

Ever-Persevering Petitions

Luke 11:5-13

SS Lesson for 02/23/2020

Devotional Scripture: Luke 18:1-14

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Luke 11:9

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

PERSISTENT ASKING (LUKE 11:5-8)

Confident expectation (5-6)

Confident expectation because God is faithful (Heb 3:6)

Confident expectation because we are partakers in God (Heb 3:14)

Confident expectation because of hope in God (Heb 10:23)

Confident expectation because God has armor that will help us stand against Satan (Eph 6:10-13)

Confident expectation knowing that God's faithfulness is true (Rom 3:3-4)

Confident expectation knowing that what God promises, He will be faithful in fulfilling (Heb 10:22-23)

Confident expectation knowing that God is faithful and just (1 John 1:9)

Initial reluctance (7)

God sometimes delays His answers because His timing is not man's timing (Isa 55:8-9)

God sometimes delays His answers to display His faithfulness (Heb 10:23)

God sometimes delays His answers because He is patient (Ps 86:15)

Ultimate response (8)

God responds because He never forsakes those who seek Him (Ps 9:10)

God responds because He will not let us fail (1 Cor 10:13)

God responds because even if I am unfaithful, God will always be faithful (2 Tim 2:13)

God responds because He cannot lie (Heb 6:13-18)

God responds because He cares for me (1 Peter 5:7)

God responds because He promises to be attentive to my prayers (Ps 34:15)

God responds because He takes care of all of His creations (Matt 6:26)

God responds because His goodness will not allow anything else (Ps 27:13)

God responds because He promises justice and protection (Ps 37:5-7)

God responds because He sustains me and does not let me fall (Ps 55:22)

God responds because He asks me to come to Him for and about everything (Phil 4:6)

A Confident Request (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

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Persistence in faith results in nothing being impossible (Matt 17:20)

Persistence in faith provides answered prayers (Matt 21:21-22)

Persistence in faith results in justification (Rom 3:28)

Persistence in faith is a way of life for the Christian (2 Cor 5:7)

Persistence in faith provides an approach to God with freedom and confidence (Eph 3:12)

Persistence in faith results in unity of the Church body (Phil 1:27)

Persistence in faith leads to reconciliation (Col 1:22-23)

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Luke's two books, Luke and Acts, have repeated mentions of people praying and frequent teachings on prayer. We cannot read these two books without noticing that Jesus was a man of prayer (see Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 11:1; 22:40, 41, 44, 46; etc.) and that the first-century church was a community of prayer (see Acts 1:14; 13:3; 21:5; etc.). The Jerusalem church made prayer a priority (2:42). Cornelius, a Gentile, was a God-fearing man before his conversion, partly because he devoted himself to prayer (10:2). The church inherited this reverence for prayer from its Jewish roots. Ancient Jewish synagogues and the temple itself were ideally to be houses of prayer (see Isaiah 56:7; Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46), dedicated spaces where people could pray alone or in community. Prayer by Jesus and first-century Jews was rooted in the Scriptures (Genesis 21:16-18; Exodus 32:11-13; Jeremiah 10:23-25; etc.). The Old Testament shows prayer as addressing the Lord as the God who hears, cares, and is powerful to act (Exodus 2:23-25; Psalm 65:2; Daniel 9:19). The previous lesson looked at the Lord's Prayer as found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-15; see lesson 12); Luke's parallel for that teaching opportunity (although not his version of the Lord's Prayer itself) is the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49). Between that event and today's lesson occurs a miraculous healing and a resurrection (7:1-17); interactions with various people (7:18-50); more teaching (8:1-21; 10:38-42); calming a storm (8:22-25); an exorcism, resurrection, and healing (8:26-56); sending of the 12 (9:1-9); a miraculous feeding (9:10-17); private conversations and the transfiguration (9:18-36); another exorcism (9:37-43a); conversations and opposition (9:43b-62); and the sending of the 72 (10:1-24). Only then do we arrive at Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer (also known as the model prayer) and today's text that follows it. As Luke 11 opens, Jesus was praying. When he had finished, a disciple asked Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus' response was to offer the prayer of Luke 11:2-4. The text for today's lesson offers further insights on prayer.

Key Verse: Luke 11:9

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

11:1. Jesus prayed at every major crisis point in His life. He prayed at the time of His baptism (3:21), and at the time of the choosing of His disciples (6:12). He **was** often alone **praying** (5:16; 9:18) and also prayed with others around (9:28-29). He prayed for Simon (22:32), and He prayed in the garden before His betrayal (22:40-44). He even prayed on the cross (23:46). **One of His disciples**, impressed with Jesus' life of prayer, asked Jesus to **teach them to pray**.

11:2-4. In this model prayer Jesus began with an intimate direct address, **Father**. This was somewhat characteristic of the way Jesus referred to God in His prayers (cf. 10:21). He then made five requests. The first two dealt with God's interests.

The first request was that God's **name** be **hallowed** (*hagiasthētō*, from *hagiazō*, "to set apart or sanctify" or, as here, "to treat as holy"). Thus the request was for God's reputation to be revered by men.

The second request was **Your kingdom come**. John the Baptist, Jesus, the Twelve, and the 72 had been preaching about the coming of God's kingdom. When a person prays for the coming of the kingdom, he is identifying with the message of Jesus and His followers.

The third request was for **daily bread**. Bread is a general term denoting nourishing and filling food. Thus the request is for food that is necessary to sustain life for the day.

The fourth request concerned man's relationship to God—the forgiveness of **sins**. Luke had already linked the forgiveness of sins to faith (7:36-50). In asking for forgiveness of sins a person expresses his faith that God will forgive him. Such a person then evidences his faith by forgiving others.

The fifth request is, **lead us not into temptation**. But why pray such a prayer since God does not want people to sin? The meaning is that Jesus' followers are to pray that they be delivered from *situations* that would cause them to sin. His disciples, contrary to the Law experts (10:25-29), realized that they were easily drawn into sin. Therefore Jesus' followers need to ask God for help to live righteous lives.

11:5-8. The first parable concerns **persistence** in prayer. It is common in Luke for good lessons to be taught from bad examples (cf. 16:1-9; 18:1-8). In contrast with the man who did not want to be bothered, God wants His people to pray to Him (11:9-10). So Jesus encouraged people to be persistent in prayer—not to change God's mind but to be steadfast in praying and to receive their **needs**.

11:9-13. The second parable noted that the heavenly Father gives His children what is **good** for them, not what harms them. Jesus encouraged the people of God to **ask**. He noted that natural **fathers** give **good** food to their children rather than something that would harm them (some **fish** may look like snakes, and the body of a large white **scorpion** could be mistaken **for an egg**). **How much more will** the heavenly **Father** give what is good to His children. Jesus stated that this good gift is **the Holy Spirit**, the most important gift that followers of Jesus would receive (cf. Acts 2:1-4). The heavenly Father gives both heavenly gifts and earthly gifts. Believers today are not to pray for the Holy Spirit because this prayer of the disciples (for the Holy Spirit) was answered at Pentecost (cf. Rom. 8:9)

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Persistent Asking (Luke 11:5-8)

5 And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

7 "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'?

8 "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

Confident expectation (5-6)

Confident expectation because God is faithful (Heb 3:6)

6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Confident expectation because we are partakers in God (Heb 3:14)

14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

Confident expectation because of hope in God (Heb 10:23)

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Confident expectation because God has armor that will help us stand against Satan (Eph 6:10-13)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Confident expectation knowing that God's faithfulness is true (Rom 3:3-4)

3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar.

Confident expectation knowing that what God promises, He will be faithful in fulfilling (Heb 10:22-23)

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Confident expectation knowing that God is faithful and just (1 John 1:9)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Initial reluctance (7)

God sometimes delays His answers because His timing is not man's timing (Isa 55:8-9)

8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God sometimes delays His answers to display His faithfulness (Heb 10:23)

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

God sometimes delays His answers because He is patient (Ps 86:15)

15 But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Ultimate response (8)

God responds because He never forsakes those who seek Him (Ps 9:10)

10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

God responds because He will not let us fail (1 Cor 10:13)

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

God responds because even if I am unfaithful, God will always be faithful (2 Tim 2:13)

if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

God responds because He cannot lie (Heb 6:13-18)

13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." 15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. 16 Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

God responds because He cares for me (1 Peter 5:7)

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

God responds because He promises to be attentive to my prayers (Ps 34:15)

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

God responds because He takes care of all of His creations (Matt 6:26)

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

God responds because His goodness will not allow anything else (Ps 27:13)

I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

God responds because He promises justice and protection (Ps 37:5-7)

5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: 6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. 7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

God responds because He sustains me and does not let me fall (Ps 55:22)

22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

God responds because He asks me to come to Him for and about everything (Phil 4:6)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

A Confident Request (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Some years ago I was the interim dean of our seminary. That meant, among other things, that all applications for admission to the school came across my desk for approval. One request came from a potential student who did not have a grade point average that was sufficient to qualify for admission. It wasn't even close. It was easy to turn down her application. But then the admission department contacted me. "This girl really wants to come," the admission officer said. I explained that her grades were too low. She would never survive graduate school—it was a waste of her money and our time. The admission counselor contacted the girl and then called me back. "She really wants to come," he insisted. I explained again. "But she really wants to come." In a moment of weakness, I said, "OK, but tell her we think it's a mistake. We can't give her any financial assistance. We'll be glad to take her money, but we think she should stay home and not waste her money on tuition, books, and living expenses here." But she really wanted to come. So she came. Yet to conclude merely that "persistence paid off" is to look at things superficially. Her persistence was an expression of her confidence. That confidence proved to be well founded three semesters later when she made the dean's honor roll. She ultimately finished two graduate degrees with us. She turned out to be a good student with a compassionate nature, a great sense of humor, and a real desire to learn and serve the Lord. Do you approach your service for God with confidence that he will help you?

Persistence is having faith in God (8)

Persistence in faith provides a blessing (Gal 3:9)

So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Persistence in faith results in nothing being impossible (Matt 17:20)

He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Persistence in faith provides answered prayers (Matt 21:21-22)

21 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. 22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Persistence in faith results in justification (Rom 3:28)

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Persistence in faith is a way of life for the Christian (2 Cor 5:7)

We live by faith, not by sight.

Persistence in faith provides an approach to God with freedom and confidence (Eph 3:12)

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Persistence in faith results in unity of the Church body (Phil 1:27)

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

Persistence in faith leads to reconciliation (Col 1:22-23)

22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation- 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Persistence in faith provides spiritual strength (Col 2:6-7)

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Persistence in faith is commanded for a Christian (1 Tim 6:11-12)

11 But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Persistence in faith pleases God (Heb 11:6)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Persistent Finding (Luke 11:9-13)

9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

11 "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

12 "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Must ask to find (9-10)

Persistence with God (from "ABCs for Christian Growth, The Prayer Filled Life", by J. Hampton Keathley III)

Persistent prayer is part of God's training school. Here again, as Murray reminds us, it is a test of our friendship with God, of how well we know Him as our *heavenly Friend and Father*, and of how committed we are to knowing the Lord and finding His will. Persistent prayer demonstrates our knowledge and confidence in our Friend and Heavenly Father. It greatly glorifies God because it shows we are resting in His wisdom and love. The lack of an immediate answer does not turn us away in disgust or cause fear or doubt and frustration. Why? Because we know our heavenly Friend and Father. Do we understand all that God is doing? No, not really. Is it easy? No. Persistent prayer demonstrates the maturity of our faith or the lack of it and so also our need of understanding God, His plan, principles, promises, and purposes. It demonstrates our need of faith, of wisdom and biblical values and priorities along with patience and an eternal perspective. A mature or growing faith sees and believes the promises of God, embracing them with persistence even though the answer is not immediately forthcoming (Heb. 11:13, 39).

(Heb 11:13, 39) 13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.

And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. 39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.

Mature faith knows that God will answer in a better time and in a better way.

The Prescription for Persistent (from "ABCs for Christian Growth, The Prayer Filled Life", by J. Hampton Keathley III)

Keep on Asking

This is a command to keep on bringing our request, keep on coming to the Lord with the need and the issue. Don't give up or faint. Don't throw in the towel. We are to persevere before the Lord in our requests. But how?

Keep on Seeking

Some see this as just another way of saying the same thing, but I believe this is a call for searching and discovery in the midst of continuing to pray. I believe this means more than just asking or seeking for the thing requested. This means, in our prayers and through the prayerful reading and study of the Word, we are to search for God's will and the lessons He want us to learn. Pray for spiritual wisdom and understanding and for that which God is doing in the situation (James 1:5). We need to ask questions like: What is God seeking to teach me or us? Is the Lord wanting to take us in another direction or is the timing just all wrong for now? Is He wanting to develop our patience, trust, change our values, or reveal the wrong sources of happiness or sources of self-trust and self-management?

Keep on Knocking

This is a call for expectant waiting in our prayers. Don't give up and go away. Don't stop. Stay, wait and rest the matter in the Lord's hands and timing. We have here the principle of waiting on the Lord, of the faith-rest life—resting patiently by faith in God's wisdom and love. The answer and revelation of what God is doing will come. Just trust in the goodness and wisdom of God. With that in mind, the Lord quickly focuses our attention on the nature of God and our relationship with Him as our heavenly Father as believers in Christ. Why? To encourage us to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking. God is a faithful father kind of God.

Earthly illustration (11-12)

An earthly father has compassion on his children (Ps 103:13)

13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

An earthly father should provide for his relatives (1 Tim 5:8)

8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

An earthly father disciplines only as he knows best (Heb 12:9-10)

9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

An earthly parent may forget family (Isa 49:15)

15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!

Heavenly reality (13)

God absolutely knows what we need (Matt 6:30-33)

30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

God, who gave His Son for us, will give us all things (Rom 8:32)

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

God's future glory for us is glorious (2 Cor 3:9-11)

9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! 10 For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. 11 And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

God will bring about justice for His chosen ones (Luke 18:7)

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?

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Disciples' Motivation for Prayer (11:5-13)

Here, then, we have the central core, the essence of those things for which the disciple of Jesus should consistently pray. Disciples should pray for the coming of God's Kingdom, along with its revelation of God's character, for daily physical needs, and for God's provisions for sin. Having provided us with the curriculum or material for our prayer, the Lord now moves to the motivation for our prayers. To do this He tells two parables, each of which begins (in the NASB at least) with the word "suppose" (verses 5, 11). The first parable deals with one's request of a friend (vv. 5-10); the second with the request made of one's father (vv. 11-13).

With a Friend, Boldness and Persistence Pay (vv. 5-10)

The first example which our Lord gave is a rather humorous one, when you try to visualize it. One man has an unexpected guest arrive at his home, and he is without bread to give to him. Even though it is midnight, he goes to the house of a friend to ask to borrow bread. His friend is already in bed, perhaps in the same bed with his children. There may even be animals in the room, as there often was (and still is in some parts of the world). The friend in bed would have quickly given the bread if it were not so late, and if it would not disturb the whole house. But even though man in bed protests, the man in need boldly (the text literally says that he **shamelessly**) persisted, which prompted his friend to get up, open the door, and give him what he was seeking, the bread for which he had asked.

If this man's request was granted, due to his persistence, even though it was most inconvenient, then persistence in seeking what one truly needs must pay off. The next verses simply apply the lesson which the story has taught:

“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 (Luke 11:9-10).

I had never seen these very familiar verses in connection with the context of the preceding words of our Lord in the story of the friend who petitions his friend for bread in the middle of the night, but the connection is clear. He, by persistently knocking, had the door opened to him. He, by boldly asking, got what he asked for. He sought and he found what he was seeking. So, too, with the disciple in his prayers. Consistent, persistent prayer, daily prayer, is to be motivated by the assurance that if a friend will give what is sought, even if inconvenient, then God will surely answer our petitions.

With a Father, We Can Expect Only Good Gifts (vv. 11-13)

In the first story, Jesus used the example of a friend, who gave his fellow what he wanted, even though it was inconvenient, because of his persistence. In the second story, Jesus leaves the imagery of a friend and moves to that of a father. If friends can be expected to give us what we ask for when we persist, what can one expect of a father, better yet, of our Heavenly Father?

Jesus instructed His disciples to pray to God as their Father. He now picks up on the theme of God as Father in His second illustration. Earthly fathers love their children and delight in giving good gifts to them. Human fathers do not give their children “bad” things when they have asked for something good. Put a little differently, earthly fathers do not give their children gifts which will harm them when they are asked for those things which will help them. Fish and eggs are both helpful. They strengthen the physical body. Snakes and scorpions are both harmful to the physical body. God, as a Heavenly Father, does not give us those things which will be harmful to us when we have asked for those things which are beneficial to us.

To often, at least in my own experience, I find myself asking God for snakes and scorpions, rather than for fish and eggs. I discover that I am inclined toward things which are detrimental to my spiritual life. In such cases, I may ask for a snake, but God gives me a fish. I may wish for a scorpion, but God gives me eggs. If God does not give us evil gifts when we ask for the good, He does give us good gifts even when we seek those which are harmful to us.

Because God is a good God, a loving Father, He can not only be expected to answer our petitions, but to do so in a way that is for our highest good. From our Lord’s first story we learn that God answers our prayers. From the second, we learn that His answers are good ones. The highest good which God gives to His disciples who petition Him in prayer is summed up in the gift of the Holy Spirit. What better gift could our Lord give to His disciples. And we know from the first chapters of the Book of Acts that the Spirit is God the Father’s gift to His church, in answer to their prayers.

Conclusion

As we seek to conclude our study, let us return to the “tension of the text” mentioned at the beginning of this message. Why, if this prayer is a pattern prayer, do we never find it as a prayer of any of the disciples, either in the gospels or in the epistles? I believe that there are several possible explanations.

(1) This prayer may have been intended as a prayer to be repeated. One of my friends has suggested that if the prayer was to be recited, Jesus would have said, “When you pray **repeat** ... ” rather than, “When you pray, **say** ... ”

(2) Even if the prayer was meant to be liturgically repeated, we do not need to be told that it was. If Jesus instructed His disciples to pray this prayer, then this is more than enough motivation to do so. If our Lord tells us to do something, we should do it, whether or not anyone else does. To give numerous examples of men’s obedience to this command is unnecessary. Jesus’ instruction is far more forceful than man’s actions.

(3) If this prayer is a “skeletal prayer” that is intended to be filled in, then there are an infinite number of variations possible. It would be more accurate to analyze the prayers of the disciples and the church to see if they deal with the second coming of Christ, the meeting of their physical needs, forgiveness of sins and avoidance of temptation.

(4) This may be a corporate prayer, one which saints would pray as a group. I cannot minimize the collective nature of this prayer. While the one disciple asked Jesus to teach, he asked Him to teach the disciples as a group (“teach us to pray ... ”), rather than to teach him as an individual. The coming of the kingdom of God, the provision of daily needs, and the forgiveness of sins are something for which all saints can pray together, daily.

As I look at our text as a whole, I learn some very important lessons. Let us conclude this message by considering several of these.

(1) I see that the prayer which our Lord taught deals both with our future hope, on which our faith is based, and with our present life, which is to be lived in the light of that hope. The coming of the Kingdom of God is our hope, our goal, and that for which we should pray. Looking and praying for this kingdom also motivates us to live presently in the light of that certainty of Christ's return and of the establishment of His kingdom. Though we look for the coming of His kingdom in the future, we also look to the Father to meet our present needs: the need for physical sustenance and the need for forgiveness of sins and deliverance from that which might cause us to sin. The prayer which our Lord has taught us is one that encompasses both the present and the future.

(2) The prayer which our Lord taught us is not merely individualistic or self-centered. Throughout this prayer we find plural pronouns ("us," "our," "we"), rather than singulars. I believe that the reason is that our prayers are to be intercessory, and not just individual. If we need desperately to pray for ourselves, we must also pray for others as well.

(3) The emphasis of this text is not so much on the method of our prayers, but on the motivation which produces them. Only three verses deal with the content, the curriculum of prayer, while the rest assure us that God the Father will hear, and will answer our prayers with only the best gifts in response to them.

The Lord's Prayer is only a "vain repetition" if we do not understand it, or if we repeat it without really meaning it. The Lord's Prayer is not the complete word on prayer, but it does inform us as to the "meat and potatoes" of much of our prayer life, indeed, for our daily prayer life.

Our Lord, in giving the disciples this prayer, and in the words which accompany it, is telling us that this prayer should be constantly on our lips. There are no excuses for not praying for these things, whether in these precise words or not. There are, however, some troubling reasons why we do not pray as our Lord has instructed us.

(1) When we do not pray that God's name be revered, and that His kingdom come, we reveal in ourselves a love for this world, and a reluctance to see it pass, superseded and replaced by the righteous rule of God.

(2) When we do not pray for God to provide our daily bread, we reveal either a self-sufficient attitude which does not depend daily upon God's provisions, or we see a life of affluence and the laying up of earthly treasures which renders prayer for daily needs unnecessary.

(3) When we do not daily pray for God's forgiveness of our sins (and the grace to forgive the sins of others) we reveal either a naivet concerning our own (daily) sinfulness, or a callused conscience toward sin caused by on-going sin which was not confessed, and for which forgiveness was not sought.

(4) Thus, when we fail to pray as our Lord has here instructed us, it may be because we are Christians, but not disciples. This prayer which our Lord taught His disciples was a prayer for disciples. The prayer makes a great deal more sense when taken in the context of the Sermon on the Mount. By this I mean that this is a most appropriate prayer for those who are poor, who are mourning over their sin and the sin of their nation, and who are persecuted. Such persons will gladly pray for the coming of our Lord's kingdom, at which time Satan and sin will be done away with, and for whom daily bread is no academic matter.

It is possible that you might be a true Christian and not be a disciple, and the failure to pray as our Lord teaches us in our text may reveal this. This teaching thus serves not only to instruct true disciples, but also to flush out those who are saints but who are not also disciples. A Christian is one who is saved through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. A disciple is one who takes following Christ seriously in his life. There is a great difference between mere Christians and true disciples, and this text tells us that one difference is to be found in the content and the continuance of prayer.

Failing to pray as our Lord has instructed may reveal that the fact that God is not your Father at all. If we do not pray daily to God as our Father for these needs, or if we pray only for some of them, it may be because God is not a Father to us, but our foe. Only the one who knows God as their Father can pray to Him as their heavenly Father and do so expecting Him to hear and to answer with good gifts. Indeed, some of those things for which the true disciple is instructed to pray would be viewed as distasteful, even dreaded by a non-Christian. What unbeliever would pray for the coming of the Lord's kingdom, knowing that it would not only spell the end of their sinful lives, but also their damnation? Who would pray for forgiveness of sins, if they denied that they were a sinner?

If you lack the confidence to come to Him as your Father, then God has a way for you to become His child. That way is through God's Son, Jesus Christ. He has come to the earth and has died in your place. God's anger toward your sin has already fallen on Him. All that you must do is to receive God's gift of forgiveness and of eternal life through His Son, and through His death on the cross of Calvary. Come to the Father as your Father, now.

If our Lord's model prayer is indeed the prayer of a true disciple, then let us conclude by praying as our Lord has instructed.

- "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."

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/38-teach-us-pray-luke-111-13>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

There are many misconceptions about prayer among Christians. These erroneous beliefs can become debilitating. Some say that if God knows all, including our needs, we don't need to ask for anything. What can we tell God if He already knows everything? "Nothing!" some say. Therefore, this logic says, prayer is pointless. We don't want to pray wrongly, and we don't want to suffer from prayer paralysis. We also don't want to oversimplify prayer, for it represents a relationship with our heavenly Father. Jesus used two analogies, images we would not expect, to teach us about our prayers to God. First, He spoke of borrowing loaves of bread. Second, He referred to a father providing wholesome food for his child. Sandwiched between (pun intended!) is one of Jesus' most profound teachings on prayer in all the Bible: His admonition to ask, seek, and knock without giving up. Jesus ends with a reference to the Holy Spirit, presenting this as the ultimate answer to prayer and the gift of the Father. Just as the unprepared host did not stop knocking or give up his search for bread, so we should not give up on asking God for the things we need. Prayer must be an ongoing conversation with the Lord. Jesus taught the disciples to ask for "daily bread" (Luke 11:3), leaving us to conclude that this request must be done every day. Prayer is a lifetime of activity, not an essay we write and file away forever. Jesus teaches us that we are not abandoned by God. For this reason, we do not need to devise effective prayer strategies on our own. He has given us examples, and He has given us His Holy Spirit. Paul notes the value of this for us when he teaches that even though we are inadequate in our prayer lives, God's Spirit will intercede for us to make up for our weaknesses (Romans 8:26). God not only hears our prayers, He will help us if we let Him. Jesus' encouragement in Luke 11 is to never give up on prayer, no matter how unfruitful it may seem on any given day. The key is that we keep praying. We keep asking God, seeking His will, and knocking on the doors of Heaven with our requests (using James 4:3 as a caution). Few of us would count ourselves as giants in the world of prayer, so we can make this same request: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1)! Jesus was both a master teacher and the greatest prayer of all time. His centuries-old words still guide us in this crucial spiritual matter today.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Persistent Petitioning - Jesus used an illustration to talk about persistent prayer requests to God. An unexpected guest arrives at a neighbor's home at midnight. Unfortunately, the neighbor has no food to prepare for the guest. So, the host goes next door and begins banging on the door of the family next door. The neighbor is reluctant to open it realizing he would be stepping over and disturbing the rest of his family members (probably all sleeping in one room). But the neighbor persists, desperate to get some food for his guest. Finally, because of the host's persistence, the next-door neighbor opens the door and gives the man some bread.

God Welcomes Persistent Pleas - The Lord is never displeased, troubled, or bothered by the number of times His children come before His throne with their petitions. But is it wrong to continually ask God for something? It's incorrect to think that if I keep whining long enough and hard enough, I'm going to wear God down, so He'll eventually give me what I want. The loving heavenly Father meets needs, not all our wants. God longs to talk with those who are sincere, constantly requesting His wisdom and searching His heart. He welcomes the constant rapping on heaven's door.

Good Gifts - Good parents love giving gifts to their children. Only an abusive parent gives a child something harmful or evil. God is better than any earthly parent. Surely, He blesses His children with wonderful gifts. Even when we look at the gift and wonder, the Father knows what to give or not to give. One of His finest gifts is the Holy Spirit who brings us love, peace, patience, joy, and so many other excellent things.

Prayer Struggles - As we look at our laundry list of petitions, we may ask why God arranged things for that person and not me? Why does He say "No" or "Wait"? One thing we need to keep in mind about these constantly asked questions is that God only answers requests according to His will. His answers honor and glorify Him. As James says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. 4:3, KJV). We often want what "honors" us and not the Lord.