

Luke 11:1-13

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Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you, Jonathan. So the topic is prayer, and we're going to look at it because it is a critical piece, a critical part of what does it mean to follow Jesus, is learning how to pray.

As you'll see at the very beginning of the passage that we'll read in a few minutes, what happens is the disciples come and say, Lord, teach us how to pray. And this would have been a very common thing in the original context where particular followers of a teacher would say, teach us how to pray distinctively.

What is it that's going to be distinctive about being a follower of you? And how does that show itself in prayer? And that's a really great question. What does it mean?

[1 : 50] What is distinctive about how Christians would pray because we follow Jesus? And this is the question. But before we dive into that, I want you to just stop and do a little mental exercise with me about what are some of the common perceptions of what prayer is today.

And maybe some of you have shared some of these. And maybe some of you have practiced some of these. I sure really have at times. Some of the ways that prayer might be viewed today.

Well, one of the most popular ones, I think, is what I would call the foxhole prayer, right? It also might be called the patron saint prayer. And what this means is, basically, I live my life.

But man, when things get really bad and I am in a jam and I need help to get out, then I turn to God. And my prayer is basically, God, get me out of this one.

And then I'll change my life and do all the, you know, we often make all sorts of promises connected to it. But that's one way. God, get me out of this scrape. I think another view that sometimes we have is that God is like a great benevolent Santa Claus.

[3 : 04] And prayer is like bringing to him our wish list of what we're going to get for Christmas. Can I get a house on the beach? Can I get a, you know, magnificent spouse?

Can I have a successful career? Can I get, you know, three warm meals and a warm bed and a home every day? You know, all sorts of things where we just think God's going to just make our lives easier and full of just physical, pleasant, nice things.

Sometimes I think we have a vending machine view of God, which is, God, I was really good this week.

Can I, can I get something for that? If I put in my quarter of like, I helped a lady cross the street. I read my Bible every day, you know, and then I get to hit my C3 button, which means that I get God to give me something in return.

I think sometimes we think of God that way. And then we think, oh, what if I've had a terrible week? Can I ask God for anything at all? Because I don't have any money to put in the machine this week.

[4 : 14] What do I get from him? Sometimes I think we have what I call the trust fund view of prayer and God. That is that God is this great big resource bank, but he only works at like 30,000 feet.

That is, God's going to sort of get you started, but then it's up to you to do what you're going to do with your life. And he's not interested in the details. He's not going to help with the day to day.

Sometimes I think we have a view of God that is what I call the stingy dad God.

I don't know what kind of dad your dad was like. My dad wasn't really like this. It was actually my mom that was more this way. But if you went and asked her for like extra money when you went to the store for, can I get a piece of gum?

No. No, we don't have money in that. It's not in the budget. You don't need that anyway. Why are you asking me? I think sometimes we think God is like that too. And so we think, can we ask him for anything?

These are some of the ways maybe we think about prayer. Some of the ways that in our heads we approach it.

[5 : 22] I know I struggle to pray. My guess is I'm not alone. This leads us to our passage tonight. So let's look at it. Luke chapter 11.

We're going to look at verses 1 through 13. And if I can get through this without my reading glasses, it'll be a miracle. So that's one more technical hurdle to overcome.

But here we go. Luke 11, 1 through 13. And as we're looking at this, remember, what we want to ask is, what does it mean?

How is it that Christian prayer is distinctive? How is it that Jesus teaches his followers to pray? And what does this mean for us? So let's look at this passage.

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.

[6 : 17] 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.

And he said to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves. For a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.

And he will answer from within, do not bother me. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything, because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives.

[7 : 33] And the one who seeks, finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent?

Or if he asks him for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Please pray with me. Lord, we ask for your help as we look at this word tonight. Lord, help us to understand it rightly. Help us to understand you rightly as we see it.

And Lord, as we see you rightly, will you teach us, Lord, how to pray? Teach us the way Jesus would want us to pray today.

We pray these things in his name. Amen. So how do Christians pray? What does it look like for us to do this? There are basically two sections.

[8 : 38] There's the pattern of prayer that we see in verses 2 through 4. And then there's the perspective on prayer, which is the rest of the section from 5 to 13. And so we're just going to look at it. First, the pattern and then the perspective to get a little bit of a glimpse of how it is that Jesus wants us to understand this.

You guys know this. This is a well-known. Maybe you found yourself stumbling as I was reading verses 2 through 4. Did you find it? Because there's a very common version that we all know.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us not our trespasses. We forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is kingdom and glory forever and ever. Amen. Right? I was raised in a Presbyterian church. I got it. I know it. By heart. I don't even have to think about it.

Right? This isn't that, is it? Right? That's the Matthew version. It's actually the version probably from early church tradition as they kind of put some things together.

[9 : 43] The Lord's Prayer as it's been well known. Here, it's not that it's not that. But when Luke records how Jesus taught his disciples, it's a little different, isn't it?

So I want to focus on what it is that Luke says is most important. Right? And as we're reading these stories, recognize Matthew is teaching in the Sermon on the Mount about how to pray.

And it's a very similar setting. And Matthew's prayer is going to be a little longer and a little more fleshed out. Luke's is a little bit shorter and a little bit more concise. Why is this? Well, there could be lots of different ways that we could think about this.

But maybe the easiest way is to think of it being one of two possibilities. One is that Jesus taught on prayer probably a bunch of times. And so Luke records one one time and Matthew records another time.

The other thing is if you've ever, if we just talked, interviewed five people who heard Bernie Sanders speak on there and say, What did Bernie say? There'll probably be some overlap.

[10 : 44] And then there might be some distinctive things that each one is going to say. Neither of these witnesses, none of the witnesses are lying about what they heard. But they're going to emphasize certain things that they thought were important or significant to communicate to someone who wanted to know what Bernie said.

So when we're reading this and Luke is saying, This is what I want you to focus on. He's just saying, Hey, this is what Jesus said that I want you to hear.

Matthew said, This is what Jesus said. There are a few other things I want you to hear too. It doesn't mean that there was contradictory. They're contradictory. It actually establishes the credibility of the witness says that they didn't make this up, but that they were independently reporting it.

That's a side note on why this is different before we get into it. So now let's get into it. Look with it. Verse 2. And he said to them, When you pray, say, Father.

Father. Now, if you were in the first century, particularly if you were from a Jewish background, which most of the disciples were, which Jesus was, which all the people, his context was primarily Jewish people, not entirely.

[12 : 03] But when you talk to God, you would never use this word. Because this word is a word of intimacy.

The easiest thing, the English word for it, it would be something like daddy. Right? When Jesus taught us to approach God, he said, Don't approach God as the most high potentate with the power to extend his scepter and either kill you or agree to your request.

Which is what would be commonly viewed in that day. When you approach God, you're approaching one with absolute power. And you approach him with fear and trembling.

And you approach him recognizing that in his great power, you have nothing. You have no right to approach him. And in fact, you are endangering your life by approaching him.

But Jesus says, when you address God Almighty, call him Father. Now, he doesn't mean, Jesus is my best friend.

[13 : 22] Jesus is my homeboy. God is my, like, you know, guy that I hang out and watch NCIS reruns with. Right? He's not diminishing the greatness of God, but he's adding to the greatness of God a picture, a portrait of an intimate approach to him.

That is different. And we see that in the second phrase, right? Hallowed be your name. Hallowed is such a terrible word. It's been kept because it's in the tradition.

But does anyone know what Hallowed means? Right? Only because you've thought through, what does Halloween really mean? Right? It means, it's an older English word that means set apart, sanctified.

Or shown to be special. Or shown to be wonderfully pure and perfect and well done.

And so, and so what, what Jesus is saying is, you approach God Almighty and you call him Daddy. But then your first request is, let your name, let, and the name would signify the person and their character and their nature of who they are.

[14 : 36] Let your name be seen as special, as holy, as set apart from any other name. Your name should be lifted up in the lights.

Greater than any political candidate. Greater than any NBA superstar. Greater than any rock star. Your name should be lifted up as the one who is worthy of our worship, of our adoration, of our devotion, of our lives.

Father, let your name be Hallowed. And then he goes on and he says, and God, because you are such a great God, let your kingdom come.

It's such a wonderful prayer. Because what Jesus starts to do when he says, this is how you pray. He says, lift up your eyes.

Lift up your eyes to the greatness of God. Let your kingdom come means not God make my kingdom come in my life.

[15 : 49] Which I think is often how we approach prayer. We think, God, I want you to help me succeed in my plans for life. And what Jesus is saying is, when you approach God, approach him with this intimacy.

Approach him with this exalted view of his greatness. And recognize that what prayer wants, what God wants to do as we approach him in prayer.

Is to unseat ourself in the center of our lives. And in the center of our prayer lives. And to put God in the middle of it instead. God, will your kingdom come?

Will the things that you care about. Will the values that you hold to. Will your decrees and your rules. And your character be expressed more and more.

In this world and in my life. Let your kingdom come. So he starts with this in verse 2.

[16 : 54] He says, lift up your eyes. Unseat yourself and focus yourself on God. The second thing then in verse 3 says, give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins.

For we, for ourselves, forgive those who sin. Well, for everyone who is indebted to us. And when we think about what is Jesus teaching us in these prayers.

He's saying, recognize that your life. Both your physical life in terms of your daily bread. And your spiritual life.

The fact that there's a funny word. When it says, give us each day our daily bread. The word there daily has very odd connotations.

It doesn't just mean something you do every day. It actually probably has connotations that would remind any Jewish person listening. Of the story of God's provision of manna in heaven.

[17 : 50] Manna from heaven. When God's people were wandering in the wilderness. A million people without supplies. God miraculously and supernaturally provided food for them.

This thing called manna. Which means, what is it? This food that appeared on the ground every morning. That they could gather and eat. That sustained them and nourished their life. And ultimately what we see as he goes on in the part about forgiveness.

Is to recognize that even our spiritual life is grounded in. Our being forgiven of our sin. Which causes death in our lives. That sin being covered over.

So that we might receive from God what we really need. Which is true and new spiritual life from him. So the first move of prayer is lift up your eyes.

The second one is recognize from that one that you've lifted your eyes up to. Now receive life. Recognize that you're dependent on him. For everything.

[19 : 00] Just stop and think. What are the things that you think you need most for life? Physically. Spiritually. It's very easy for us to seek.

To begin to find our life in other things. My life is in my career. My life is in this relationship with this special person. My life is in my pleasure.

And my hobby. My life is in my sense of self-satisfaction. Or meaning in life. Jesus is saying as we pray. May we recognize that everything we have comes from God.

He is the one who is actually the giver of real and true and eternal life. And so let's ask him for it. Go to him for it. Then finally lead us not into temptation.

This is just a recognition of our weakness. Saying God keep us from. Temptation might not be the right word here. You may know this in the New Testament.

[20 : 04] The word temptation is also the word for trial. And you can sort of play it back and forth into exactly what the meaning might be. We tend to think of those things as very different.

The New Testament probably thinks of them as a lot closer together. But part of what he's saying here is God don't give me more than I can handle. Don't give me something that will overwhelm me.

Lead us not into a situation where I will be lost. Or where I will be overwhelmed.

Maybe overwhelmed by giving in to sin and despair. Maybe being overwhelmed simply by being crushed by life. Again, this is a recognition again of my life is in God's hands.

He alone is the one who can actually help me. And protect me from those things that would destroy me. And these are the emphases in this pattern.

[21 : 07] So I want you to stop and think. When you pray, do you think about who is God? And how can I exalt his name? Can I pray, God, will you give me life?

Life that is centered on you. When we pray, do we express a dependence upon God for everything?

Or do we come to him demanding, bargaining, complaining? Jesus gives us a pattern that we ought to follow as we think about how we pray.

But he doesn't just give us a pattern. He goes on and he gives us a perspective. I love these little stories that he gives us, right? He uses two parables in the middle of this.

The first one, right? The first one is great. He says, so in the middle of the night, your neighbor comes to you because he's had a traveler come through town, a friend, come through and stop at his house at midnight and he didn't have any bread.

[22 : 17] So he comes and knocks on your door and he says, hey, buddy, I need some bread. Right? And you, in your nightgown or your PJs or whatever it is, right, asleep in your bed, you're thinking, go away.

It's the middle of the night. I'm sleeping. Why are you bothering me? And it's very interesting because Jesus says he won't respond well because of the friendship.

The friendship has no bearing. In fact, the friendship will be like, forget it, go away, right? But if you keep knocking long enough, you'll finally be like, fine, I'm at least going to respond to you for your impudence, right?

Impudence, here is this word, for your aggressive asking, you're bugging him until he finally responds. It's very similar in some ways to what you see in Luke 19 where the woman goes to the unrighteous judge and the persistent woman who goes until finally just to get her off his case, he responds.

Right? And what he's saying here is there's a kind of persistence in prayer that is good. Then he goes on.

[23 : 36] And this is sort of his core perspective. You see this in verses 9 and 10, right? I tell you, ask, and it will be given.

Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened. Because everyone who asks will be given. Because everyone who seeks, they will find it. Because when you knock, the door will be opened. Jesus wants us to see that in prayer, as we come to God, we should have an expectant heart that God is there and that he will respond to us.

What he's saying in that first story is that you humanly would respond to your friend, not out of love, not out of loyalty, but simply out of convenience to try to make your life easy so that you can go back to sleep.

And he's saying God is greater than that. It's an argument from the lesser to the greater. God isn't like, God isn't, he isn't saying God is like that. If you bug God enough, he will finally answer your prayer just to get you off his back.

[24 : 52] That is not the way God actually responds. Jesus is saying, this is how humanly we respond. How much more will God respond to you differently?

And that's what he says at the end, right? He uses this great analogy of a father. When your child comes to you and asks you for something good, you human fathers who are really imperfect are not going to give him something malicious, potentially destructive.

How much more will your heavenly father, if you earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to those that you love, how much more will your heavenly father give to you good gifts?

Did you catch it though? That's not what he said. Look with me, verse 13. That's what Matthew says. Matthew says, in Matthew, it'll say, you know, how much more will your heavenly father give to you good gifts, right?

But here, what is it that God says? Verse 13. If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

[26 : 26] Huh? That's kind of odd, isn't it? Well, all depends a bit on your theology of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit being the third person of the Trinity.

The Holy Spirit in the book of Luke and Acts being this great gift of the very presence of God and the power of God. The very person of God indwelling and filling the people of God.

After Jesus ascends to heaven, he says, I have to go so I can send to you the Holy Spirit. And when he comes, he will be like me. He will be alongside you.

He will be with you. And he will give you spiritual life. And he will give you spiritual power. And he will fill you with a knowledge of who God actually is.

And the Holy Spirit is this, in the book of Luke and Acts, which was also written by the same author. He's telling the story about the beginning of the church.

[27 : 27] And the gift of the Holy Spirit is this tremendous blessing of God being with his people. Okay, what does that mean?

What Jesus is teaching us, even here, is that the thing that you most want, the thing that you most want God to give you in your life, is not a better grade on that test.

It's not even a roof over your head. The greatest thing that God will give you is himself.

This is the thing that we most need in life. This is the thing that in all of our circumstances we most need is more of God in our lives.

And so when Jesus, in teaching his disciples to pray, He teaches us to want more of God in the midst of it.

[28 : 43] The pattern of prayer is a very God-centered prayer. God, you are great. God, everything I have comes from you. God, only you can watch over my life and keep me from falling apart.

And then in this perspective on prayer, he's saying, Don't you see? God wants you to come to him in prayer so that he can give you more of himself.

And when you ask for that, you will find it. When you seek for that, you will get it. And when you knock on that door, he will open that door.

And his presence will be with you. And friends, that's the best thing. It's the best thing when you're standing at the bedside of a loved one who's suffering.

It's the best thing when the thing you had set your hope on in life had fallen apart and is gone. It's the best thing when you have nothing.

[29 : 52] And it's the best thing when you have everything. Jesus says, how do we pray? Jesus' disciples said, how do we pray?

Jesus said, come pray like this. Pray so that you might see that God himself is the greatest thing that you will ever have.

And of course, friends, this is the good news of the gospel. This is what Jesus was teaching his disciples about even as he was living out that very thing. Because he himself was God in the flesh who had come to be with them.

And he was looking ahead. He was heading. We've talked about this in this section in Luke. He's heading to Jerusalem. He's heading to his death on the cross.

So that our sins could be forgiven. So that as he is raised to new life, we who by faith are joined with him might also be raised to a new life.

[31 : 00] So that we could actually be in a relationship with this Abba, Father, God. We can't just approach God and say, God, can you be my daddy?

But because of what Jesus has done, as we believe and trust in him, he then invites us to come in to the family of God.

And as we do that, then this prayer becomes our prayer. This pattern and this perspective that we have a loving Heavenly Father who will not give us a stone when we ask him for bread.

That's the Matthew one. See, I get them all confused. Who will not give us a serpent or scorpion when we ask him for bread or for eggs. But he will give us himself.

And that's the most precious thing. Let's pray. Lord, teach us to pray like this.

[32 : 04] And Lord, teach our hearts to long for you like this. So that when we pray, what's in our hearts comes out. Lord, help us.

We confess how easily we are selfish in how we pray. We also confess, Lord, how often our prayers betray that we don't know you and we don't trust you.

We don't believe that you have our good in mind and we think we have to manipulate or cajole.

Lord, or sometimes we just approach you in fear, not thinking that you will do good.

But God, thank you for the cross that shows us your goodness. Thank you for the Holy Spirit. Lord, in whom we know your presence with us.

God, teach us to pray like this, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.