise in our lives, especially when they are needs that we might be hesitant to pray about.

He says, go and bring them to God. The same way, he says, don't do that. Think of the illustration with the friend. You may hesitate to go to that friend because of the lateness and all the other circumstances, but not with God.

He is gracious and he is generous and he will hear your petitions, so go boldly to him. Ask and seek and knock. And so if you have a need for a car, the better petition is to boldly go to God and ask for transportation and trust him in his wisdom to bring you the transportation that you need.

[58 : 48] If he gives you a Corvette, that's a headache. You're going to need to pay the insurance. If it gets hit, you probably have to park it up. You'll probably be without a car, but you have a car.

So God, you don't pray for that. Or you don't want to pray for the house on the lake. They're hard to maintain and all the other kinds of things. It's better to say, Lord, would you provide me a house and trust him in his wisdom to do that within your means and your income and all the other things.

Boldly we can pray those prayers. Because God is more than a friend. He's our father. And he is generous and gracious towards his children.

So let's ask boldly. The second attitude that Jesus teaches is in verses 12 and 13. And he illustrates another aspect of the father to us, teaching another attitude that we should have towards him.

And he does so by asking this two-part question. In verse 11, what father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead give him a serpent? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

[59 : 54] If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? So what's the point?

What's the attitude that Jesus is trying to teach us when we pray? Jesus is teaching us the attitude of trust. He's saying God is good you can pray to him and you can trust him.

You can trust him fully. He will give you good gifts. He is not evil. That's what he's saying. Trust him fully when you pray.

You don't need to be, I wonder what this is. This is like a scorpion. No. God is good.

Jesus says, if you're earthly fathers are good and they won't do that to you. Imagine God. He is good. So trust them fully.

[60 : 55] But you know there's another side to God's goodness. The other side to God's goodness is sometimes in our maturity, sometimes in our humanity, sometimes in our blind sinfulness, we ask the Lord for a serpent.

serpent. Because we don't see it as a serpent. We ask them for a scorpion. We don't see it as a scorpion.

And because God is good, he doesn't give us a serpent. He gives us fish. He doesn't give us a scorpion. He gives us an egg.

And you know sometimes we throw our temper tantrums, God didn't give me what I prayed for. And then sometimes in time we see there's a serpent that we were asking for.

There's a scorpion that we were asking for. And see, we're not wise enough. We're not wise enough many times to pray. There are things that we just are not wise enough to pray.

[62 : 02] And this is why it is so wonderful to fervently pray, Lord, your will be done. Lord, your will be done. Oh, we have to be so careful. We grab on to certain things, be it a prospective husband or wife, be it a job, be it whatever, trying to grab on to that as if we know we need to hold it loosely and say, oh, Lord, that your will be done in this.

Because truth be told, sometimes we could be grabbing on a serpent, grabbing on a scorpion, and we don't want to go that way.

We need to trust God because he is good. And notice what Jesus does. Jesus argues from the greater to the less.

And he says this, he says in verse 13, if you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

You know, the Holy Spirit is the most precious petition that we can ask of God. And of course, if you know Jesus Christ as Lord and person and Savior, the Holy Spirit resides in you, so our prayer can certainly be for more of the Spirit, and God will grant that.

[63 : 26] If you don't know Christ, it can be to come to know him, and when you come to know him, you will receive the Holy Spirit. But it stands to reason that if God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him, then everything else, as a good father, he will hold no good thing from us.

And therefore, we can trust him. We can trust that whatever God gives us is a good gift from a good father.

So Jesus tells us what we should pray. We should pray in accordance with the categories and the priorities of the Lord's Prayer. And then he tells us how we should pray.

We should pray with this awareness that we are praying to our Heavenly Father. He is gracious, therefore we can pray and ask him boldly.

He is good, therefore we can pray and trust him fully for whatever he gives in answer to our prayers.

[64 : 38] Jesus taught this to teach us to pray, what to pray, and how to pray. As I was preparing, I thought about a hymn that we're going to sing in just a couple of moments.

What a friend we have in Jesus. And the first verse of it is, what a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear, what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Brothers and sisters, it is a privilege to be able to pray and address the God of the universe as Father.

It's a privilege, an amazing privilege that we take for granted. But you know what, as much as a privilege as that is, sometimes we still find ourselves in seasons of prayerlessness, in seasons of neglect.

God. And one of the schemes of the enemy is to try to deceive us, to link our performance in prayer with our acceptance before God.

[66 : 05] One of the schemes of the enemy is to cause us to relate to God based on our performance in prayer. If we think we're doing well in prayer, then we can be bold in coming before God and our view of our relationship with him.

But when our prayers have been diminished and our souls are cold, we can begin to think that God is relating to us based on our performance in prayer.

And that's not so. Brothers and sisters, we are called to pray. We need to grow in prayer. And I pray that we do. But let us never allow how we're doing in prayer to give us confidence before God in terms of our acceptance before him.

The truth is that Jesus has succeeded in prayer in every place where we feel. And when the Father hears us, when he does hear our prayers, he hears us, not because of us, but he hears us because of his Son.

And he accepts us not because of the effectiveness of our prayers, he accepts us because of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That is our confidence that we come before God.

[67 : 24] We come before him boldly because the way has been made open through the blood of Jesus Christ that we are sons and daughters of the King. And nothing changes that.

Nothing enhances that. that is a subtle fact in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

So each day, let us, like Jesus, find that place. And let us use this pattern that he has given to us.

And let us pray to God, not just for ourselves, but also for brothers and sisters in Christ.