

Campaigners Service - Keep On Praying

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Blessed. Let's turn again to the chapter we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 11.

And I'm not going to read the whole section, but verses 1 to 13. And in it we have the Lord's Prayer. We have the full Lord's Prayer in Matthew chapter 6, but again Jesus is summarizing, as it were, the Lord's Prayer here in this chapter.

And we'll just read at the beginning when it says, 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.

And Jesus said to them, When you pray, say, Father, so unhallowed be your name. One of the greatest things that your mums and dads ever did for you was to teach you to say your prayers.

Very important. Every night before you go to bed, go to sleep, it's very, very important to ask the Lord to bless you and to watch over you.

[1 : 12] Because, you know, when you're sleeping, you can't. You can't watch yourself. That's one thing. When you sleep, you've no idea what's going on round and about. And so it's wonderful to know, the psalm tells us, that the Lord, he never slumbers and he never sleeps.

So it's wonderful to be able to go and to ask somebody who is altogether powerful to watch over you when you're sleeping. And it's also important that we, not only when we finish the day, we ask the Lord to watch over us and bless us, but also in the morning.

We should always be asking the Lord to help us in the day, to help us to be wise, to be careful in what we say, to live in a right way.

We should be asking the Lord for his help all the time. And so prayer is something that's very, very important. It's something you learn about at campaigners and Sunday school.

It's something that we do in church all the time. It's very important to pray. But of course, it's not just in church that we pray. I would hate if we could only pray in church.

[2 : 24] Imagine if the only place that you could pray was in church. It would mean that if you wanted to speak to God, no matter where you were or what time it was, you would have to make your way here or to any other churches in Stornow.

That would be really, really, really difficult. Supposing you were really needing the Lord at two o'clock in the morning. You would have to phone Donnie, the church officer, and ask him to come down and open the church so that you could go in and pray.

Wouldn't that be awful? But we're able to pray anywhere, at any time. Sometimes we forget just how absolutely wonderful that is.

The Bible is full of examples of praying in different places. We read about David and Samson. They prayed in battle. We read about Jacob.

He prayed in the wilderness and he prayed by the river. Remember, the strangest place where anybody prayed in the Bible was Jonah. Because Jonah prayed from the belly of a whale down deep in the water.

[3 : 41] Now, I don't think anybody, I'd be very surprised if there were many, if any others that did that. There may have been, maybe somebody else has been swallowed by a whale and spat out. But Jonah, do you remember, was swallowed by the whale.

And he prayed. You read Jonah chapter 2, and the whole of Jonah chapter 2 is his prayer from the belly of the whale. So that shows us how we can pray anywhere.

Jesus prayed on the top of the mountain. He prayed on the hillside. He prayed in the garden. He even prayed when they were hammering the nails into his hands and into his feet.

So I hope that every day that you are in the habit of praying. Today I believe there will be Christians who are in submarines, and they will be praying from way down in the depth of the ocean.

We know that some of the astronauts who have gone into space in a rocket have been Christians, and they've prayed from up in space. So there is prayer in this world, prayer in space, prayer we can pray in a plane or pray anywhere.

[4 : 51] And the wonderful thing to know and to remember and understand is that God hears and answers prayer. I'm going to tell you a story. Now I've told this story before, but it's a long time since, and I know some of you young people have not heard this.

This is a true story, and it's about something that happened with myself. And I, like you, was brought up to say my prayers and to believe that God hears and God answers prayer. And when I was about the age of six, we moved for a few years to a place in Skye called Portree, and that's where I spent a lot of time, a number of years.

And there was a pier there, and I loved going down to the pier, and I loved looking at boats. Still do. But I always was, I loved to walk on the edge of the pier and see how close to the edge I could go, and even sometimes stand on one leg on the edge of the pier.

I loved to do daring things. And somebody told my mum, I was just a wee boy, what I was doing, and my mum banned me from going to the pier. Ah, that was, to me, that was awful.

And I loved when a big boat would come in. And back then, there were two boats, bigger boats.

[6 : 08] There used to be a wee boat that would come in that would sail from Portree to Razzie and to Kyle. But a lot of the cargo came in bigger boats. There were two main boats that used to come in called the Loch Caren and the Loch Den Wagen.

And they used to bring supplies. They would bring big things that a crane would take off. And I remember this day, seeing the Loch Den Wagen had come in, and I so wanted to go down and see that big boat, because it was bigger than most of the boats that came in.

And I didn't go. There was a voice saying, On you go, your mum will never, ever know. And another voice was saying, No, don't. Obey your parents.

So there was this struggle going on within me, and there was a street, Boswell Terrace, and you could stand there and look down to the pier. And I was looking there. And I remember, I was just a young boy, and I prayed, and I said, Lord, help me to get down to see that boat in a way that will be okay with my mum.

It was a very simple prayer. That's all I prayed. And that evening, just after tea, this man came in, and this man was somebody who was friendly with my dad.

[7 : 24] I think they had been at sea long ago. This man was, he had a strange name, but he was from here. I think he was from the East Coast originally, somewhere away, but he was married to a lady from here, and he stayed down in Newton.

And his name was Mr. Spinks. And maybe one or two of the older people here might remember that name. And I was introduced to him.

They said, this is Mr. Spinks. He's on the boat, the Lochton Beggen. And I remember saying to him, oh, that must be great being on that boat. I said, I would love to be on a boat like that.

Well, he said, after tea, you and your dad will come down with me, and I'll show you around the boat. And that night, myself and my dad went down. So I wasn't just standing on the pier, looking on the boat.

I was all around. It was up in the bridge. It was everywhere. And I was thinking, you know, God heard my little prayer, and he gave me far more.

[8 : 22] I just asked that I might be able to get down to see the boat. Because I had obeyed my parents, and I had trusted the Lord, he helped me to get onto the boat, every part of it, and even be right up on the bridge.

And I'm telling that story because it just shows simple little faith, the faith Jesus emphasizes, the importance of faith like a child.

So you make sure that you go to the Lord and bring everything to the Lord and trust him, that he will answer your prayers. So we see here, in this chapter, that Jesus, the most perfect person ever, that Jesus is somebody who was always praying.

And when Jesus had finished praying on this occasion, his disciples who heard him pray, they thought, whoa, he really is good at praying.

And they thought about themselves, and they say, I can't pray like that. And so one of them said, Lord, will you teach us how to pray?

[9 : 36] Because John the Baptist, he's taught his disciples how to pray. Will you teach us how to pray? And so this is where we have what is known as the Lord's Prayer.

And I would say this, if Jesus, who was the most perfect person who ever lived in this world, found it essential to be praying every day and all day and all the time, and John the Baptist, who Jesus said was the greatest man born of woman, that he was praying all the time, how much more is it important that you and I are learning how to pray?

So the disciples said to Jesus, Lord, teach us to pray. And Jesus gave them what is known as the Lord's Prayer.

And what we have here is what we would call a pattern for prayer. Jesus is giving us a model of prayer, a pattern. My late mother-in-law was always knitting.

Anytime she sat down, out would come the knitting needles and she would start knitting. And I would say to her, what are you knitting this time, granny? Sometimes a cardigan, sometimes a jumper, sometimes a pair of socks.

[10 : 53] She was always knitting. But she had, when she would start out, she always had this piece of paper and on it was a pattern. She didn't just say, right, I'm going to just decide something in my head and I'm going to knit.

There was a pattern which she had to follow. And if she followed that correctly, then when she finished, there would be a beautiful cardigan, beautiful jumper. In fact, I had a jumper, I wore that jumper that she had knitted, but she followed that pattern.

It's the same if you're going to build a house. You have to have plans. You have to have drawings of it. You can't come along just with lorry loads of bricks and say, right, I'm going to build a house here and we'll see what, what kind of house are you going to build?

I don't know, but we'll see as we start. You can't do that. You have to have drawings and a pattern. And that's what Jesus has given us here. It's like a model, a pattern for prayer.

And yes, I believe we should all pray every day the Lord's Prayer because it's the most wonderful prayer. But we should also pray ourselves building on that prayer.

[12 : 03] And so Jesus begins and he says, Father, elsewhere, the other time in the fuller prayer, he says, our Father, which art in heaven, our Father, he begins with Father.

Now, in one sense, God is the Father of everybody in the sense that he is our maker. But only when we receive Jesus is God really and truly our Father.

And you know, the most important thing for you, and I'm going to say this, is that you receive Jesus. A lot of people, and it's not just young people, a lot of people struggle about how to become a Christian.

Well, what we've got to remember is that salvation is a gift. It's God's gift. God has a gift he wants to give you. And the gift that he wants to give you is Jesus, his son.

And what do you do with that gift? You receive it. So, the question you have to ask yourself is, have I received the gift that God is giving?

[13 : 19] And you know, the sad thing is a lot of people say, no, I don't want God's gift. That's one of the saddest things. And I hope none of you will ever say, I don't want God's gift. I don't want the great gift of Jesus.

You ask that God will help you so that you will want Jesus above everybody else and that you will receive Jesus as your very own.

And so, that's what we have here. Our Father, our Father, hallowed be your name. Now, to hallow means very simply to honor as holy.

And so, when we come to God, we have to give him real respect. We've got to remember that we're coming before the greatest king that there ever has been.

The greatest. He's the king above every king. And you know, I want you to think about that when you come in prayer. That you're coming to the most powerful king, the ruler, over this whole wide world.

[14 : 21] And you and I can come to him. And we can speak to him. And we ask, and we share things. It's amazing.

But when we come with respect in our heart. If you're going to meet somebody really, really, really important, you would be in your best behavior. You wouldn't be acting up.

You'd be saying, I must be really good today. I must be in my best behavior. Well, when we come to God in prayer, that's how we should come. Because we're coming before this wonderful, wonderful person.

And so, we then pray, and that's one other thing I would say. When we come to God, and remembering who God is, and God is holy, we have to be careful using his name.

You know, an awful lot of people use God. God says, you mustn't use my name in a wrong way. A lot of people swear using God's name in a wrong way. And do you know what God says?

[15 : 24] I won't hold guiltless. In other words, everybody who uses God's name in a wrong way is guilty. And that's an awful thing. Don't use God's name in a wrong way.

We use God's name in a right way, and it's wonderful that we can actually use his name at all. And so, we say, your kingdom come. Now, we live in a kingdom.

We live in the United Kingdom. But God also has a kingdom. And when we pray for God's kingdom to come, we're praying that the king of the kingdom, who is Jesus, would come into our heart.

And we're also praying that King Jesus, that his kingdom will spread right throughout this world. So, when we pray that God's kingdom will come, we want, first of all, that we'll come to know the king, Jesus, as our savior.

Then, that we will grow, becoming more and more like Jesus. Jesus. But also, when we pray that the kingdom will come, is that the kingdom will come all over.

[16 : 33] That Stornoway will be full of people where the kingdom has come into their lives. That the whole of Lewis, that the whole of Harris, the Western Isles, that the whole of Scotland, the whole of Britain, that all over the world, that more and more people will come to know Jesus as his kingdom comes.

That's what we pray. And then, it says, give us each day our daily bread. Now, that doesn't just mean that all we pray for is bread.

Bread is important. It was terribly important back in the day, back in Jesus' time. It's still important today. And bread, if there was no bread, there would be a crisis. But when we pray, give us this day, our daily bread, it means give us, Lord, all the things that we need for life.

Because there's loads of things that we need. We don't pray to Jesus, Lord, give me everything that I want. You know something? I thank the Lord that the Lord didn't give me everything that I wanted when I was young.

There were many things that I wanted, and I am so glad I didn't get them. At the time, I thought it was the most important thing for my life. God knows what's best for us, and we have to trust him.

[18 : 02] So God promises, and he says, I'll give you the things you need. I'm not promising you, I will give you everything you want. And there's a difference there. So it's important that we go to the Lord every day, and we say, Lord, give us this day our daily bread.

And then it tells us this, we pray, forgive us our sins. But then it adds, for we ourselves forgive everyone who's indebted to us.

Two sides to this. We go to the Lord and say, Lord, forgive me all my sins. And we want to because we've all done wrong things. We're all doing wrong things all the time. And a lot of the time we don't even realize it.

But we're asking God, Lord, wipe the slate clean. Clean away. Wash, rub out all my sins with the blood of Jesus Christ. Rub, clean me, cleanse me from my sin.

But the Lord says, there's another side to this. You notice what it says? Forgive us our sins for we. For we forgive.

[19 : 08] others. Do you? Do I? Every day? Are we ready to forgive those who have wronged us? Or are we building them all up?

Have we got a wee, almost like a wee diary of saying, oh, he did this and he did that. Oh, I'm going to pay back. I'll tell you what, I'm going to pay him back. I'm going to pay her back. Or are we saying, oh, I've got to forgive.

Because Jesus is saying, you're asking me to forgive sins just as you forgive those who have wronged you. Remember how a man asked Jesus, how often do I forgive my brother?

The question, he said, seven times. Remember I was telling you before about, I can't remember the story exactly, but this boy, there were two brothers and one brother was very, very clumsy and he was always knocking and breaking things that belonged to the other.

One was the two boys who was Roddy and John. John was the clumsy one. And Roddy was always getting angry with him for breaking things and spoiling things.

[20 : 19] His mother used to get, Roddy's mother used to get at him for he was always at his brother. And she said, you know, and she read this from the Bible where the question was asked, how often should I forgive my brother?

Seven times? And all he heard was seven times. He said, all right, that's it. From now on, I will forgive my brother seven times, but oh, look out.

See when he does the seventh one, that's wrong, when he goes past that. And that day, one thing after another went wrong. He lost his game, he broke something on his back, there's one thing after another.

And then the final straw when they were having supper at night, John went and spilled the milk all over Roddy. And Roddy said, right, that's it. And he went hammering up to his room and he started getting all his things and throwing them off the wall.

He was so angry. His mother came in and she said, what are you doing? He said, I forgave my brother seven times. That was the eighth time. And she said, no, no, no, no, no.

[21 : 21] Jesus said, when he was asked that question, how often do I forgive? Seven times? And Jesus said, no, but 70 times seven. Roddy was doing his wee bit of mental arithmetic 70 times.

That's 490 times. Oh, I can't, I can't do that. His mother said, the point Jesus is saying is that forgiveness is ongoing.

You're always forgiving. You're always forgiving. And so that's something we need to pray for is a forgiving spirit because sometimes it's very difficult for us to forgive.

I'm sure all of you in here today that there are some people or a person or something and you're saying, you know, you're asking me to forgive. I'm telling you, it's hard.

Well, you think of what God has forgiven you. And the worst thing that we can do, worst thing that Christians can do is to receive all God's forgiveness and yet not be forgiving to others.

[22 : 27] So this is where we need God's help and we need God's grace. And lead us not into temptation. So what is temptation? Well, in a sense temptation is the feeling we get to do something even when we know it's wrong.

Do you ever get that? That feeling to do something and you really want to do it but you know it's wrong. That's temptation. temptation. And you know, temptation is part and partial of our lives.

It happens all the time. It all began in the Garden of Eden. Remember how God said you can eat of everything. It's all yours except one. There's one tree.

See that tree there? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Do not eat of the fruit of that tree. If you do, the day you eat of it you will die. Adam and Eve said, okay.

And then Satan came along in the form of the guise of the serpent, remember. Eve was in the garden there and he took her mind, focused her mind on the tree and he said, see that tree?

[23 : 37] It's beautiful, isn't it? And Eve said, yeah, it is beautiful. See the fruit on that tree. Wouldn't that fruit be nice? And as Eve looked in the fruit of the tree, it tells us that she saw that it was beautiful.

And you know, that's what temptation does. It makes us look at something in a way that we don't just look at it but we begin to long for it. We know it's wrong and Eve said, but God said we weren't to take of it.

And Satan said, no, no, you can. Look how beautiful it is. Go on, try it. But Eve said, no, she said, God said the day we eat of it will die.

And Satan said, no, you won't. Do you know what will happen? You only know good. Take that and it's going to be good for you. You will know evil as well.

It's going to be a great experience. Good and evil. On you go. And the longer she looked, the more beautiful that fruit appeared. The more she desired it until in the end she took it and she took it and ate and gave to Adam.

[24 : 58] And we know the rest. That's where the fall, where all the disobedience brought the collapse so that our world, there was a world to begin with that there was only good.

Now there's good and evil. And the evil is terrible. And that's what temptation is all about. And you ask, Lord, help me with temptation because every day you're tempted, I'm tempted.

And it's so easy to give in because temptation can become really, really powerful. And then Jesus, time is going very briefly here. This is where he's teaching us the importance of prayer.

And he tells this story about a friend who wouldn't give up. And this man had a friend. And this man, he got visitors. And at midnight, there were visitors who came really late and he didn't have any food.

So he went to his friend. And he started knocking on the door and he said, excuse me, hey, hey, can you wake him up? I want three loaves. And the man in the house had no intention of getting up, even although that man outside was his friend.

[26 : 07] It was midnight. And he, but the man kept knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock. And he said, oh, go away. And he said, I can't get up and give you because he said, I'm in bed.

And the children, you see, back then there would be only one room and there would be only one and all the children, everybody would be together in the one room. And if he got up, he would waken the whole family.

And if you, you know yourself, if there's a baby, the last thing you want to do is in the middle of the night is waking a baby. And then everybody's awake for ages. So he says, I can't get up.

But the man kept knocking. Come on, get up. In the end, he got up, not because he was his friend, but because of his persistence or as it's translated here, his impudence.

He was really cheeky about it. But he just kept going. And Jesus is saying, you know, that's how I want you to keep on praying. Don't give up. The story is told about Robert the Bruce, who was the great famous Scottish king who defeated the English at the Battle of Bannockburn.

[27 : 13] It's all part of history in 1314. Robert the Bruce tried to become king so often and he was failing. The story is told of how he was hiding in a cave and he saw this spider.

And he just, as he was sitting on a stone in the cave, he was very down. And he said, I'm never going to be able to make you get king. Everything's going against me. And he saw this spider and the spider was trying to make a web in the cave.

And it was trying to get up the wall of the cave. And it kept falling down. At first he wasn't paying too much attention to it. But then he began to watch the spider and would try up again and then fall back down.

And would try up again as it was making its way and fall back down. And in the end Bruce was kind of saying, come on spider, you can do it. He was really watching.

And in the end the spider eventually did it. Made it. And Bruce said, you know, I'm like that spider. I have tried and I've tried and I've tried and I've failed. And it's said that he took that he took encouragement from that.

[28 : 17] And he went back and he eventually became king. And became one of the most famous kings that Scotland ever had. And as they say the rest is history. It's all history. But that's just a story of how we have to keep going.

It's so easy to give up. Just because we don't get our answer right away. Jesus says, keep going. Keep on praying. All the time.

When you pray, do you really trust the Lord? Probably one of the great, maybe some of you have heard, maybe some of you haven't. Maybe some of you have once in your Sunday school prize giving, he's been given a book about George Muller.

George Muller was a very famous man who built what was called then orphanages way back in the 1800s. There were an awful lot of illnesses that there was no cure for.

And in so many homes, mums and dads would die from the illnesses. And there were many, an awful lot of orphans. Orphans are children of no, they've lost their mum and their dads.

[29 : 29] Terribly sad. And George Muller was saying, this is terrible. And he began to pray about it and he asked God to help him to build orphanages for, so that there would be places for these children to live and to be watched over.

And you know this, he built loads of orphanages and he built them all by prayer. He had no money. But he would pray to the Lord for huge amounts of money.

And all the time God kept answering his prayer. And one time he had to go over to Quebec, over in Canada.

And back in those days there was no aeroplane, you went by boat. And on the wedding stairs who were crossing the Atlantic, there was a terrible fog. So thick.

And the boat was at a standstill. It just was stopped. They couldn't move. It was too dangerous to move. And George Muller went up to the bridge and he said to the skipper, I have to be in Quebec on Saturday.

[30 : 39] God has told me that I have to be there. But the skipper said, we can't move. Well, George Muller said, right, I'm going to pray that the Lord will lift the fog.

But the skipper said to him, you don't realize how thick this fog is. Well, Muller said, I'm not looking at the fog. I'm looking at the God who is over the fog and over everything else.

And he just went down on his knees and he prayed the most simple childlike prayer. And he said, Lord, you sent me to Quebec.

Please, Lord, lift this fog so that I will do what you asked me to do. And within a very short time, to the skippers and to everybody's amazement, the fog, that thick fog, began to lift.

And George Muller made his appointment in Quebec on a Saturday. That is simple, childlike prayer. That's what the Lord wants us to do.

[31 : 46] That's how he wants us to live. And I hope and pray that that's the way that you will live, every single one of you. Let us pray. Lord, we pray that just as we've been thinking about the wonder of you and what you do for us and the pattern of prayer that you have given to us, help us, Lord, to be always trusting in you.

And as your word teaches us there that if our parents would give us the things, the essential things in life, how much more will our Heavenly Father give to us the Holy Spirit when we ask?

And so we pray to bless us. We pray that our worship might be pleasing in your sight, not because of who we are, but because, Lord, of our love for you.

And even although we are sinners here, we ask that you will forgive us our sin and that you will bless us. Take every one of us to our homes in safety. Bless a cup of tea, coffee, juice in the hall afterwards.

And forgive us all who have sinned in Jesus' name. Amen. I want to say before we sing to the campaigners, thank you for being so, so good and so attentive.

[33 : 05] That was very, very good to you. I credit to your parents and to your leaders. So, thank you. Let us conclude singing from Psalm 23. Psalm 23.

And this is from Sing Psalms. And Psalm 23. We sing the whole psalm. From Sing Psalms on page 28.

The Lord is my shepherd, and O what shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps he brings back to his way.

In straight paths of righteousness making me stay. And this he has done his great name to display. Though I walk in death's valley where darkness is near. Because you're with me, no evil I'll fear.

Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer. To the last verse. So, surely your covenant, mercy, and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.

[34 : 06] I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days. Psalm 23. The whole psalm. The Lord is my shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd.

No one shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow.

He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps he brings back to his way.

In straight paths of righteousness making me stay. And this he has done his great name to display.

Though I walk in death's valley where darkness is near.

[35 : 18] Because you are with me, no evil I'll fear. Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer.

In the sight of my enemies a table you spread.

The oil of rejoicing you poured on my head. My cup over and I'm graciously fed.

So, surely your covenant, mercy, and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.

I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days. May the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore.

[36 : 37] Amen. Amen.