

Luke 11:1-4 - First Things First

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[0 : 00] In our journey through the Gospel of Luke, we've slowed down for Jesus to teach us to pray using the beautiful words of the Lord's Prayer that James just sang.

I recall that last week as Jesus started that, He did so by telling us to pray to our Father. That our miraculous, incredible relationship that we have with the person to whom we are praying is really what's at the heart of a life of prayer.

God has adopted us into His family. He invites us therefore always, anytime, into His presence. He loves us. He's interested in our hearts, not merely our words.

And we're gonna see that again this morning. As we run and jump in our Father's lap to talk with Him and listen to Him, Jesus now begins directing us in what should be on our hearts to ask Him as we talk to Him.

Let's read again this portion of God's inerrant Word. Luke 11 at verse 1. 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 : 40] And He said to them, when you pray, say, Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us and lead us not into temptation.

Let's pray. Father, we do pray these things. We've said them already.

We've sung them. We've heard them sung. Would You make them not just words that often are on our lips, but Father, as You work by Your Spirit among us this morning, make them true in our hearts that these would be the things that we treasure, that we value, that we long for.

And then may we pray them more. Teach us, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. If your prayers are anything like mine, often are, they could probably be compared to Christmas shopping lists. You've made them before. I need help. I need to get some healing for them, wisdom for him, patience for her, provision for them.

[3 : 07] The list goes on and on. All of the things that we need to get. The natural tendency of our hearts in prayer is for our prayers to be about things that we need, right?

And I think our Heavenly Father is not frustrated by that at all. That we're bringing the needs of our hearts to Him. He loves that. He wants to hear them. So He doesn't want to drive us away in those moments, but rather what He wants is to help us see even deeper needs, things that we truly, truly need that we may not even know to ask for.

We know that in general, out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. And that's true in prayer too, that what's in our heart is what comes out when we pray.

Prayer is not merely words coming out of our mouths, but actually longings coming out of our hearts. We pray for things that we deeply desire, right?

That's why we're praying. And so we get this morning to what are called the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. The things that we ask for when Jesus teaches us to pray.

[4 : 24] And we find out that Jesus is shaping not merely our prayers, not just trying to put some words on our lips, but really our priorities. The passions of our hearts, Jesus wants to shape with these.

God our Father desires to give us the desires of our hearts. And He wants our hearts shaped to delight in the things that delight Him that are also what's good for us.

Isn't that amazing? That He's that gracious and glorious, that the things that we're most supposed to long for are the things that delight Him also are the things we really need.

This morning we're gonna look at the first two petitions. Hallowed be your name and your kingdom come. Where does Jesus start as we bring our needs to our Father?

As He says, pray like this. What is it we're supposed to pray for? What's most on the heart of Jesus? Maybe not the things that make most of our Christmas lists.

[5 : 31] He starts with the glory of God's name and the coming of God's kingdom. Both God-focused requests, right?

Your name. Your kingdom. We know that these things are to be priorities for us. That's not new information here in the Lord's Prayer.

All the way back to Psalm 115. Not to us, O Lord. Not to us, but to your name give glory for your steadfast love and your faithfulness.

In fact, Matthew 6, verse 33, Jesus says, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you. We're supposed to be, as Ron has led us already, about the glory of God, the kingdom of God.

That's what it's about. These are to be our priorities. And so if those things are our priorities, it will change what we ask for in prayer.

[6 : 35] And also, in many cases, we'll still bring the same particular needs to God and find it will just change how we pray for the things that we're already praying for.

A loved one has cancer and you pray for healing, right? Anything else? Your marriage is struggling and you pray for restoration.

Anything else? Kids, you may have this other kid at school, maybe someone in your class who's just being unkind to you over and over and it's really starting to bother you and you pray that you will grow up to be bigger and stronger so you can beat him up.

Anything else you would pray? I hope so. Well, we have needs. We bring them to our Father but these priorities are going to shape the way we pray for everything.

We're gonna come back to all three of those situations and think practically about how we pray the way Jesus teaches us. But first, let's look at each of the two petitions briefly.

[7 : 46] What priorities is Jesus teaching us to have as we pray? The first one is God's name. Hallowed be your name.

Father, hallowed be your name. Some of you have great names. Others of us regularly get mail addressed to Mr. Stink.

It's not funny. You shouldn't laugh at people who go through this. It's really discouraging actually, right? Now, nine out of ten of them it's junk mail. Because if you don't care enough to know my name or at least know that it's not Stink, then probably we don't have a deep personal relationship. It's probably an indication the way you think about my name whether or not you're caring for me personally. If you don't know my name you're not really concerned about me usually, right?

Because what's our name?

It represents something more than that, doesn't it? It's our person. It's our character. Our reputation perhaps. And we're very concerned about protecting our good name, aren't we?

[8 : 57] Especially if you have one. About having a good reputation with people. All the way back to the Tower of Babel people have been seeking to make a name for themselves, to bring glory to themselves, to be great and mighty.

We're pretty passionate about our names. I'm not sure many of us are equally passionate about the name of God, about His glory.

We may know the Reformation mantra, soli Deo gloria. You may even know what those Latin words mean. To God alone, the glory. But we often live with our glory at the front of our minds, don't we?

Our reputations need to be protected. Our honor needs to be defended. But Jesus says, pray, Father, hallowed be Your name.

Not what will people think of me, but what do people say of Yahweh, the God and King of all?

Hallowed is one of those words that we don't use a lot these days.

[10 : 13] At least I don't. Maybe you do. I remember when I was a kid, first of all, I thought it was hollow. And I didn't really understand what it meant for a name to be hollow. And then for many years, I thought it was connected to Halloween.

And so Halloween and the Lord's Prayer were really connected in my mind. Kids, I suspect some of you may have made that same connection. And you may not know what it means to pray, hallowed be Your name.

So if it connects to Halloween for you, let me see if I can help a little bit so you can remember.

What's Halloween about? You know. Candy. You getting candy.

Okay? Hallowed is different. Hallowed is not about you getting candy. It's about God getting glory. Not candy.

God doesn't need candy. Glory. God getting glory. In other words, it's saying that God is special and worthy of all of our praise.

[11 : 12] That He is absolutely unique. For God's name to be hallowed means He's honored as holy and worthy and glorious beyond anyone else.

Completely set apart. And you may be thinking, but isn't God already holy and worthy in all of those things? Yes. He is. And what we're praying for when we say this is that more and more He would be honored as such.

Recognized as such. More and more in this world. Puritan Thomas Watson goes through a list of those who dishonor the name of God.

The God who's uniquely holy and the only true God. And Watson writes a paragraph about Muslims. He writes a paragraph about Jews. He writes a paragraph about Catholics.

And then He writes multiple pages about Protestants. His own people. And how we dishonor the name of God. Fail to hallow His name.

[12 : 21] And we do it with our lips, He says, in speaking God's name carelessly or irreverently. I mean, after all, doesn't everyone these days? We can even do it in Facebook shorthand.

We can, there's a lot of ways that we can throw God's name around, but we'd never stand for someone to treat our names carelessly and disparagingly. More often though, that's not the deepest issue.

The issue is even more serious in our lives. Because remember, it's not just a name, right? It's not just the letters and the word that they spell. It's the person that that name represents.

Our Father. God Himself. Because God's name is about His entire person, Watson says, we fail to hallow it when we fail to acknowledge God before others.

When we fail in our lives to trust Him to provide for us as a good father would, we're not hallowing His name. When we fail to praise Him for good gifts that He's given us, all of these ways where we fail to acknowledge God's unique greatness, we fail to hallow His name.

[13 : 37] So when we pray for God's name to be hallowed, we pray that in our hearts and in our lives, God's glory would be our first priority.

In the second petition, Jesus teaches us another priority. Again, it's focused on God. Your kingdom come. And in the same way, just as God's name is already holy but it's not honored as such all the time, so God is the king.

There's no question about it. God is the king but His reign is not evident everywhere, is it? Think back to the book of Judges all the way back in the Old Testament.

Time after time, it says there was no king in Israel and what happened as a result of that? Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Sadly, what was right in their own eyes led to all sorts of horrific acts.

The same is true today when God's not honored as king. Where the reign of the true king is not evident, where we and those around us like the Israelites deny God's authority and reject His rule.

[14 : 59] Ron said earlier as he was leading us in confession, we saw this happening in the awful, heartbreaking events in Charlottesville this weekend.

Listen, there is but one king. There is one God who has the supremacy, Colossians chapter 1. He alone has supremacy, not white people. And when He is seated on His throne, when that king is on the throne, people from every race, every tribe and tongue and people and nation gather together to worship Him.

Amen? That's the good news of the gospel. Any other group claiming supremacy, setting themselves up above others, is in rebellion against the true king.

And any individual, me, or you, who is pursuing his own desires and his own plans instead of God's laws and decrees, is in rebellion against the true king.

[16 : 14] Luke has shown us repeatedly that the kingdom comes in the person of Jesus. In word and in deed.

Over and over again, we've read it, right? We've seen it happen as Jesus shows up. When faith in Him displaces unbelief, when the light of His presence drives out darkness and demons, when His salvation is proclaimed and His power is displayed, Jesus and His disciples say, the kingdom of God has come upon you.

The kingdom of God is at hand. In Matthew's gospel, we get further explanation of this petition for God's kingdom to come.

Jesus adds, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus taught often on prayer so it shouldn't surprise us that these passages in Matthew and Luke look a little different.

They're clearly from different times in Jesus' ministry. There's slight differences there. Matthew usually includes a little bit more in His account here in the Lord's Prayer. But that helpful explanation of Thy kingdom come meaning Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven helps us understand that God's kingdom coming involves His rule being more and more evident as we follow His will more and more faithfully here on earth.

[17 : 46] That's what it means for His kingdom to come. Warren Wiersbe says this really helpfully I think. the purpose of prayer is not to get man's will done in heaven as we often think it is right?

But to get God's will done on earth. In other words not to get God on our agenda here's the things you need to be doing God but to get us on God's agenda to have our hearts redirected toward God's priorities toward a kingdom of justice and righteousness and peace that He's the King of where every person flourishes the way God created them to and fills the earth with His glory the way He always designed.

When we pray for God's kingdom to come in the words of our catechism we pray for Satan's kingdom to be destroyed and the kingdom of grace to be advanced.

That prayer is a declaration of war. A declaration of war on Satan and his kingdom. As Pastor Eugene Peterson says it's a subversive activity that involves a more or less open act of defiance against any claim by the current regime.

Prayer's not passive is it? You can feel that way sometimes it's not true at all. It's actually featured in the armor of God passage about our spiritual warfare.

[19 : 22] Prayer is how we fight. So Samuel Chadwick says the devil laughs at our toil when we work hard. He mocks at our wisdom when we think we can out think him.

but he trembles when we pray. Do you believe that? Does getting down on your knees feel like taking out your sword?

You tapping into something powerful? Are you fighting for the kingdom when you pray? Let me just speak my heart to you for just a minute.

I hope Lord willing to be here with you all for a long time. And it's not just because I enjoy hanging out with you. It's not just because I want the years to pass and us to make memories together and build big houses and all of that.

Although I do love making memories. It's a lot of fun. Listen, here's why I want to be here. I want to storm the gates of hell with you. I want to be about something bigger than just me and seeing if I can make it through for a little while and if we can be a little happier than we were yesterday.

[20 : 35] I want to see the gates of hell stormed. Souls who are facing certain death brought back to everlasting life. To see broken and hurting people in these pews and in those streets to experience the healing and the peace of God.

To see our city transformed one relationship, one system and situation, at a time, to be a place where justice and righteousness rule and are evident everywhere.

I want to see our kids grow up in a community of brothers and sisters and friends and neighbors that are teaching them, pointing them to Jesus, teaching them to pour their lives out for each other, not just to live for themselves.

I want to see this sanctuary full of rich and poor and black and white and young and old because all of those things are a taste of God's eternal kingdom.

I want to have that with y'all. And I'm more and more convinced that there's one thing more than anything else that we need to be doing if that's our passion and if that's what we want to experience.

[21 : 52] If we're going to advance the kingdom of God, our vision tells us that's what we're here for, we must fervently pray. And that may seem strange to some of you.

Of all the things that we could be doing, we must pray individually and corporately. Day and night, in the prayer room, in the hallways, with our neighbors, with our coworkers, we must pray because of this because God is the one who advances his kingdom.

Wow, that was profound. Like you didn't know that, right? Who's the king? Who's the one that moves the kingdom forward? He is. Francis Schaeffer used to always say, we don't advance God's

kingdom.

God is building his kingdom and we are praying for the privilege of being involved. And he delights to use us in that, to allow us to be a part of it.

He's building his kingdom. So the first thing we can do is to pray and to plead to see it happen. It's why we say in our core commitments as a church that we don't just pray for the work of the church, prayer is the work of the church because it's weak people prevailing upon the one strong person we have, our strong father, to do mighty things in us and through us and in spite of us because he's at work.

[23 : 27] See, the church of Jesus Christ is the beachhead of the kingdom. It's where it begins and from which it does all of its work moving forward.

It's the place where the king is trusted, where his grace and his power are to be demonstrated and where all other kingdoms, including my personal one where I'd like to build my own things and Satan's competing one, all of those other kingdoms are demolished.

So if you want to storm the gates of hell, if you want to be about something as exciting and as big as that, you're in the right place. Connect to the church.

Support the church. Remember, because of the might of her king, let's be really clear where the strength comes from. Because of the greatness of Jesus, the gates of hell will not prevail against whom?

The church. We will storm the gates of hell and so to do so, we take out our swords and we kneel down and pray, Thy kingdom come.

[24 : 44] And Satan trembles. And God moves and he conquers our hearts and our city and our world and you don't recognize any of us or any of it when he gets through.

That seems like a lot to pray for. It is. I need to remind you who we're praying to. Our father, the one we started this prayer with last week, is the king over all kings.

He is the king of kings. Thou art coming to a king. Large petitions with thee bring. For his grace and power are such none can ever ask too much.

That's John Newton. Amazing grace. See, God-centered priorities change what we pray about.

They lift our eyes beyond our petty preferences and our personal gripes to long for his glory and desire his kingdom.

To pray for faith to come in our most hated enemies. To pray for healing in the most hopeless cases. To pray for justice in the most evil situations.

[26 : 11] That's why this prayer guide we've started printing and emailing to you every week. It always starts on the first page with prayers that are for the advancement of God's kingdom in our church and around the world with our ministry partners.

To help us remember the priority of praying big picture and for kingdom movement everywhere. Everywhere. We don't want to miss the priority of those prayers.

It changes what we pray for. But what's even more exciting to me, what God's been teaching me so much in the last few months, is that this priority changes how we pray for the things we're already praying for.

Let's go back to those examples we had earlier. If you look on the second page of this where we put some of our specific needs, I know you're not holding it right now, but if you look on it sometime, you'll see particular things like pray for Mike Stanfield as he undergoes stem cell treatment this week for his cancer.

Pray for Mike. Sure, sure, I'll pray for Mike. Pray what for Mike? This is shorthand. Pray for Mike Stanfield. If our priorities are God and his glory and his kingdom, what do we pray for Mike?

[27 : 27] I talked with Mike this week before he went in for his treatment, and it won't surprise those of you who know him to know that he's praying for healing.

He wants healing from this cancer. But what he asked me particularly to pray for was that he would learn more of who God is in the midst of this situation and God's daily fatherly care for him.

And then he said, pray that others would be impacted for Christ and for his kingdom as I undergo this treatment. Do you see how God-centered priorities make a difference in how we pray for those things?

Mike is asking for the name of God, for the kingdom of God to be promoted even through this difficulty he didn't ask for. Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come in my cancer, in my struggling marriage. How about that?

[28 : 38] How do you pray for that one? Do you just pray God fix him or fix her or fix us because this is miserable? And I want us to stay together?

Or could we pray, Father, how are you teaching me to trust you more in this difficult relationship? Father, please give us forgiveness for each other.

Not just so our life is better. Not just so our kids can be happy. But because it's about your glory. So your glory is on display as we forgive and love the way you designed us to in marriage.

That's what our marriage was about. I remember back in those days. It's about your glory. It's about showing your love. God, would you help us do that? How about that classmate being unkind to you?

What do you think, kids? Is it wrong to pray that God would make that mean kid start being nice so that you can enjoy school more? No, that's a good prayer.

[29 : 42] God loves to hear that prayer. What else could you pray for? What about praying that God would teach you more about how Jesus suffered for us?

The pain and the difficulty he went through. What if you prayed that God would teach you patience and teach you to trust him in a really hard situation like that?

What if you even prayed that God would help you show his love to that kid? That that kid would actually know the love of King Jesus because he experienced some of it from you.

That'd be a kingdom prayer, wouldn't it? That King Jesus would be seen in your life. It's easy to say those things.

It's hard for that to be what we actually want, isn't it, kids? When what we really want is to be able to beat him up. Seems quicker and easier. But this is part of how God's shaping our hearts.

[30 : 47] It's what Jesus is doing as he teaches us to pray. Shaping our hearts to seek first his kingdom and live for his glory. He's teaching us what to love, what to long for, what to hold as highest priority.

And isn't that the way Jesus not only prays but also lives? Think about it. Think about the life of Jesus. For all those times we fail to seek first God's kingdom, we need to remember Jesus' faithfulness to do so.

From his temptation, when Satan offered him his own kingdom instead of trusting his father's way.

A chance to make his own name great instead of exalting God's name.

And Jesus trusts God. Jesus hallows God's name. All the way to the Garden of Gethsemane where his passion for the father's will to be done surpasses all his other desires.

including avoiding excruciating pain and suffering. He wants God's will to be done. Then all the way to the cross where he even lays down his very life to see the kingdom of God built up and you and me brought in to be a part of it.

[32 : 12] That's how passionately he lived for God's kingdom. His success where we failed is what welcomes us to this table.

We celebrate at this table this morning a Savior who prayed and lived, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

And so we come to rest in him, to feast on and find life in him, and to be strengthened by the body and blood he gave for us to make his priorities our priorities too.

As we prepare our hearts to come to this table, we're going to practice praying again as Jesus is teaching us. Here are three questions again to guide our hearts as we pray.

Three questions, they're printed there in your bulletin if you want to be able to take them home.

What things fight for priority over God's glory in your heart and life? We often call these idols.

[33 : 20] Secondly, where do you groan against evil and injustice in the world? Do you see wickedness in your own heart?

Do you think of human trafficking, poverty? Do you think of Charlottesville? Do you think of things closer to home and your heart longs for something different? Finally, how do you long to see the gospel and the church advance?

Where do you want it individually? In each of us and in others? What about in us as a body together? How are you praying for God to move his kingdom forward through us?

Take a minute, just contemplate these words that are coming up on the screen now for just a moment. We're gonna pray them together as we prepare to come to this table. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[34 : 46] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Join me as we pray and I'll give you three chances to stop and pray silently as well. Let's pray. Holy Father, there is no other God besides you who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders.

You alone are worthy of our praise. May your glory fill the whole earth, every people and every heart. Father, the affections of our hearts are pulled after so many other things.

And we confess these to you now. Join me again.

Father, the sinfulness of our hearts and the brokenness of this world are evil. We cry out to you for these things now.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[36 : 24] Amen. Join with me.

Father, may your rule and reign come powerfully in the hearts of those we love, in the church and community we love.

Join me.

At this table, may we see you as holy, our sin as heinous, your kingdom as gracious and glorious.

Amen. Amen. Our Lord Jesus, on the night that he was betrayed, took bread. He broke it and gave it to his disciples as I ministering in his name, give this bread to you.

[38 : 07] And he said, take, eat. This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

And after supper, he took the cup.

He said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which was shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink from it, all of you. This is the Lord's table. We come, not just those who are members of this church, Southwood Presbyterian, but we come, all those of us trusting the Lord to his table. Those of us clinging to King Jesus as our only hope, committing to make his kingdom and his name the focus of our lives.

We come here to feast and to be strengthened to that end. If you know him, come and celebrate with us. If you don't know him, don't come to this table, but we'd love to tell you more about King Jesus so that you could come and know him.

Our host team will usher you to tables forward and back. We will celebrate together the love of our King for us, that he gave his life in our place.

[39 : 19] Let's do that now.