

A Simple Man's Guide To Prayer

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[0:00] Well, it's good to see you all again today. One of them did.

Matthew was a tax collector, so he got his money the wrong way. He was everyone's enemy because he was a tax collector for Rome.

But mostly they're just uneducated, didn't know much of anything, and you might be thinking, well, Rich, why are you exaggerating like this?

Let's see if I am. Acts 4, verse 13. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, these are two of the apostles, and perceived that they were uneducated and common men, they were astonished.

What's interesting about these two words, the uneducated one word is the word grammar, our English word grammar with an A in front of it meaning negative.

[1:25] They weren't grammared. They didn't have any training in language or really much of anything. They just didn't. And then common men, this is the translators just being nice because the Greek word here is a word that if I say out loud with people around, my wife will say, Richard!

It's the word idiots. Literally. The Greek word is idiots. These were uneducated idiots, according to the religious rulers in Jerusalem anyway.

And what's interesting now is that in the passage that we're looking at today, Jesus is going to teach them. And he does this for the three years of his ministry. He's teaching his disciples, his followers, his pupils.

And now, when we come to chapter 11, verse 1, we see that they're asking him to teach them about prayer.

So, okay. So, Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John, as John the Baptist, taught his disciples to pray.

[2:44] And so, what we have in the next few verses here is Jesus teaching his disciples, his apostles, these 12 uneducated, ungrammored idiots.

I don't know if I should continue to use that word. I've run out of my allotment for today. And so, this is what we have in this text. So, the text goes on.

Jesus said to them, when you pray, say these things. Father, hallowed be your name. And so, he's saying, say these things.

It's not something that you just think. It's say. Say these things. Father, hallowed be your name. The word hallowed there, sometimes we get hung up on that. It just means holy or sanctified.

We get our word saint from it. It just means to set apart. And so, what Jesus is telling us to do there is set apart God in our hearts.

[3:46] To set apart God as holy, as different than, as separate from anything else in all of creation. God is different. God is set apart from all of creation.

And so, we need to recognize that as we pray. So, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

And we have been talking all throughout the book of Luke. And actually, chapter 9, we got out the congas to again remind us that Jesus had been from the start.

Actually, John the Baptist started it. That the gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom of God is near. Or the kingdom of God is at hand. And in chapter 9, verse 51, he set his face to Jerusalem.

Meaning, in chapter 9, verse 51, we're already more than two-thirds of the way through his earthly ministry. And he is now traveling a long road from Galilee to Jerusalem.

Weaving in and out of towns and villages. And proclaiming, preaching this, the kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand. And as he is making his way toward Jerusalem.

[4:57] And as he's getting closer and closer to Jerusalem. That drum beat gets louder and louder and louder. The kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand.

And so we can't forget that as we make our way through the rest of the gospel of Luke. This has to kind of be in the backdrop of everything we study going forward here.

The kingdom of God is at hand. And so he's actually teaching his disciples his agenda all along.

The kingdom of God is at hand. So your kingdom come.

Your kingdom come. And we're still praying this today. Because his kingdom has not yet come.

There's a sense where as believers we have the Holy Spirit living within us.

And so in that sense the kingdom of God has come to us individually and to the church. But not to the world. And because we're still waiting for that.

[5:54] We're waiting for the return of Jesus. Where all wrongs will be made right. Everything will be restored. Everything will be made new. That's what the kingdom of God will be like.

And that's what we're waiting for. That's what we're praying for. He goes on. He says then. Actually.

I want to compare this to the other time where we see Jesus teaching his disciples to pray.

Which is in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew chapter 6. So in Matthew chapter 6 he tells them.

Pray then like this. Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now everything I've highlighted here in yellow. is stuff that is new or different than what he said in Luke.

And my question is like, okay Jesus, what did you forget? Or did you forget? I mean, if we're supposed to repeat this prayer after you, how could it be different?

[6:56] Wouldn't it be the same prayer in Matthew and in Luke? I mean, you can't mix up the words. And again, that kind of reminds us that this prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray wasn't meant to be something that we would recite over and over again.

That it was intended to be a model prayer. Or kind of in a vernacular that some of you may recognize, a template prayer. A template that helps us to understand the things that we need to be praying for.

And so this is what he's teaching him. And that's why we see the differences between the two. The content is basically the same, but the words are different. So the model that we're using, this kind of list of things that we're told to be praying about and praying for, that's the same.

He just says it in a little different way in both of those times. So we see the highlighted phrase, our Father in heaven, where in Luke it just says, it just says Father, and hallowed be your name.

Where here it says hallowed be your name, but it says your kingdom come, and it adds your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And then he goes on back in Luke chapter 11, give us each day our daily bread.

[8:20] I've highlighted the verbs here. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And boy, that's a big assumption, right? Because we have forgiven everybody in our lives. And that's what he's saying. And he actually, in Matthew, says it in a little stronger language.

We'll get to that in a moment. And lead us not into temptation, he says. Lead us not into temptation.

And then once again in Matthew, we see a little different here.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

So the idea of delivering us from evil is something that he says in Matthew, but not in Luke. And so we see basically in these two passages then the content of what our prayers are supposed to be about.

[9:20] But I want to start off with talking about how to do this, how to pray. And again, this is for the slow learner because we could have classified the 12 apostles as slow learners.

Certainly classify me as a slow learner, particularly when it comes to the subject of prayer. I don't know how you guys, you know, if you would consider yourselves like, Woohoo, I'm really good at prayer.

I've graduated and I'm on my way. Or if you struggle with prayer. But here's some how to's, if you will, when it comes to prayer. So the first thing you have on your notes is that prayer is a conversation with God over matters of mutual concern.

So we're praying over things that matter to God. And then we're praying over things that matter to us. That's basically what this, this conversation is about.

And, and I would encourage you that as you do this, as you learn about the things that matter to God, what you do is you incorporate using the word of God in your prayer life.

[10:23] A lot of times people will ask me, well, Rich, what do you pray about? What are the things that you pray about? Because, you know, if I have my list of prayers, I could read through that list pretty quickly and be done in like less than five minutes.

So what else am I praying for? And what I would encourage you to do is to open up your Bibles.

And instead of separating my prayer life and my Bible reading or Bible study time, I would combine those.

And I would say the best thing that you can do is to use the word of God as a springboard. Not only are you reading it to learn and to grow and to understand who God is and how he wants us to live. But now I'm using the word of God to actually pray, to communicate. If there's a promise, I want to claim it. If there's a command, I want to say, Lord, help me to obey this. If there's something that in my thoughts that I need to rid of my mind, that I'm praying in that way, Lord, remove that from my mind.

If there's a sin to avoid, if there's a situation to avoid, Lord, help me not to put myself in a situation. Lead me not into temptation. That's what it's talking about.

[11:35] Don't put me in situations, Lord. Help me in this. I don't want to sin. So may I avoid those situations where I am tempted to sin. These are all the things that can help us in terms of having this conversation with God over things of mutual interest.

So that's an important aspect of that. Second thing I would talk about is that prayer is an action, not so much an attitude. Prayer is an action and not so much an attitude.

And where we sometimes struggle with this is found, I think, in 1 Thessalonians 5.17. 1

Thessalonians 5.17 is right in the middle of a quick hit section that Paul is giving.

And the people who devised our verse numbers and so forth, for some reason, just gave each little quick hit its own verse number. So you have rejoice always. That's verse 16.

Two words, one verse. Pray without ceasing is also two words. But in English, it's translated as three. Again, just one verse. That's verse 17.

[12:42] And then verse 18 gets all the rest. Give thanks in all circumstance. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. All of those things would be the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

But he says to us, pray without ceasing. What does that mean? How do we do that? Pray without ceasing.

Pray without stopping. Because that's going to be kind of hard, right? Because here I am. I'm praying at work. Let's say that I'm at work and I'm in a factory or some other job and my boss talks to me.

Well, that means I have to stop praying in order to talk to my boss. Is that what it means? That I, no, boss, I can't talk to you because I'm praying. That's not what it means.

Pray without ceasing is something that we've come to misunderstand what this is talking about. And sometimes how it's taught is that prayer ought to be our constant mindset or a constant attitude.

[13:50] And I would say, no, that's not quite right either because there's more to it than just having an attitude of prayer. If all I do is, you know, if you were to say to me, well, Rich, I don't know that I really have a set time of prayer each day.

I just have an attitude of prayer throughout my day. Let's say, for instance, I'm going to Walmart and I'm asking God in that moment, Lord, open up a good parking spot for me at Walmart.

And maybe, you know, that's about the amount of your prayer time is you're just having it in the moment for that.

And you might get the best parking spots at Walmart. I don't know. But let me ask you, is there anything else going on in the world or in your life that's maybe a little bit higher priority than the parking spot you get at Walmart?

Yeah. So it needs to be more than just an attitude of prayer. There needs to be a little bit more. But let's discover what he's talking about here. Back in Matthew chapter 6 when he's teaching about prayer, Jesus told his disciples this.

[14:59] When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret. So Jesus is actually teaching here. And he modeled it for his disciples as well.

That he would go aside and set aside a time specific that was dedicated for prayer.

And he teaches us to do the same. That we ought to have a time in our day that we set aside. And that's hard, right? That's a difficult thing to do because we're busy people.

How many of you are not busy? And, you know, Jacob, really? You're really not busy? Man, it's like harvest, isn't it?

Greatly busy. Okay. We're busy. We got a lot of stuff going on. And so it's tough to say, well, okay, prayer is such a priority or ought to be such a priority in my life that I need to set aside a time certain each day.

[16:05] So that I can communicate with my heavenly father in prayer. That I can have a conversation with him about things that are of mutual concern.

Things that concern God. That's first on the agenda. We're going to talk about that in a moment. And then also things that concern me. My desires. My needs.

My heart. Where my heart is at. I need to do that. I need to set aside that kind of time every day to do that. And, again, I would encourage you to open up the Word of God and allow God's Word then to inform the way that you pray.

If you want to pray according to God's will, you start getting into the Word of God, you're going to start praying according to God's will. That's huge in your prayer life.

That, for me, was a huge step when I finally put two and two together with the idea of, okay, prayer time is not just me by myself, maybe with a list of prayer requests, but it's me with an open Bible and reading the Word of God and then using that as my base for prayer.

[17:13] Jesus told them a parable. Now, in Luke chapter 18, this is interesting. Luke chapter 11, which we're studying today, and Luke chapter 18, there are two stories, two parables that Jesus teaches about prayer that are very, very similar with a familiar theme through both of them.

And I was struggling, okay, how do I do this? Do I just teach both stories at the same time? You know, I could say, well, here we are in chapter 11.

Let's jump ahead to chapter 18 as well. We'll talk about these two stories together. Or do I keep them apart, as what Luke did? Because maybe we need, like, the extra, like, you know, in a couple months when we get to Luke chapter 18, we're going to need it again.

And so that's kind of how I'm treating this. But we're going to get a little preview of it today. Jesus told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and to not lose heart.

Okay? So, again, he's talking about when we pray, we need to be persistent. We need to be disciplined.

[18:31] We need to be a people who pray on a consistent basis and not to lose heart. And so how do we do that?

I think that's a little bit more when we get back to 1 Thessalonians 5:17. This is the NIV version. Rejoice always, pray continually. I think this perhaps conveys a little bit better idea for us than pray without ceasing.

It's always having the opportunity throughout your day to stop and to pray. Because you're not going to be praying 24-7. None of us are going to do that.

Even Jesus didn't do that. But he was always able throughout his day to stop in any moment and to rehearse Scripture or to meditate on the Word or to involve the Lord in what he was going about his daily business doing.

And that's an important part of that as well. That we would pray continually and not give up with that. Now, how many of you...

[19:41] I'm going to bring a reference in from my childhood. So some of you probably won't relate to this if you're younger than a certain age. And I'm not sure what the cutoff age is.

How many of you are familiar with Hot Wheels? Raise your hand. Hot Wheels. Oh, wow. Quite a few. Hot Wheels fans? Fans of Hot Wheels?

Hot Wheels? My grandson is a big fan of Hot Wheels. He actually likes them so much he can get into trouble with them. Hot Wheels is a big thing.

When I was a kid, I never had Hot Wheels. Even though I like playing with Hot Wheels, it was always my friend down the street who had the Hot Wheels. I never got them.

But he got the Hot Wheels. But if you remember when they first came out, you know, they had these cool little cars. They're not Matchbox cars, by the way. Right? You guys know that. Don't offend anybody by trying to say Hot Wheels versus Matchbox.

[20:41] Hot Wheels were the real deal because they could roll very nicely. They would... Matchbox cars, not so much. But remember, they used... Originally, when they first came out...

I almost hesitate to... Does anybody have a Hot Wheels set up right now in your house? You have them. Do we have anyone that has them set up in their house right now?

A couple? Okay, very good. Hot Wheels. You'll get what I'm... When they first came out, they used Gravity. Even today, Gravity is a big deal. But you had to back in the day because that's how they all started.

And so you'd take the one piece of track and you'd get a chair and you'd put it up on the back of the chair. And that's where you would start the roll. Right? You'd put the car on the track and let it go. And boom! It would take off down the track. And then maybe it would have enough steam to do a loop-de-loop or around the corner and all of that fun stuff. And then you'd get a double track.

[21:41] And then you'd have races. And that's what my friend and I would do. And then there came a certain time. And I don't even know what time this happened. And they introduced this thing called the kicker box.

Anybody know what I'm talking about with the kicker box? It was like you didn't need gravity anymore, but you needed batteries. I looked this up online.

They don't even really use gravity so much anymore. It's the spring-loaded kind of things where you go through when it pushes it. Well, the kicker box was a battery-operated dude that was just incredible that you didn't need gravity.

You could just put the car on the one side of the kicker box and feed it in. And boom! It would send it off down the track. Right? You guys remember that? You'd put the car in there. You'd kind of feed it into the kicker box.

Boom! It would shoot it right out. Okay? Now, you could then, if you were good, if you were good enough, you could set up your track with enough curve in it and enough length in it so that the momentum that it would gain out of the kicker box, you could bring that track and bring it all the way back around and feed right back into that kicker box.

[22:56] And you could have it. You wouldn't have to give it any more momentum. You wouldn't have to get behind it and shove it some more to get it to the kicker box. It would just go. You'd put it in the first time.

It would go, boom! And it would slow down and slow down and slow down and slow down. And just enough momentum to get back to the kicker box.

Boom! It would send it off again and back around the track. And it would be fast at the beginning and then slow down and slow down. Boom! It would do it again. And if you were good, you could just kind of sit there all afternoon and watch your car go around and around and around until your batteries ran out.

Right? As silly as that, why in the world is Rich talking about Hot Wheels right now?

That kicker box is an illustration for, a picture of, when we have a set time with God, to meet with Him, to open up His Word, and to spend time in prayer, that's the kicker box for the rest of our day.

[24:03] And we go through our day and we start off with great momentum. And we're able to pray continually, pray without ceasing through the day. And then we go and we get to bed and we get up the next morning and we have our set time of prayer. Boom! There we are off again. And it just re-energizes our prayer time with God on a daily basis.

Because every day we get that jolt of momentum, that jolt of energy, where we just have this time with God and it just springboards us into this time of prayer that continues out through our day. Now, again, you can kind of sense what's going to happen then when you don't have that time of prayer, that set time of prayer. Or if you have a day and something comes up, inevitably it does, and you have to miss it because, you know, something got thrown in the wrench in your time and you weren't able to have that set time of day.

Or maybe you're just starting to get a little lazy or lackadaisical or you just kind of start to slough off. And that time during your day where before you had that momentum and that energy, now you don't.

[25:28] And so it's easier to forget God through the day. It's easier to forget that relationship. It's easier to forget that momentum and what you were conversing about and what God's priorities were in your life and what God's program was and plan for your life was as you spend time with Him and as you bear your heart to Him and you pour out your heart to God over what's going on with your kids or what's going on in your marriage or what's going on at work or, you know, I'm not getting the hours that I need or my job is cutting my time and whatever it is that you're going through.

When you have that set time of prayer, it gives you that boost that you need. I heard that whole illustration from a pastor named Mark Shaw down in Greenville this week.

And I thought that's a perfect illustration for that boom that we need, that set time of prayer that we need. Finally, in terms of the how to pray, this is an important part to remember, that prayer is a family privilege, right?

It's a family privilege. You get this privilege to pray to your Heavenly Father because of that relationship. It starts with, Our Father who art in Heaven, Our Father, hallowed be your name. It's the only reason we can pray is because of that relationship. Again, you've heard it said over and over again that Christianity is not a religion, that it's a relationship.

[27:14] And it's because of truths like this that remind us that we are living as believers in relationship to our Father who loves us and desires to hear from us and wants to bless us and wants to answer our prayers.

He absolutely does. We'll see that as we go on. But that relationship is also guarded by a couple other principles here. Let me show these to you.

And this is the part of the sermon that takes a downward turn, a dark turn, a hard truth kind of a turn. This is from 1 Peter 3.12.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, those who have, you could say it this way, those who have been given a right relationship with God. We don't have any righteousness of our own to bring to the relationship.

We are, by faith, trusting in Christ who then gives to us, imputes to us, gives us a right standing before Him.

[28:27] So if you have a right standing before God because you've placed your faith in Him, His ears are open to your prayer. Okay? Now, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, who do wrong.

Okay? Who disobey. So, again, we're reminded that obedience is a part of that dynamic, right? Because 1 John, we're told that if we love Him, we're going to, what?

Obey Him. That's kind of a defining aspect of the love that we have for God is evidenced by our obedience to God.

Ouch. Because sometimes I disobey. Anybody relate to me at all? But we have a loving Heavenly Father who's provided His Son and paid the penalty, and all we need to do is continue to come to Him, and He continues to forgive us.

He continues to offer open arms. Proverbs 28, verse 9. If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, we're back to obedience again, even his prayer, ouch.

[29:53] I don't even know if I want to say the word. Abomination. My prayers become an abomination in His ears because of disobedience.

Because I hear His law, I hear His word, I'm going to do my own thing. And then my prayers. Why would He hear prayers from people who are living in disobedience?

Now, it's not that, okay, I'm living in disobedience, but now I'm repenting of my sin, and I'm coming back to my relationship with the Lord, and I'm saying, Lord, forgive me.

He loves that prayer. And He forgives freely, openly. But when I'm in defiance against what He wants me to do, how He wants me to live, then my prayers even are an abomination to Him.

So, let's quickly go through this part here. What should we be praying for then? And really, the prayers, this model prayer, this template prayer that He gives us is broken down into two sections.

[31:15] The first part is that we're praying, we're praying for His agenda. Did I already go by it? I did. We're praying for God's agenda.

That's number one. That's the first part of that. And of course, Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. We want God's kingdom. That was, during Jesus' earthly ministry, that was like, you know, priority number one.

He's preaching this gospel message of the kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand. He wants us to join in with that prayer. He wants us to say, come and get on my agenda of bringing my kingdom to pass in Your world.

And again, in Matthew, our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. I have to admit, I struggle a bit with that highlighted phrase, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

You know, on the one hand, God is sovereign and everything He wants to happen will come to pass because He is sovereign. So when something terrible happens to someone, that's how we comfort them?

[32:34] Well, God ordained it. You know, your family member got hit by a drunk driver. Well, God's will is going to be done. He's sovereign.

He willed it. I struggle with that. Right? Do you struggle with that at all? That idea? And He's telling us to pray for His will to be done on earth.

So does that mean that there are times where God's will is not done on earth? I don't know the answer. I have to admit, I don't know how to answer that.

And I think we're left to wrestle with some of these questions of God's sovereignty and man's man's agenda to do things that are wrong and to break God's will and to do as He wants to do and sometimes that affects my life or a life of someone that I love.

How does that all work together? And hopefully what that does is it drives us to our knees and say, Lord, I have to trust You. I have to trust You.

[33:45] It is Your will that I want to be done. So Lord, I give it over to You and I trust You. We're going to see why we would do such a thing in a moment. The second thing that we're told to pray for is our needs.

Pray for your needs. Again, this very similar list, God give us each day our daily bread, forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us and lead us not into temptation. There's three things there, three blanks that you have on your notes there that He's telling us, He's teaching us to pray for. Again, from Matthew chapter 6, very familiar, give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil or the evil one.

So there's three areas that He's telling us to pray for here. First is physically, the physical needs that we have. We have need for daily bread, for sustenance, for nutrition.

We need a roof over our heads and provide for heat in the winter and all of these things that we have to do, right, that we have need of and we recognize that God is the Father of lights who gives all good gifts to us and that includes these physical needs that we have.

[35:15] He knows that we are dust, made of dust and so He knows that we have these needs. Spiritual needs. This is a biggie because we need forgiveness and we also need to be forgiving.

We need to forgive others. They go hand in hand, right, because how can we receive forgiveness if we ourselves refuse to forgive? So they go hand in hand.

This need that we have, this spiritual need that is an ongoing need. And then we need protection, right? We need protection.

Lead us not into temptation. Don't lead us, help us to avoid situations where we'd be tempted to do wrong, right? So I don't want to go there.

I don't want to look at that because now I'm tempted to do wrong and to stand up against the evil one. These are the needs that we have.

[36:11] Now after He teaches them about this model prayer, if you will, Jesus goes on to tell these stories, both in Luke chapter 11 and Luke chapter 18, these two stories that are very similar.

Actually, they're parables. parables. And when it comes to parables, whenever we start to go through a parable, I want to kind of remind us again of helping, how we understand parables. Parables are stories. They're not true stories. They're made up stories to teach a particular point. And the second aspect of that is that these parables are meant to teach one point.

So don't get bogged down in trying to find two or three or four points out of any one story. If you do, you'll get in trouble. So with each of these stories that we're going to look at, the first one today and a little bit of a preview and then Luke chapter 18, this next parable, remember that there's one main point that the parable is teaching not more than that.

So be aware of that as we go into this. If we take it too far, someone's phone is doing something.

[37:40] I think it's a phone. Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead. That's fine. If you take either one of these parables too far, you end up making God look like a real jerk.

And as we read through this, you'll see what I mean. But I don't think you would say, well, Rich, I don't think God is a jerk. Right? We're not going to say that. But again, if you try to get a couple, three points out of this parable, that's where you're going to end up going.

So be careful of that as we make our way through this. So Luke chapter 11, verse 5. And he said to them, after he taught them this model prayer, he said to them, which of you has a friend?

And I'm going to ask you the same question. Which of you has a friend like this? That you would be able to go to him at midnight, you could go to your friend or you might say neighbor, you could go to your neighbor at midnight.

Now, again, our midnight is not the same as their midnight. And I mean it this way. We have lights they didn't have. They had candles and oil lamps and things like that.

[39:01] But you'd want to conserve that. So they didn't stay up late. There were no city lights. It's going to get weird here too. Okay? Hold on.

So, who has a friend that you'd be willing to go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, let me some food. Three loaves of bread in this case. For a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him.

Standard operating procedure that if you traveled and you were traveling on a journey, you came to a town where you had a friend. Friend provided some food.

Well, why didn't he just stop at the Wesco and pick up some beef jerky or something? They didn't have that! That's what we would tell them, right? But we can't do that.

So, I've got to provide food and I am fresh out so I'm going to my neighbor's house. Boom, boom, boom, boom. Hey, I need some bread. I have nothing to set before.

[40:05] Look at how he, his friend responds. Okay? And he will answer from within. Do not bother me.

Now, in this story, we're the friend, we are the friend knocking at the door looking for food. In this story, supposedly, depending on how you read this, God is the one who's on the inside with the ability to answer the request.

So, this is where I'm talking about, well, if you read this wrong, God comes out looking like, not so good. Do not bother me.

The door is now shut and my children are with me in bed. What? Because that just sounds weird, wrong, right?

You know, is that how we do it today? No. But back then, that was normal. They had one-room houses, basically. And the family slept together to conserve heat, to save heat.

[41:12] And so, that's how they operated. So, the idea of someone is in the middle of the night knocking on my bed and I've got my family there, I'm going to have to step over all of these kids to get out of the bedroom or to get to the place where the bread is and to be able to do that.

And this guy is saying, not doing it! I'm just not going to do it! So, the door is now shut and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything.

I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to wake up the rest of the family. They might already be awake because you're pounding at the door. What's going on? I tell you, though, Jesus concludes, that though he will not get up and give him anything because he's his friend.

You guys have friends like this who might help you out, not because you're a friend, but because you're a nuisance. Yet, because of his, here's the word, impudence.

Anybody got a stab at what that means? Because I have to admit, I didn't know what that meant. It's shamelessness. because he's so shameless, knocking at my door at midnight because that's kind of how you got to be, right?

[42:29] Shameless. I'm going to, I don't care. I got, I got to feed my friend here. I'm not going to do that. So I'm going to go to my neighbor's house. I'm going to pawn at his door at midnight and say, come on.

Because of his impudence, he will rise, give him whatever he needs. Wow. So how do you interpret that?

Now let's skip, oh actually before we go to Luke chapter 18, Jesus gives some additional teaching here about this persistence. I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you.

Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be open to you. These are, these are given in the present tense, in the Greek language, they're in the present tense, not in the aorist tense.

present tense meaning, ask and keep on asking. Seek and keep on seeking. Knock and keep on knocking.

[43:31] And the door will be opened to you. And you will find and you will get what you have been asking for. For everyone who asks, receives.

The one who seeks, finds. And the one who knocks, it will be opened. And again, it's over and over and continuing to come over and over.

And he goes on, what father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a snake? How many of you have ever asked your father for a fish and he gave you a snake?

Right? It doesn't happen. I don't know, maybe some of you dads, I don't know. Let's have some fun with Junior today. Or if he asks for an egg, we'll give him a scorpion.

I'm glad we don't have scorpions around here. Any of you have ever lived where there were scorpions? No, thank you. Coming back to Michigan. If you then, who are evil, if you then, who are wrongdoers, if you then, who are not righteous of your own accord, know how to give good gifts to your children.

[44:45] Do you guys give good gifts to your children? I bet you do. How much more, how much more, how much more will your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

How much more will God be willing to give? God love? Now, this phrase at the end of this might throw a little bit of a wrench into our thinking here, so we have to address it because it's there.

What is he talking about when he says give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? Well, a couple of things. Number one, the best gift that God has to give to us, his children, is himself.

That's what he means by giving us the Holy Spirit. The best gift that he can give us is himself here as the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

So the question is, are we still asking for this gift of the Holy Spirit? And I would say no, we're not because this prayer has already been answered.

[46:05] It's been answered at Pentecost. It was answered in a very definitive way on the day of Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven.

That's when that prayer was answered. And so there's no more need for us to ask for that because as soon as you come to faith in Christ, the moment that you trust him, you get the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in that moment.

You say, well, Rich, how can you say that? Because I've heard often that we need to seek the Holy Spirit or that as believers we now need to seek to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Let me kind of demonstrate why that's kind of a misunderstanding of what Jesus is teaching here. In 1 Corinthians 12, 13, Paul is writing to the church at Corinth and there in talking about spiritual gifts, he says this, for in one spirit we were all baptized into one body.

So he's talking to the church at Corinth and all of them, that's the word that he uses, all of them, had been baptized into one body.

[47:30] This is baptized with the Holy Spirit. Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and all were made to drink of the one spirit. So that's something that happens when we come to faith in Christ.

Nowhere in the New Testament, after the Gospels, are we told to pray for or to seek the Holy Spirit. It's only that one spot, where we just read in the Gospel of Luke, and we know that that prayer was answered that he gave us the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

And from that moment forward, every believer who came to faith in Christ received the Holy Spirit when they trusted Christ as Savior. Another passage that kind of demonstrates this is Romans chapter 8.

Romans 8 says, you, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. So he's writing to the church at Rome, and all the people of the church at Rome are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

So he gives us that conditional, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. But he says, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

[48:44] So this could then perhaps lead to another false teaching, that unless you have received the separate work of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, sometimes with evidence of speaking in other tongues, then you are not a believer at all.

And there are denominations and groups of people who actually teach that, that unless you've had this baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues, then you're not even a Christian.

You're not even saved. But that again is a false teaching in the sense that it's very clear that the moment that you put your faith in Christ, Ephesians chapter 1, Romans chapter 8, all of these passages that come together that teach us that as believers, the moment that we place our faith in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit indwelling within us.

We receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit that brings us into the body of Christ, that makes us a believer. That's the work that happens when we put our faith, our trust in him.

Okay, that little, I don't want to call it a sidetrack because Jesus introduced the topic, but let's get back to the idea of prayer. And back to this teaching of not giving up, not giving up.

[50:13] Luke chapter 18, verse 1. This is from the NIV where it says, they should always to pray and not give up. Give up on what is my question? Give up on what?

Is it give up on the prayer request? Is it give up on praying at all or is it giving up on God? I think that's what he's after here.

That we should always continue to pray and not give up on God. So when it comes to giving up on prayer, on a particular prayer request, when do we stop praying?

Because there are times where it's appropriate to stop. You know, when God answers the request, right, do we have to keep asking for it? No. But there are other times where it's maybe not so hard or maybe it's not so easy to know that.

So when should I stop praying about a thing? So here's the first one. Stop praying about something when God answers by saying no. No.

[51:21] Like, oh, I've been praying for that girl, had my eye on her, and I want her to marry me. So Lord, bring her into my life, and meanwhile, she's dating and ends up marrying Fred.

I can stop praying for that now, right? Right? Because she got married to someone else. So, Lord, I want you to, I'm praying for my uncle for healing, and you had the funeral last week. I think you can stop, and if he's a believer, rejoice, in that he did receive healing, but maybe not the healing that you were praying for, but in the sense that he is made whole in heaven. But, certainly, that's appropriate. When God, when it's like, no. And then, secondly, stop praying about something when God changes your heart, and you no longer want it. Because that'll happen, too. From Psalm 37, delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

[52:30] There's two ways you could take that. One is that, oh, here's my desire for this new 2025 Chevy pickup. Super charged.

I don't know, what are you looking for on a pickup? You can tell I haven't shopped for pickup trucks. But God will give you different desires.

You start spending time in his word. You start building that relationship, and God changes your heart. It's not that he gives you all these things, temporal things that you're desiring. It's that he changes the desires of your heart. That would become more in line. My desires would become more in line with what God desires in my life. So what's the point of these stories? I'm going to do this real quick. What is the point of these stories? What's he getting at with these examples of these guys that are really mean?

[53:35] Don't bother me. The door is now shut. My children are in bed. I cannot get up. I'm not going to give you anything. I tell you, though, he will not get up and give him anything because he's his friend.

It's not a good guy, right? So what's the point of this story? Back in Luke chapter 18, again, this is the widow. We're going to cover this in a number of weeks.

The widow who comes to the wicked judge. And this widow represents us and the judge in the story in a sense represents God, but he certainly doesn't represent the character of God because this guy, though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me. Do you think that when you are persisting in prayer that that's how God views you? No, nor does he think this way about not respecting God or man, but I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down with her continual coming.

If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give you? Again, this is the picture that Jesus wants us to understand about our heavenly father.

[54:59] It is because of his goodness that he will answer your request. He is a good father. Chapter 18, will not God give justice to his elect, those who belong to him?

Will he not give you justice, who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? Imply to answer no. I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.

We are going to do a word study when we get to this on speedily. We don't have time now. But what is the point of these stories? The point of these stories is this. We ought to keep praying. We ought to be persistent.

We ought to pray earnestly. We ought to, in a sense, be shameless. We ought to pursue God, not because he is evil, not because he is not a respecter of persons, not because he doesn't respect God, none of those things, but because our God is better than all of us.

Because God is good and he is a loving, a loving father. From Nahum chapter 1, the Lord is good, a refuge in times of, he cares for those who trust in him.

[56:17] and let me tell you what it's not about. It is not about your self effort. Well, God's going to answer me if I just bear down and I'm going to pray and I'm going to pray every day and that's why God's going to answer.

No, no, it's not. You may put in some effort in your prayers, but that's not why God would answer you. He answers you because he's good and he loves you.

It's not your persistence. It's not. Now, does he want you to persist? Absolutely. He tells us to persist. He tells us not to give up, not to lose heart.

But that's not why God will answer. Not because of your persistence, but because God is a good father, a loving father and wants to.

It is not your samelessness. that's not why God will answer. Even though that was an element of the parable that he told, remember, each parable is meant to teach one truth and that the parable, both of the parables, are meant to teach us to not give up, to persist in prayer, to continually come. [57:34] But the each little detail of the story is not an accurate depiction of people in real life or of our heavenly father.

Because even if you are evil and you know how to give good gifts, how much more would our heavenly father give us gifts? It is not your earnestness.

We get this from James chapter five, particularly from the King James version of this. the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Is that true? That's a statement that's true? Absolutely. And Elijah was a man subject to passions like we are and he prayed earnestly. So we've got to be earnest.

And what does that mean? Dear Lord, we beseech thee today there's extra noises in there.

[58:43] And your voice has to get lower. Right? And your head has to be bowed. That's not what it means.

It's not what it means. Actually, if you look at the construction of this, and we don't get this in the English, and I understand why, because it's hard to translate, there's two words in the Greek language for prayed earnestly.

He prayed earnestly. But the two Greek words are the word for prayer and the word for prayer. So literally, if you translated it, he prayed in a prayer.

In prayer, he prayed. Either way. In prayer, he prayed. In other words, he just took it seriously. It wasn't like an earnestness like how we think of earnestness.

It was the fact that he just did it. And the clue that we have comes from earlier in the book, chapter 1, verse 6, but let him ask in faith with no doubting. Aha, that makes a difference.

[59:54] For the man who doubts, he's a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. That's not a condemnation of the man, it's just a fact. If you're a doubting man, you're going to be unstable because you're not going to be able to choose one way or the other.

You're going to be rocked by the sea back and forth. Last one, not the power of prayer. Can I say that's a lousy statement?

The power of prayer? It's not a good statement at all because it's not the power of prayer. prayer.

You could be praying to an egg or to a rock or to Buddha and the power of prayer still covers it.

No, it is the power of God. It is God. Prayer is just the conduit that gets us to him. If you have a lamp and you have a plug, the power is not in the plug.

The power is in the outlet that you plug it into. And that's what prayer serves for us. So remember, it is our good and loving Father who answers our prayers.

[61:10] And then finally, Ephesians 5, therefore be imitators of God as beloved children because that's who you are. He loves you as his children.

You are beloved in his eyes. That's why you want to be persistent. in prayer. He loves you. Let's pray.

Lord, thank you. Thank you for this privilege that we have as your children, as beloved children, to come to you in prayer.

And I pray that you would help us to seek you out, to seek and to knock and to ask, Lord, that we wouldn't give up, that we would be committed to a time of day each day to set aside some time to talk with you about mutual concerns.

Lord, I pray that we would, as we do that as well, go through our days with praying continually, being able to stop along our day and to talk with you.

[62:30] Lord, help us to remember that you are a God who loves us. you love us so much that you sent your son to die for us.

And he rose again from the dead, and we have a hope. We know that when we put our faith in you, we become part of your family, you become our father, and we can pray in that way as our father.

Lord, again, we thank you. We ask that you would use this teaching and this truth in our lives, that our own prayer times would grow and benefit from it.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.