

Sermon Title: **“Gospel Triumphant: Good Gift”**

Series: *Learn, Live, Lead*

Speaker: Pastor Damian Mericka

Text: Acts 19:21-31

Introduction

“Stand firm, and you will win life.” -Luke 21:19

We began this year with a look at what Kingdom endurance is. **Standing Firm** here means *Endurance* and is a very rich word embodying an **upward, consistent, contagious, and outward** motion that goes against the current. *It is swimming upstream after Jesus.* We saw this is the work the Spirit of God does in our lives, just as He did in Jesus’ - He leads us upward to higher ground and a higher life in Him.

We also looked at some of the outward challenges we face when going upward with the Spirit, including the spiritual forces of darkness which our on their way downward. As they are being cast out of God’s Kingdom, we are being brought in. This is the nature of our Spiritual Battle. Unlike the generations that came before Jesus since His Ascension the Spirit has now come upon us to take the battle to where it truly is at.

What does this look like lived out in or lives? Following Jesus as His Disciples.



“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

-Matthew 4:19

This series is set to be a journey answering this question- *what does it mean to follow Jesus?* How do we today answer His invitation and see this journey with Him unfold as it did for the first-generation followers of Jesus? Together we will discover anew what it means to follow Jesus- *to be a disciple making disciples culture that **learns, lives, and leads!***

I. Can We Have What You Have? (Luke 11:1)

“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.” -Luke 11:1 ESV

Luke, the same author of the Acts account we have been going through wrote an account of the life of Jesus. In the context of chapter 11, Jesus had called and commissioned The Twelve Disciples to carry out His ministry ahead of Himself. Jesus then also sent out The Seventy two-by-two in which they went declaring and displaying the authority of Jesus and His Kingdom. From healing, deliverance from demonic oppression, restoration of what was lost-

Christ's Kingdom was coming into this world with great stride as the Kingdom of darkness was being pushed out. Jesus opened the eyes of those serving Him to see the real victory that He was witnessing,

*“And he said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’” -**Luke 10:18-20***

What I want to focus on here is that Jesus both *called and sent* The Twelve, and then *appointed and sent* The Seventy to do what He Himself was doing. In the Greek, **called** means to *pull together as a unit, or body*. Whereas **appointed** means to *elect to a position; announce as chosen*. These two words characterize the manner in which Jesus called and appointed them *into* Himself and then sent them *out* from Himself.

Before this had happened, Jesus had already begun His public ministry. Both The Twelve and Seventy had been around Jesus enough to learn through instruction and observation at His Hand to be sent in His Name to do His Works. They understood clearly that in Jesus they could do everything He called them to do. Outside of Jesus, they could do nothing. So even when sent out they needed to abide or remain in Him Spiritually. *How did they do this?*

Coming now to our text in verse ***Luke 11:1***, one of His Disciples came to Jesus with a question. If you spent any time with Jesus, you realized quickly both the value and role prayer had in His life. To say Jesus prayed often would be an understatement. They realized Jesus was filled in these prayer moments; the ministry He did was the overflow of that filling. That is why Jesus could say He felt power leave Him,

“But Jesus said, ‘Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.’”
-Luke 8:46

The Disciples picked up on the role of prayer in Jesus' life and in turn asked Him to teach them. That is, after Jesus finished. Note: *They didn't interrupt Him, which shows the reverence they had and the faith to realize the power of what was happening*. Beyond the general request of a student their Rabbi, they desired to step deeper into the relationship Jesus had and modeled with the Father. Jesus, can we have such a relationship as you have with the Father?

These are foster children asking the biological siblings, *Will your dad love us they way he loves you? Can we be a part of the family as you are?*

II. The Posture of Our Hearts (Luke 11:2-4)

*“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.”” -**Luke 11:2-4***

Jesus immediately leads them into this place of prayer. He leads them into this Spiritual connection that He and the Father enjoys. There is no room left to speculate in their minds of their position in Him; they are not outside looking in. *It is as if Jesus was waiting for them to ask! (We have not because we ask not)*

When you pray is built on the assumption that not only are His Disciples asking Him to teach them how, but they also long to do it as often as He does. *Like children watching their parents and others worship in service, they learn (and we learn) from observing.* They are not asking to be given prayers to prayer verbatim; they desire to **experience** what Jesus does as a Son with the Father!

First, *Father*. Call Him Father.

“But go (Mary Magdalene) to my brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’” -[John 20:19](#)

“For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”” -[Hebrews 2:11-12](#)

We are God’s Children and approach God as our Father.

Heart Posture #1- Being in His Presence

Hallowed be Your name in the Greek is an expression rich with value and meaning. **First**, this is an acknowledgement of God’s Holiness. **Second**, it is an affirmation that we are cleansed, purified and free from the guilt of sin in the presence of our Holy God. Further, it is a renewing experience between us and God; our souls are renewed through this affirmation. All is in perfect balance and alignment when God is in His rightful place in our lives; and we in Him.

Name implies all that is attached to that name. For God the Father, it is embracing all that He is as He has revealed to us in the Scripture. This sets the tone for God who is disposed to answer-when He says *no* we are invited to know and trust in His Wisdom. He invites us to enter boldly, not arrogantly. To appeal and ask of Him, believing He hears and answers.

Heart Posture #2- Keeping the Focus on His Kingdom

God’s Kingdom comes only through His Will. This is the ultimate desire our hearts are being taught to embrace- God’s Kingdom and Will for our lives and the world around us. Too often we come to God with our desires and make our appeal to Him by wrapping Kingdom benefit to it. That is not what this is about. This is about truly seeking first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. It is pursuing Jesus with all that we are and have. It is embracing His purpose through our circumstances even if they should not change for our desired benefit.

This is His Kingdom coming through our heart and life. From this heart posture we are focused on His Kingdom, and then we ask for *daily bread*. **Daily bread** here implies just enough for the present need. Jesus didn’t teach them to appeal for a storehouse; but to entrust the immediate day to Him. This does not discourage planning ahead, for in other passages He emphasizes that. Even with the most well thought out plan, things come up that cause the day to unfold

differently than we may have hoped. Yet here when we are focused on God and His Kingdom we can have confidence He knows our need and will supply as we have need. Further this posture is an invitation for us to face our needs and bring them into subjection to our faith in God and His Word. Will we trust, or be driven by fear to despair?

*“Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” **-Matthew 6:31-34***

Heart Posture #3- As We are Forgiven, We Forgive Others

Though we are Justified by the blood of Jesus, though we are invited to enter boldly into His Throne Room, we are still sinners saved by Grace. We have been forgiven; we are being forgiven. When we struggle to forgive others who offend us, we reveal a heart that views our own sin very lightly, such as *I’m not as horrible a sinner as that person!*

This is a time of confession and repentance, a time to be forgiven and cleansed. We are believing that He forgives us for the daily sin that we commit. As Protestants we have swung the pendulum to the side of assuming we are forgiven and making little mention or effort to allow the weight of sin to be felt. As if *guilt* is the dirty part of sin. When this is so, we are so quick to rid ourselves of what brings *guilt* that we often pick the sin back up.

*“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” **-1 John 1:7-10***

For the immediate audience here, Jesus is making this Gospel Truth that they went out and proclaimed- *God forgives sinners*- very practical to the daily rhythms of life. For me as a Pastor, you as the leader and person of influence with others- do we live and model a life of forgiveness or is it an ideal we are comfortable preaching to others. Do we bring our sin in confession to Jesus as well as our need for bread? As we allow Him to satisfy our hunger, may we allow Him to satisfy and heal our wound of guilt as we confess, being forgiven and cleansed.

Heart Posture #4- I Trust You God More Than I Trust Myself!

Lead us not into temptation here does not mean we are praying *God, don’t lead me to sin!* But rather, *God, I trust you more than I trust myself!* If you close a door, if you say no, there is a reason I may not see or like, but I accept.

“And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make

*you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” **-Deuteronomy 8:2-3***

Moses’ words were the backdrop to this prayer Jesus is teaching His Disciples- until we are willing to humble ourselves, our sinful pride will take the helm and win the day causing us to sin and act selfishly. Yet when we are humble, we daily eat from God’s Word and are nourished beyond physical bread. When we are obedient to God’s Word daily, we flee our sinful desires as our flesh grows weaker and His Spirit within us grows stronger.

*“Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” **-1 Corinthians 10:13***

III. Persistence, Snakes and Scorpions (Luke 11:5-12)

From this posture of prayer Jesus now gives examples to help reinforce what He is saying. The **First** example is from our own perspective- as a friend in need. The **Second** series of examples are from God’s perspective as our Father. In both cases, there is the factor of Faith. Remember, the Disciples want what Jesus has with the Father, and Jesus is bringing them into this intimacy in ways that penetrate their mind and heart.

First, the heart of a friend.

*“And he said to them, ‘Which of you 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 (persistence) he will rise and give him what he needs.” **-Luke 11:5-8***

This was a worst-case scenario- that even under such a difficult circumstance the friend will realize the need is not going away and get up to share what they have an abundance of. Yet I wonder, how put out are we today when someone with a mental, social, spiritual, or physical need interrupts us for what God has gifted us with to overflow into them? Maybe the friend in need only had this one friend, or perhaps he knew this would be the only friend that would help them.

*“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, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” **-Luke 11:9-10***

Second, the heart of a Father.

*“What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?” **-Luke 11:11-12***

Admittedly, as upset as I may have gotten with my children, I have yet to be tempted to put a snake in their lunch box, or a scorpion in their cereal bowl! The contrast was meant to be very direct by Jesus to hit a nerve common to each of them there listening. No one in the audience would do this- most likely everyone was pricked to their hearts thinking *who would do such a thing?*

Jesus is building up to the finale to their request to learn to pray and have what Jesus has with the Father. It's not about asking and getting, it's about being in His Presence, being transformed by His Presence, being directed (or re-directed) by His Presence, and being filled to overflow when we transition from this posture of prayer to daily life.

IV. A Good Gift (Luke 11:13)

*“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!” -**Luke 11:13***

And here we come full circle to what the Disciples asked of Jesus. Remember, Jesus called and appointed them, sent them out to do the same work He was doing. Near or far from Jesus they recognized all that they did was through Him and Him alone. Jesus overflowed into them.

But Jesus is not going to be here for much longer. The Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension are on the horizon.

The desire to come to the place of filling that happened between Jesus and His Father was being nurtured long before they asked Jesus this question. Our God- Father, Son, and Spirit- are all involved intimately in the Gospel and its Triumph. It is a triumph within us that overflows beyond us as it did Jesus.

Why is the Holy Spirit considered such a good gift?

Let's look at what role the Holy Spirit had in Jesus' Ministry,

*“And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit...” -**Matthew 3:16-4:1***

And now, what role the Holy Spirit has in our life and ministry,

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, **but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.** For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that*

is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

-Romans 8:1-11

The best gift that *God the **Father*** could give us that are in *God the **Son*** is that of *God the **Holy Spirit***.

It is this Good Gift that fills us to overflow. This Good Gift that convicts and renews us. This Good Gift that is transforming us from the inside out on this road of Sanctification.

*“You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” **-Romans 8:15-16***

Jesus, can we have what you have with the Father when you pray?

Yes, you can.

And it begins by calling Him Father.

The Father who gives us **Good Gifts**.