

Teach us to Pray

Luke 11:1-13

INTRODUCTION: Think of what it must have been like to be one of the disciples walking with Jesus throughout his three and a half years of earthly ministry.

- To hear the most excellent sermon ever preached - the Sermon on the Mount
- To witness those tormented by demons suddenly and dramatically delivered.
- To see tears fill the eyes of a man born blind, as the first thing he ever sees is the face of Jesus.
- To hear the rejoicing of a mom and dad as their little girl is raised from the dead.
- Or how about sitting in amazement as a little boy's sack lunch feeds a multitude?
- Or to feel the gentle breeze that followed after Jesus, the Master of the wind, commands the storm to "hush, be still."

Yet, when the opportunity came for his followers to make a request of Him. They did not ask him to teach them how to preach, or to teach them how to cast out demons, or to teach them how to open blind eyes, or how to multiply food, or how to calm the storm, nor even how to raise the dead.

The only thing we have a record of the disciples ever asking Jesus to teach them is found in our text this morning, "Lord, teach us to pray."

It makes one wonder, could it be, perhaps, by chance, that they saw a connection between Jesus' public displays of power and his private practice of prayer?

If that is true, could it be that the thing you really need is not what you THINK you need... more money, better health, a new job, a new spouse....could it be that the thing standing between you and the life God intended when he knit you together in your mother's womb is, very simply, you need to learn how to pray.

Let's learn together....

TEXT: Luke 11:1–13 (ESV)

¹ Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

The last time we were together, we mentioned the priority of spending time with the Lord, as Mary did, placing her worship before her work. One of the things I advised you to do was to find a TIME and a PLACE to pray. See here in our text that Jesus had a certain place while he was in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Luke doesn't tell us the name of the place, but if I had to guess, I would suppose it was a spot of land that he had been granted access to on the Mount of Olives. It was a garden used for the pressing of olives into oil, called "Gethsemane."

You see, the fact that he went there the night before his crucifixion was no accident. Judas knew exactly where to find him because he had a regular time and a predictable place. Do you?

NOTE that the disciples were eavesdropping on Jesus' prayer. Much can be learned from the conversation between a man and his God.

Remember, in 1st Corinthians, Paul directed the church they should not pray in tongues unless there is an interpreter present... why? Because it would sound like gibberish to those who were listening, and they would not be able to experience edification or affirm with the "amen."

One might say, "What difference does it make if I understand it or not? He is not speaking to me but to God." Yet Paul says it does matter... hearing a person pray can benefit you personally.

ILLUSTRATION: I have had the opportunity to offer a few formal prayers in recent days. These events require you to submit your prayer in advance and generally limit the words to 150 or less. It's not unusual for someone to criticize the offering of a written, premeditated prayer. But keep in mind, Solomon the Wise told us -

Ecclesiastes 5:2 (ESV) ² Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

It is suitable for you, and it is beneficial to others if, from time to time, you think about your prayer, even write it down.

If you have spent time in the Middle East, you will understand that if there is anything these people know how to do - it is pray. It is a cultural norm.

ILLUSTRATION: As you fly east to Israel, at sunrise, you will see the Hasidic Jews standing at a certain place on the plane with the tefillah on their forehead, often rocking back and forth as they recite their prayers. In our day and in Jesus' day, faithful Jewish people made prayer a very regular practice, often praying toward Jerusalem three times a day.

So, it is surprising that they would ask Jesus to TEACH them to pray. Yet, they did. Something about how Jesus prayed was different than the rabbis.

The three verses that follow are what has been commonly called the "Lord's Prayer". I would suggest that title is more appropriate for the High Priestly Prayer of Luke 17.

This prayer is an example of how the disciples might pray. You see, in this prayer, Jesus mentions the need to confess sin. He had no sin to confess, but we do.

NOW, this is very important...there are a couple of ways this prayer can be helpful to you: In Matthew's account of this same prayer - Jesus makes it clear that our prayers are not to be meaningless repetition, he even says more directly, pray *like* this, rather than *pray this*.

So, Jesus isn't saying - just say these words and you are done.

I would advise you to memorize the Lord's Prayer, the longest version found in Matthew. From time to time pray it word for word to the Lord. But more importantly, let it be a pattern for a prayer that comes from YOUR HEART.

There are a couple of ways you can do this:

- a. **BASEBALL DIAMOND** - I like to think of them as a bases on a baseball diamond. SO, when I sit down to pray and I don't know where to start, I remember this prayer - it begins with **magnification**... so I take some time to magnify and adore the Lord, to worship him. Then He goes to **material** needs... so I mention the material needs of my life. Then **metaphysical** or spiritual needs... so third base, I confess sin and ask for spiritual protection. Or think of them as the skeleton and you add the meat to the bones.

Another approach is to use this prayer as a filter... let me explain.

- b. **A FILTER** - Do you ever sit down to pray, and your heart is so burdened with something that you can't seem to work through your prayer list? Rather than resist that, work with it. Trust that God has placed that burden on your heart for a reason... and filter that burden through this example prayer. Let's say someone you know is suffering from cancer. Start out by magnifying God - God, I know that you know all things; this didn't catch you by surprise; I know that you are the great physician and you can heal them of this sickness. Go on to the material needs... Lord, provide them with the proper medical attention... let them rest well at night... give them the right nutrition to fight this cancer... then metaphysical... Lord, I know that physical pain can cause spiritual confusion... let your peace guard their heart and mind in Christ Jesus. You see?

So a baseball diamond or a filter....

Now, notice the three elements of prayer that Jesus taught us to include:

1. The Magnification of God

² And he said to them, "[When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.](#)"

2. The Material Needs of Life

³Give us each day our daily bread,

3. Metaphysical Needs of Life

⁴and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: