

Teach Us To Pray

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Hi right, good evening everyone. Welcome to our Wednesday discipleship study. As always, let's go ahead and first start off with prayer.

Father, thank you for this great privilege of opening up your word again tonight. Ask for your presence to be not only spoken of of your presence but felt deeply within each one in this room. God, unstop our ears so that we may have the grace of concentration tonight on this important lesson on prayer parable that the Lord Jesus Christ gives to us in this passage that we'll be going through tonight. I pray father that it will not be just some story where it's out and about but rather it's an internal call for all of us to see ourselves in this parable and ultimately father I pray that it will become crystal clear where we are all at in this parable whether we are truly understanding of what Jesus is saying, or if there are some here tonight that don't understand this story, I pray that as the message is preached forth that you would make it clear to them. And I pray that you would humble their hearts. That you would show them how good, how perfect, how loving you are as the heavenly father.

I pray father that you would bless to this end. We'll thank you in Jesus name. Amen.

Well, tonight we're going to be going through a parable that the Lord Jesus Christ gives to us right before teaching us to pray. We saw that at the beginning of Luke 11 verse 1. And if you will go ahead and turn there with me, Luke 11.

And the disciples there were asking Jesus or teach us to pray. And Jesus had just finished giving the pattern of prayer. We saw that in verses 2 and 4. And then we're going to see here in verse 5 how he immediately applies the lesson the teaching on prayer with a parable.

Now just kind of the beginning here in this before we go into the scriptures I want to make it known what is a parable. Some may be a refresher some don't know what a parable is. So I think I want to make sure we are on the same page. Well a parable serves a dual purpose. There are two purposes to a parable. And we see this in the parable of the sower that they both reveal truth to those who genuinely seek understanding.

That's number one. That's the first purpose. Those who genuinely seek understanding. And then on the other end, conversely, a parable can conceal the understanding for those who do not generally want to seek understanding. So those are individuals who have a hard heart, the hard soil as it were, listeners who are insensitive, resistant to God's word, and ultimately closed off from understanding God's word.

And so parables are designed to compel the listener to deeply examine your own life and your relationship with God. So with that said, as you're listening to this parable, examine your life. Examine your life. See where you are in your relationship with God.

So that's the defining of a parable. Now Jesus shows that his teachings is meant for real life use, not simply a theory, not something an intellectual ascent. And so Jesus literally applies what the disciples were taught in a parable analogy. In many ways, that's what discipleship really is. It's not for us to sit around, huddle around, and sit and read the word of God, and then we walk away unchanged. The whole point in any parable is that you come in genuinely wanting to understand the truth and then to live it out in real life. That that's what a parable is supposed to do.

So in this case Jesus the one giving the parable. He's the one instructing us teaching us carries a divine authority a divine weight behind his instructions. What does that mean? Is that his instructions are perfect. That's what that means.

So, it's for us, the ones that are listening on this end, that we pay attention. Referring to Matthew 7:24-25. Jesus said this, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended and the flood came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not. The house did not fall for it was founded upon a rock.

And who is that rock? We know the foundation, the firm foundation is Jesus Christ himself. Amen. And he is the one that we are to actively obey. Actively obey. That's change transform heart. as someone that wants to understand that we are constantly actively obeying his teachings, namely his parables.

And so the truth of this passage is not about how hard we must work to reach God or about human persistence earning an answer from God. But rather it's waiting, listening, and then doing based on what we listen to the perfect work of God reaching out to us, namely through his word. That's how he reaches out to us. He speaks to us. Amen. He speaks to us.

And it is about this passage. It's about God's readiness. It's about God's generosity. It's about God's heart towards his children. And you'll see the difference here when you go into understanding it this way. What you're going to see in this passage is you're going to

see the difference between God and this friend in the parable. Okay? So that's how you are to view this parable.

So with that said, go ahead and turn with me to Luke 11 beginning with verse 5.

Jesus says in verse 5, "Which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight and say unto him, friend, lend me three loaves?" Verse six, for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.

Here we're going to see first and foremost a cultural setting. This parable is in the backdrops that hospitality was a sacred duty. A sacred duty. If you recall, I gave a message previously about how important it was when guests arrive in the homes that they were ready to serve. This is a very common thing in the Middle East. I will say more than here in the west where strangers would just come and visit and then they would just stay there. Remember I shared with you some of them took advantage of the homeowner by asking for a bunch of things.

So there is risk behind it but underlying to this story applies the same that hospitality was a big thing and it still is in this part of the passage.

And so we see that that's the background. There's hospitality is sacred duty. And so when the person here saying lend me three loaves essentially he's saying this is an ordinary request. This is a common thing again in this culture giving three loaves to a friend was common. And so that this is an ordinary request. Nothing strange nothing out of the ordinary just an ordinary typical request. someone who is being hospitable. Okay.

But this points to the fact that God invites bringing of everyday needs. So there is a part of this parable that shows the importance of God inviting us to bring everyday needs not just emergencies. We know this from Philippians 4:6. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God.

So that includes emergencies, that includes ordinary requests, all things. So the request for this simple request of bread underlines daily dependence. We saw that in the disciples prayer, right? To ask for bread, daily bread.

So this is important note to take here that God does want us to ask for simple daily dependence such as our daily bread.

But ultimately God provides Christ himself namely that he the Lord Jesus Christ calls himself the bread of life. And he mentions in John 6:35 that the person that receives Christ, the bread of life, shall never hunger. He that believeth on Jesus shall never thirst.

What does that mean? That you'll always be satisfied in Christ. Always be satisfied in Christ.

And Psalm 34:8 where it says, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him." Why do I bring this out? Well, because it's not only important to know that God cares for our daily needs, but he ultimately cares for our ultimate need, which is the bread of life, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. and that we will receive ultimate satisfaction, always being satisfied, never thirsty, never hungry. And then Psalm 34, that we taste and see that the Lord is good. He is good and you are a blessed man that trust in him.

So going now back to the parable, we're going to look at the seeker in this parable. He finds himself empty-handed. Take note the word midnight. Midnight represents the moment when we have nothing. That's what it means. Midnight also represents a time of desperate need.

And so God who invites the needy to his door is at the most inconvenient hour. And we see this in verse six. I'll read it again. For a friend of mine in his journey has come to me and I have nothing to set before him. empty-handed, desperate need and inconvenient hour, midnight.

This is the heart of the parable here. God brings us to the place where we where we see we have nothing so he can show that he has everything. It's it's literally that kind of a contrast. He is literally depicting here nothing to knowing that God can provide everything.

And so we must first acknowledge our emptiness. We should understand and acknowledge our emptiness. So you see for God will only fill the voids we confessed are there. Just like we see this seeker, he confesses I have nothing. I have nothing and I must have something.

And so we see that this nothing is contrasted with God's inexhaustible sufficiency which we're going to see here as we see more into the text.

But the traveler arrives on a journey. You see that in the text, life's sudden needs, albeit both physical and spiritual needs, arrive unexpectedly, arrive unexpectedly, leaving us feeling unprepared, empty-handed, unless we rely on God's provision.

You see, God is the one who is the one that brings the traveler. God is the one who exposes the emptiness. God is the one who intends to supply. You see that in the text.

We often think well God is going to provide us ample opportunity, ample opportunity to do everything in the right timing. No, that it is true. He is he does work in the right timing. But he wants to show that in his right timing, these are the things that you need to be aware of.

He's the one that brings unexpected spiritual needs so that you will go to him and you go to him first. He's the one that exposes the emptiness in our lives so that he is the one that will fulfill the emptiness, will fill the void. He wants to be the one that directs all these things from beginning to end.

This is what grace is. This is what grace is. Grace upon grace as the way John expresses it from beginning to end. It is all about grace.

See this in the text. So let's look at verse 7 and 8. Seven and 8 says this. And he from within shall answer and say, "Trouble me not. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise and give thee." I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Here we're seeing that the neighbor says, "Trouble me not. The door is now shut and I cannot rise." In verse 7, you see, in first century homes, the whole family slept on a single mat. And what it meant was any disturbance, anyone that got up from that mat, immediately everyone wake up.

This is a picture of human limitation. We see the neighbor fatigued. We see the neighbor inconvenience. We see selfishness. I don't want to be bothered. Don't trouble me at this hour.

See, the point of this parable is not to suggest that God is the unwilling to help. He's not the friend as I reminded the very beginning. No, rather Jesus is contrasting human limitation with God's immediate availability. You see, you got to see always the difference. You see the limitation, but you see the unlimiting accessibility of God.

And so the the shut door is the story emphasizes here is human limitations serving as a perfect setup for illustrating God's limitless access. See, God is not the sleepy neighbor. God is not the one that's annoyed. By the way, sleepiness tends to make you more annoyed, doesn't it? And then building upon that, God is not inconvenience. He's not limited in resources.

Isaiah 40:28 spells this out. says, "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is

weary? There is no searching of his understanding." Isaiah 40:28 perfectly illustrates God's strength is limitless and never needs replenishing. Never.

He's unlike humans. He neither faints nor grows tired. We have to always remember that.

And the neighbor's excuses highlights the opposite of God's heart. Even a sleepy yet annoyed neighbor eventually does provide for persistent requests. After all, he is his friend.

But how much more will our father, our heavenly father who loves us, respond with grace?

And so we see this contrast more and more in the text. Further, let's look at verse 8. We see the turning point. Verse eight, I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

So here Jesus emphasizes that God, unlike the friend in the parable, is never reluctant to give. The original point remains because of God's sure willingness to supply, we should approach him with importunity, which is defined as shameless boldness. Right? We can enter into the with boldness into the throne of grace.

It's this shameless boldness that this word importunity is defined as. Yet the focus is not on the man's boldness. Sometimes we focus too much on that word importunity about that man's boldness. But let me nuance this. You see the fact that God has granted us the freedom to come to him at any time is that word boldness, right? Boldness opposite of that is hesitation. Oh, I don't I don't want to bother him. Oh, I I don't want to disturb him like his friend. But God is never bothered. He is never reluctant. He is always ready to hear from us. That's why we can come boldly and we can come shamelessly in our boldness.

So while human friends may require persistent repeated appeal before they offer assistance, God who is infinitely more gracious than this friend is always prepared to provide everything that is genuinely needed. He genuinely needed. You see, we're going to see two promises in two passages that I'm going to share that will help understand again God's character compared to this friend.

Number one, the unchanging character of God. Numbers 23:19 says this, "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent change their mind. Hath he said and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good.

So what is his unchanging character that he will make all things good at the end? Next we go from character to God's word never fails. Isaiah 55:11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Promise after promise, but I want to emphasize that which I please going back to what we genuinely need. Not what we might need, but what we genuinely need. He knows that very thing. always know that.

Now, we're going to go into verse 9 and 10 where we see God's response.

And I say unto you, verse 9, ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Here we see ask, seek and knock. We often view ask, seek and knock as a ladder of human effort. But that is not the case. These are promises guaranteed by the character of our father. The focus and attention is not on us. The asking, the seeking, the knocking. It's the character of our father.

We ask, we receive. We seek, he helps us to find. We knock and he opens the door. I want you to see this clearly illustrated. First one we're going to go with is ask. This is the response of God giving. The response of God giving. And he is not just any kind of giver. He is a generous giver who promises a always a positive outcome for his children by the word it will be given.

You see it is not our asking that creates the gift. Our asking doesn't create some kind of gift once it's released. No, it's not that. Rather, it is God's generous nature, his nature that ensures that asking is met with receiving.

And remember, asking the things that God is genuinely pleased with is the key. He will give us what we need. Next, we see the word seek. This is what God is revealing to us. God reveals to us. You see, we don't locate God. Can we find God? No. That's not what this passage is talking about.

It's not us trying to locate God intellectually, but rather it's God makes himself accessible. He's the one that makes himself accessible. And the most important discovery is God himself, not our material requirements. That's secondary. This is not talking about material requirements at all. It's seeking God himself because the material requirements are secondary and will be provided. We know this Matthew 6:33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

So God wants us to seek and it implies a relationship is more important than our things. And we saw that way back in the Lord teaching the disciples to pray. They saw the Lord Jesus Christ and his relationship with the father and said I don't have that kind of relationship. Teach us to pray like that. Not how like comparing but I want to have that kind of a relationship Lord Jesus as you have with the father.

That's what this passage is talking about. God is seeking or we seeking God ultimately he draws himself to us. What does it say in James right that as we draw nigh unto him he will draw nigh unto us a relationship he closes that gap. He's the one that comes to us. We need him in everything in our lives.

Next we see the next pattern of which is knock and this is ultimately God opens. Perseverance is illustrated by the act of knocking. Yet the eventual opening of the door is a direct result of grace. You see the opening of the door is not the action of the person outside. The door rather is opened by the action of the one within. Let me say that again. The opening of the door is not the action of the person outside knocking but the action of the one within namely God. It's his action that counts.

See the door does not open because we knock harder. That's not what this passage is referencing. It's rather it's the door opens because God opens it. Sometimes we get so frustrated, right? When you pray and it's nothing's appearing as an opportunity. Well, maybe that's not the door that God's going to open for you. And sometimes we think we can just pray harder or try harder. Our own persistence as it were. Again, which this is not the emphasis. It's what is genuinely needed in your life that pleases God. That's the key here. Emphasis here.

So verse 10 summarizes this. Look at verse 10. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

See, God's reply is assured. The key is, are we asking the right way? Are we seeking the right way? Are we knocking the right way? Because the reply is always assured. Jesus stresses that this promise of response is for everyone. We see that with right there at the beginning. For everyone that asketh receiveth.

So because of God's unchanging nature, we can be certain that he is actively giving. He is actively revealing and he is actively opening to his children. That is his posture.

And so this is not about persistence, our persistence. This is about God's promise. It's about God's promise.

So now let's look at verse 11 to 12. God gives only what is good.

Verse 11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you, that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Here we see that a curse is never something God would present as a blessing. A curse is never something God would present as a blessing. Even earthly fathers who are evil in this context give good gifts. Jesus uses common language here to show that even flawed, evil human parents instinctively meet their children's needs. But how much more will God?

You see, God consistently provides what is truly beneficial and life-giving to his children. And again, if imperfect fathers require, evil human parents require, persistence, evil human parents instinctively meet their children's needs. But how much more will God? You see, God consistently provides what is truly beneficial and life-giving to his children. And again, if imperfect fathers refuse to injure their children, the sinless father will never destroy his own.

God never gives snakes. God never gives scorpions. God never gives harm to his own children. You see, when we look at the fish and the egg here in this passage, these are ordinary nourishing things in that day. Fish and eggs were a common staple in a home. Daily nourishment.

And we see that God delights in providing for our daily practical needs. Even when God answer is different from our request. Know this. It is always better. It is always better in the way he responds to the way he wants to respond. God is God. That's enough for all of us. And we should always rest in his loving care for his children. He knows always what is best for us.

And so remember that reverence, that respect that Jesus taught his disciples that before you make a request, why don't you go before him and understand his character and understand his word first and then he is magnified and then not only our problems are smaller but our requests become more right. They become more right because we base it on his character and his word. That's very important in our prayers.

Next verse 13. If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Here we see we go from daily practical needs to God gives the greatest gift himself. How much more shall our heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? God's perfect goodness is a complete basis for how much more in this argument. This is the main point of this passage that the central message of Luke's gospel here is that the greatest gift that God offers is the gift of himself namely the Holy Spirit.

God does not merely give bread which is yes necessary. God does not merely give us answers which are necessary but what is best is he gives his spirit. Here are just some wonderful promises.

Namely, first with the Lord Jesus Christ, how the spirit indwells us as his children. John 14:16-17 Jesus prays, I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever. Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him. For he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.

That's a powerful promise, isn't it? He dwells in us. Again, that relationship is most important to the father and to the son as he's praying that he's present with you yet even living in you shall be in you. Promise.

Next, the spirit empowers. Acts 1:8. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

So we don't need to work up our witness. God will just empower us to be his witness. It will be his power always. And that power if it rests in you could not only be for here in Calvary Road Baptist Church and how we are together but maybe you're sent out to Judea for example or Samaria into the uttermost part of the world. That's the kind of power that is possessed in a believer. this kind of witness. But we need to remember the promise. We need to know that this is given to us.

This promise of the spirit next. So he goes from indwelling to empowering. Next we see in Romans 8:14, the spirit guides us. 8:14 says, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

We need guidance, don't we? In order to please God, we need the Holy Spirit to show us what pleases him. And it's the Holy Spirit that does that for us. And then we are able to produce fruit. Galatians 5:22-23. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law.

You see, we don't have to work up anything to produce fruit. The Holy Spirit will naturally produce fruit in us. It's all dependent on him.

Lastly, the Holy Spirit seals us. Ephesians 1:13-14. In whom ye also trusted, namely Jesus Christ. After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after ye believed, you were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the

earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

See, God gladly and generously gives the spirit to all who genuinely seek him. Remember, that's how I started the message. When you genuinely seek him in all areas of your life where the spirit can work in you in all these areas of indwelling and empowering and guiding and producing of fruit and ultimately sealing you to the end for the praise of his glory, not ours.

This is what it means that God is generous. He wants to cover every aspect of our lives. Not just little parts, all of it. We see it, don't we? In all this wonderful text and promises of what the Holy Spirit can do in a believer's life.

So, as we come to an end, this passage that we saw in Luke 5-13 reveals the very nature of God's heart for us as children of God. It moves beyond an emphasis on persistence which many people hang up on. It goes beyond that. It goes to God revealing that we are empty for one and that he is the one that ultimately fills us namely his holy spirit in us. That's the greatest gift.

Next get God is never reluctant to give. He is always ready. But we have to do it according to his will and to his pleasure. Next, God guarantees his response. If you ask the right way, if you seek the right way, if you knock the right way, he will receive, give to you, he will give you the revealing, and he will open.

And then God gives only what is good. When you have the spirit dwelling in you, you have greater discernment for that which is good, that which glorifies and praises him, not to focus on ourselves, but the Holy Spirit what always directs us to the Lord Jesus Christ as our example. And more good, more of Christlikeness. That's the greatest good in us that we become more reflections of the Lord Jesus Christ and less of our old nature.

And again, all of these wonderful gifts, grace upon grace, is by the work of the Holy Spirit. The heavenly father is far from being an irritated neighbor. He is eager to meet the needs of his children regardless of the time or the size of the request.

We don't need to wear God down by being demanding or persuade him to be gracious. No, the door of heaven is unlocked for every child of God. It is held open by the hand of a loving father who delights to give the Holy Spirit to all who are drawn to him.

So may you rest today and all days going forward that it's not in your strength of your prayers but in the strength of the one who hears them. May God bless this passage to your hearts.

Let's pray. Father, it is truly a privilege again to come to you at the throne of grace to obtain mercy, to find grace, to help in a time of need.

And Father, all of us here need more of you and less of what we want, what we desire. We want what we genuinely need as children of God. not only to sustain us physically but more importantly spiritually by being filled with the Holy Spirit so that we can be indwelled that we can be empowered that we can be witnesses that we can truly God bear the fruit of the spirit and that we can live ultimately to glorify you and please you father this is your desire for us to have a right relationship with you, namely by us our initial trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, but more you want us currently to be sanctified in thy truth which is your word.

Help, Lord, your word to sink more deeply into those areas, Lord, where we need your word to work in us to produce more and more fruit. God, we desire to have that not because of our flesh, but it's because it's the spirit who speaks, who groans within us.

God, I want that for all of us to have those groanings that cannot be uttered by words, but it's their spirit working in us at the deepest level where there can be greater root and greater grounds for love. And that is found in being more Christlike in our lives. less of us, Father, and more of the Lord Jesus Christ reflecting in our lives because that is what ultimately pleases you. That we are we are united to Christ and that you look at us just as if you're looking at the Lord Jesus Christ right now.

God, what an awesome privilege to be joint heirs with Christ. That everything that's given to him is given to us. that whatever we ask in his name, you'll receive.

Help us, Father, to pray more right, more in your will, more in the way that pleases you. And we'll thank you in Jesus name. Amen.