

Exegetical Notes - Luke 11:1-13

“When You Pray”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

Luke 11:1-13

Verse 1-2a

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.” He said to them, “When you pray, say:

- It was Jesus’ regular practice to spend time in prayer. (See Luke 5:16, Matthew 14:23, and Mark 1:35) He did this openly as an example to his disciples.
- Having watched Jesus pray regularly, one of the disciples asked Jesus to teach the group how to do as he did. What we call the Lord’s Prayer is actually the example of prayer which Jesus gave in response to this request.

The Lord’s Prayer

Verse 2b-4

*“Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.*

Give us each day our daily bread.

*Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation.”*

- The prayer is very simple in construction. It begins with the simple address, “Father.” Matthew adds “Who art in heaven.” There is no complicated form of address; just the simple, respectful address of a child to its parent.
- “Hallowed be your name,” is the first of five petitions in Luke’s form of the prayer. It is a simple request of God that his name be regarded as holy.

- The second petition is “Your kingdom come.” This is a request that God’s will be done “on earth as it is in heaven.” The first and second petitions of the prayer find their resolve, first, in the life of the person praying the prayer. The one praying the prayer must be the first one to resolve to hold God’s name in respect and must resolve to allow God’s kingdom to come in his own heart as he bends his will to that of God. The prayer loses all meaning if he who prays it does not first resolve to respect the name of God and then to do the will of God.
- The third request of the prayer is “Give us each day our daily bread.” Bread means all necessary sustenance. The prayer implies that the pray-er should expect to receive what he needs when he needs it and not expect it to be given in advance of the needing of it. The pray-er should expect to get what he needs when he needs it.
- “Forgive us our sins,” is the fourth petition of the prayer. Jesus teaches on forgiveness in Matthew 18 and in Mark 11 as well as in the Lord’s Prayer. Always, forgiveness is hinged upon forgiving others. Because God’s children are forgiven by God, they freely extend the gift to others.
- The last petition of the prayer is “Lead us not into temptation.” The Greek word translated “temptation” means more than just the temptation to sin, although it does include that kind of temptation. The words means any testing or trial that might challenge our integrity or our resolve to follow God’s plan for our lives... that is, our resolve to submit to the will of God in our daily living. All of these trials can be successfully faced with God. As Matthew’s version of the prayer explains, the fear is that we will not face the trial with our faith in God to deliver us, but will face them on our own. If we proceed on our own, we might succeed to overcome the temptation, but God’s deliverance from them is sure.

Verse 5-6

Then he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’”

- After giving his disciples the very brief model prayer, he continues his lesson on prayer with two parables.
- The first parable is about a man whose neighbor comes banging on his door at midnight begging for bread because the neighbor has just

received an unexpected traveler and has no food to set before him. The neighbor asks the man for three loaves of bread.

- The request is extraordinary. The man does not ask for some bread. He specifically asks for three loaves. He wants to set a bounty before this unexpected traveler who has arrived at his house in the middle of the night. He is requesting much more than his “daily bread.”

Verse 7-8

“Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”

- It would have been considered very bad manners to knock on a closed door for any reason. If the door stood open, it could be knocked on, but when it was shut it meant that visitors were not welcomed.
- The man inside indicated that he could not come to the door without disturbing all his family. But still the neighbor continued to knock. He would not go away.
- Jesus said that under these circumstances the man in the house would get up and give something to his persistent neighbor because the neighbor was threatening to disturb everyone’s peace anyway.

Verse 9-10

“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. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

- Jesus is not encouraging people to make pests of themselves in prayer or to practice bad manners. He is encouraging them to pray. It is correct to bring our concerns to God.

Verse 11-13

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 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!”

- Matthew adds, “The good gifts of the Holy Spirit.” The lesson is that you need not fear receiving from God what you may ask of him, if

that for which you ask will be harmful to you. The Holy Spirit of God prevents those requests from even reaching the ears of God. He intercedes for us in prayer. So we have no need to be afraid to pray. It is correct to bring our concerns to God.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *When You Pray*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen*. They are used here by permission.)