

PRAYER
Shameless Audacity
Luke 11:1-13

Sometimes, we get answers to questions that we did not expect. [Story of how Oliver “taught me” to CRY!] I love that story! Today in our reading, we see where Jesus answered the request to teach the disciples how to pray with a very unexpected story. But his story reveals more about God, and more about us, than we would at first imagine. Let’s see how this story unfolded, and remember some truths that we learned last week.

Luke 11:1-4 NIV

1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "**Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.**" 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.' "

The disciples asked this of Jesus because they SAW his lifestyle of prayer and the answers to prayer that he continually experienced. We LEARN from those who actually DO the thing they are being asked about. These disciples were close enough to Jesus to SEE the power of God in his prayer life like no other man they had ever seen. Lisa and I have been watching THE CHOSEN together. I love the way that they personalize the “after conversations” that they may have had with Jesus between what we can read for ourselves in the scriptures. I cannot imagine what it would have been like to talk personally with Jesus about prayer like that! What an amazing conversation that would have been. It is curious to think what JOHN taught his disciples about prayer! We do not know, but we do know that he pointed them toward JESUS as the ultimate SOURCE of all knowledge.

The MODEL that Jesus used to teach them to pray was the Cliff Notes version of the one from the Sermon on the Mount. But the PATTERN within it is the same. The FIRST FOCUS of true prayer is that of GOD, GOD’S CHARACTER, and GOD’S WILL. Everything else is under that context and focus. Our needs and our personal struggles are best presented to God in the FULL light of HIS GLORY and GRACE.

-Speak about what I am learning about my own prayer life right now.

After Jesus gives them this brief recap of the Model Prayer, he tells them a story that is meant to demonstrate some rich truths about prayer. **Luke 11:5-7 NIV**

5 Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' 7 And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.'

It is intriguing that Jesus started with this NEGATIVE picture of a RELUCTANT FRIEND who really did not care about his NEEDY NEIGHBOR! It seems to paint a negative

picture of one who does not want to be BOTHERED [God?] by the requests of his friend [Us?] even when they are asking for something for someone else's benefit! Would this kind of abrupt, harsh response to your request cause you to STOP ASKING? In my mind, it seems that if you wanted to encourage people to pray more, then you would start by emphasizing just how much God loves to hear and answer our prayers! How different would it have felt if he had started with **Luke 11:11-13 NIV**

11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

So, why did he not start his prayer instruction off this way? Perhaps he was wanting to focus on OUR ATTITUDE and APPROACH to prayer before he focused on God's RESPONSE! We are often so CASUAL and even APATHETIC in our prayers. **We throw a prayer out to God, and then move on without demonstrating any sense of DESPERATE DEPENDENCE upon God for what we need. We tend to move on to our OWN SOLUTIONS to our prayers if he does not immediately answer, rather than CRYING OUT to God until we get an answer from him!**

God loves to answer his children's prayers. This is what the final part of Jesus's instructions about prayer teach us. It shows a marked CONTRAST between the attitude of the reluctant NEIGHBOR and the heart of our loving FATHER. But the balance of the story is about our approach to God. **Luke 11:8-10 NIV**

8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. 9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

ARE WE SERIOUS about finding our needs met in Jesus alone, or are we just playing with prayer? Remember, Jesus is sharing these stories in response to a REQUEST that he TEACH them about how to pray. He is addressing probably one of the greatest WEAKNESSES that his children have when it comes to prayer: PERSISTENCE. He wants to teach us how to practice SHAMELESS AUDACITY with God in prayer! When we get to the point that we will BADGER GOD for what we believe to be the thing that he knows we need and that we know we need, then he will give us that answer! We can actually see this better when we understand the type of VERB Jesus uses in verses 9-10. He actually says, "Ask . . . and KEEP ON ASKING, and it will be given to you; Seek . . . and KEEP ON SEEKING, and you will find; Knock . . . and KEEP ON KNOCKING, and the door will be opened." **God loves our persistence in prayer!** HOW MUCH MORE, he says, "will God give us . . ." what we need, when we ask him with this kind of confident, HUMBLE INSISTENCE?

What does "shameless audacity" look like? I am glad you asked! Jesus gives us another even more shocking story to demonstrate the importance of PERSISTENCE in prayer in a later time of instruction. **Luke 18:1-8 NIV**

1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!' " 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. **However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"**

Did you catch the REASON why he told this story? He wants to teach us that prayer, LIFE-CHANGING PRAYER, requires persistence. We cannot give up. We must not back up. The OLD-TIMERS used to call this "PRAYING THROUGH." It is the idea of prayer that extends beyond just a few moments, or days, or weeks, or even months or years if necessary! **It is prayer that keeps on until God's answer is given, because God is the ONLY ONE that can give the adequate answer to this request!**

-The Judge may be unjust, but he is the ONLY JUDGE! The woman's persistence was not dampened by the judge's response because **She knew that HE ALONE could grant what she was asking**, so she kept coming to his door! **Do we see this about God?**

-This woman was a WIDOW. She had no real PROTECTION in this society without a husband. Apart from the judge, this woman had NO HOPE of HELP.

-The judge finally relented because he was WORN OUT by this woman's persistence. [The NIV says, "lest she come and ATTACK ME!" This is SHAMELESS.]

Have I ever been shamelessly audacious in my prayer life? Does my prayer life REVEAL how DESPERATELY I need God? Sadly, I think not. I can remember a few times when my heart was pressed to seek God for an extended time until I got an answer, but never have I sought him with this kind of LONG-TERM PASSION. **[Percy Ray prayers]** I do have some things that I have been praying about for years, and will continue to do so until those prayers are answered. Lisa and I (along with our parents) prayed diligently for our children to be saved until each one came to Christ. I am so grateful for God's answer to those prayers! These kinds of prayers we can keep on praying and praying and praying until we get our Father's answer, because we already know his WILL about the salvation of our children! **DON'T GIVE UP!** **[We have seen this in our prayers for our grandchildren as well! Ryan and Isaiah's salvation/pregnancy and birth for some of our kids that could not initially conceive. We continue to pray for each of them to be saved, and will until our last breath!]**

I think that the way Jesus concludes this story is convicting. He asks a simple question: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find FAITH on the earth?" The answer to that

question depends upon US. **Will he find faith here in our church and in our homes if he comes NOW?** How will that faith be evidenced? **I know that when he comes, he will simply find us doing what we do!** We will not get an ADVANCE NOTICE that he will be here on such-and-such a day [regardless of what some “prophet” may say]. Don’t say that you will start praying like this later on. Start now. Ask God now (and keep on asking God) for the faith and the burden to keep on praying until you receive his answer to that thing that is currently overwhelming you and that you know is HIS WILL.

Just as in Luke 11, Jesus FINISHES this story in Luke 18 with a CONTRAST. This time, it is between the UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGE and GOD. The judge cares nothing about God or man, but God LOVES his CHOSEN ONES, and will bring them SWIFT JUSTICE at the divinely appointed time. We cannot - we MUST NOT - DOUBT that God loves us and loves to answer our prayers. But again, we must note that God will bring swift justice . . . when HE chooses to act!

-God TIMING is as much a part of his will as his ANSWER.

-Jesus teaches us to pray until the answer comes.

-When the answer comes, he will do SWIFT WORK for his glory and your good.

Sometimes, the more we pray about something, the more we learn to DISCARD the parts of our prayer that we realize are NOT God’s will. Praying through does not PRESSURE God, it PRIORITIZES him. It makes HIS WILL the most important thing. He knows how to give what is absolutely BEST for us, and he will not withhold that good thing from us. His promise to give the Holy Spirit to those that ask is another comparative illustration. **God does not just give us STUFF in answers to our prayers, he gives us HIMSELF!**

Let’s pray.

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Southaven Facilitation Guide
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Start talking

What is the longest you have ever prayed for something?

Start thinking.

What are you learning about prayer during this season of your life?

Start sharing.

[Read Luke 11:1-13.](#) Why do you think Jesus put prayer in a context of disturbing someone (God?) who does not want to be disturbed? How does the intensity and urgency of our prayers expose the true sense of our need for God? How would you describe “shameless audacity” in one’s prayer life? Have you ever been there?

Why does Jesus teach us to “ask and keep on asking” when we approach God? How does this affect us?

How have you learned that God loves to answer the prayers you bring to him?

[Read Luke 18:1-8.](#) Why do you think the widow kept coming to the unjust judge when he did not fear God or man? How does prayer like this reinforce the truth that God is our only hope for help? Why is it so important to trust the timing of God’s will when we pray?

Why did Jesus ask the question about the Son of man finding faith on the earth when he comes?

Start praying.

Identify some prayer that you have quit praying due to discouragement, and bring that prayer back to God again and again until you receive his answer.

Start doing.

Refer back to “start praying!”