

IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

Luke 11:1-13 Text: vs. 10 *"Everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."*

Alan Redpath was a well-known British evangelist, pastor, and author. In his book *Victorious Praying: Studies in the Lord's Prayer*, he summed up how some may feel after they have prayed. He wrote, *"When we have finished praying, we can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that our feeble words have been heard, or that they made no difference in what we have been praying about. We've said our prayers. But we have not prayed!"* And he could be right! Because most personal prayers begin by rushing into a lot of things like, *"Lord do this. Lord do that. Lord, heal my friend."* Then, after you've poured out all your problems, your wants, and your frustrations, you're right back to what's troubling you. And it makes you feel helpless!

Well, the reason why you may feel depressed and frustrated after you pray is, you started from the wrong place in your prayer. Jesus said, *"When you pray, say: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* You didn't put God first in your prayer! Prayer isn't just a rambling utterance of words. Prayer should be thought out. It should be quality time spent with God. Thought through! Planned! When the disciples asked Jesus about prayer, He gave them an outline for prayer. We refer to it as the *"Lord's Prayer"*.

And in today's Gospel lesson, you're going to see how if you use the *"Lord's Prayer"* as a model, you can use it as a foundation for all your personal prayers. And you begin by *worshipping and adoring* your Heavenly Father. God wants your praise and adoration. *"Hallowed be Your name"*. It means "blessed" or "holy" is Your Name. Praise comes from a grateful heart. Hebrews 13:15, Psalm 29:2 and John 4:23-24 makes that perfectly clear. You are to continually offer up praise to God in Spirit and in Truth.

Then, you make the second part of your prayer a *thanksgiving*. Always be thankful for what God has done for you! Express your gratitude to Him. You may have asked God for things, but you never thanked Him for what you've been given. Then, *confess your sins with a regretful heart*. Not just a flippant *"I'm sorry"*. Be truly broken. Really be sorry for the sin in your life! It's important you be specific! Don't give just a "blanket" confession like *"I'm sorry for my sins"*. Be Specific! Name them. One by one! But the problem may be you never have really come face to face with the sin in your life. Psalm 32:5 says, *"I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD. And You forgave the guilt of my sin'."* And 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* Write those down! Memorize them! *Psalm 32:5 and 1 John 1:9*.

So, you've praised God. You've adored God. You've taken time to thank Him for all that He's done for you. You've confessed your sins. Now, and only now, can you truly begin to *make your prayer requests* to Him. If you do all those things *before* you ask, then you've put your focus on God, and not on yourself. And when you make your requests, be certain of what you say. Remember, no request is too great, or too small! God wants to know *exactly* what's on your mind. And when you pray, pray like you mean it! Ask in faith! Believe in your request! It will be answered, Yes. . . . Or no. . . . Or wait awhile. . . . It will be answered!

It's been said, the greatest reason prayers go *unanswered*, is not because of what you asked, but *how* you asked. For example, Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-8, *"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."* But you have to be quiet! That's right. *Be quiet!* It's called the *"shut up and listen"* principle! A reporter once asked Mother Teresa, *"When you pray, what do you say to God?"* Mother Teresa replied, *"Sometimes, I don't say anything. I just listen"*. And Psalm 37:7 underlines that point. *"Be still in the presence of the LORD. Wait patiently for Him to act."* But you also, have to think about your relationship with those around you. Not only should your relationship with God be in good standing. But it should be with your brother, your sister, your neighbor, your friend, your child, your spouse. 1 Timothy 2:8 speaks to that; *"In every place of worship, I want people to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger, and controversy."* That's what's needed in our country today! We need to be free of anger. We need to be freed from controversy!

Our country is facing turmoil of every kind. Each problem needs our prayers. Our economy. Inflation. Racial hatred. Mass shootings. Climate change. The Ukraine War. Food crisis. Gas prices. Refugee crisis on all our borders. Poverty. Homelessness. We may not have all the answers about the world's situation, but we sure can have our hearts and minds set on what we do know. And that's - - - *God is faithful!* He is our Deliverer. We can trust Him. He is our Hope. He is our

Peace. And He will carry us through all of this because He has promised that no matter what we may be facing, He will empower us to walk through it and overcome it.

That great English pastor and preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, *“To seek aid from a supernatural being in time of distress, is an instinct of human nature.”* That’s true! However, some people may not be praying to the *One and Only True God*. Many a person’s atheism has disappeared in times of trouble. Especially in time of war *“there are no atheists in foxholes”*. Warfare brings about a sudden change in belief. It is called *“foxhole conversion”*. That’s where we as a nation are right now! We’re at war with the Devil! And we desperately need a *foxhole conversion*! Some may say they follow Jesus. Yet, there are a lot who don’t! Jesus said, *“Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you”*. Some say they believe in Jesus. Yet, they don’t believe it when He says He is the *“Way the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Him”*. People do have the chance to become followers of Christ. Yet they deny Him.

What say you? Is it time for our nation to have a *“foxhole conversion”*? If Jesus is the only Way for our life as a nation, then let Him lead us. Let Him lead you! Be sure you’re following Him! That you *are* listening to Him through your prayer life! Jesus said you should *“always pray and not give up”*, not because God is hard of hearing. Not because God needs to be pestered into answering your requests. Not because God doesn’t want to answer you. No! Jesus taught you should always pray, and never give up! Because when you pray, your prayers carry weight. EVERY TIME you pray. Every time I pray, more and more of God’s power is released from His heavenly throne. If you are you praying for someone you know to become a Christian, every prayer you pray puts more and more pressure on that person to hear God calling them. Are you praying for your friends in their daily struggles? Every prayer you pray sends to them more and more convincing power from God. Are you having difficulty with someone? A family member? Maybe a neighbor? Every prayer you lift up to God brings more of God’s power to bear on that person! Pray for them!

Is there anyone who can honestly say, *I have sought the Lord, and He rejected Me?* The Bible says *no one* will be present on the Last Day of Judgement who will be able to stand before the Lord and say, *“I asked, and did not receive. I sought, but did not find. I knocked, and it was not opened to me”*. The Lord’s promise will stand on that day! . . . *“Everyone that asks, receives”*. If you doubt that, try it! Ask, and see if you don’t receive. Seek, and see if you don’t find. Knock, and see if the door will open to you. Yes, when you trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you will receive Eternal life. When you believe in the cleansing power of His blood, He will forgive you of all your sins. When you believe in Him, He will give you eternal life.

Those who say I have been calling on God, but haven’t gotten an answer should never give up! If you say you have asked, you have sought, and you have knocked, but nothing has come of it, understand this: You must *first believe* God will save you and answer you when you call upon the name of Jesus. Then God will answer you when you ask. God will answer you when you seek. God will answer you when you knock. And this church. Your church. Wherever you are, must be praying! You must be a firm believer in prayer. Always praying. Always understanding that your prayers are heard! It’s guaranteed! And you must thank God. You have His promise. He will always hear you! It’s as simple as that! To God be the glory! AMEN