

## *“Teach Us to Pray”*

Text: *Luke 11:1–13*

Theme: Jesus invites us to approach our Father with boldness, persistence, and trust.

A disciple of Jesus had just witnessed something deeply personal and powerful. He had seen and heard Jesus praying. He didn't ask, *“Teach us to preach.”* Or *“Teach us to perform miracles.”* He simply asked, *“Teach us to pray.”*

Now, prayer isn't a ritual. It's a relationship. I told you about that in my sermon last week. Jesus doesn't ask for your perfection. He wants is your attention. It isn't about doing more for Jesus. It's about sitting with Him. Listening to Him. Loving Him. Having a relationship and being loved by Him. That's *“The better part.”* And prayer provides that! It's a loving connection between God our Father and us. His children.

So, in our lesson today, Jesus gave not just a prayer to be repeated. He gave an **example** for how to approach God. The Lord's Prayer teaches you to have worship and adoration when you pray. To submit to God's rule and guidance. To ask for your daily needs. Seek forgiveness. Be forgiving. Ask for guidance and protection. And end it with praise and surrender. He said, *“When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be your name...’”*

Now that's pretty simple. It's usually said to be a ritual, which we just did this morning in our Morning Prayers. Saying the Lord's Prayer as a ritual can be meaningful. But it can also be just empty words, depending on the heart behind it. He gave us a framework. An outline. A guide by which to offer prayers to God. That's the relationship we learned about last week. Having a relationship with God your “Father” is not having it with some distant deity. It's with a loving parent.

And when you say, *“Hallowed be Thy name”* you're showing respect. You're recognizing God's holiness. For God is completely pure. Morally perfect. And utterly set apart from all sin and evil. Isaiah 6:3 says: *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.”* But His holiness is not just one of His qualities. It defines all of them. His love. His justice. His mercy.

And then you look ahead. *“Your kingdom come.”* That brings you into line with God's eternal purposes. You're asking for God to rule over all creation with His authority. And to be in your life. Your world. It's the fulfillment of His promises for the future.

Then you pray, *“Give us each day our daily bread.”* That's pretty simple! But it's a powerful request! It teaches you to depend on God every day for everything you need. Not just food. But everything that supports your life spiritually, physically, and emotionally. It is a prayer of dependence. *“Each day”* reminds you to trust God moment by moment. Don't worry about tomorrow. (Matthew 6:34) Seek God's providing **for today**. Live with contentment. And avoid anxiety by trusting God every day.

Then, you ask for forgiveness: *“Forgive us... as we forgive...”* That's what you call *“living in grace”* which means, walking daily with the certainty of God's unearned love. His ongoing forgiveness. And His transforming power. It's not just something you receive one time at the moment of your salvation. It's how you live the Christian life. And spread it. To live in grace means to live in the daily awareness and outflow of God's unearned favor. Grace is not just *how* you are saved. It is how you are *sustained*. Re-formed. And sent out to live in a relationship with God. And each other.

And when you pray *“Lead us not into temptation,”* you're asking for spiritual strength. It's a genuine plea for God's guidance and protection. It doesn't mean God leads you into sin. It asks for His guidance to *avoid* temptation. To be given enough strength to resist evil. So, use this prayer as a guide. Not a script. Pray your own prayer. Personally, and honestly. Ask yourself every day: *Am I seeking God's kingdom first? Am I trusting Him for today's needs?*

Then Jesus asked, *“Suppose one of you has a friend...”* and He went on to tell a parable about a man persistently asking his neighbor for bread at midnight. The man finally gave in. Not because of friendship. But because of the neighbor's unwavering persistence. He didn't give up! And Jesus was not saying God is annoyed by your prayers. Quite the opposite. He was saying, if a reluctant neighbor responds, how much more will your loving Father respond to you. So, *“Ask... seek... knock...”* Those three active verbs are in the present tense which means: Keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking. Don't give up praying. God welcomes your persistence. Not because He forgets. But because prayer helps you develop spiritually. It draws you closer to God's heart.

Then Jesus used a simple, but powerful image. *“Which of you fathers... would give a snake instead of a fish...?”* Good fathers don't give bad gifts. Even sinful parents know how to give good things to their children. So, how much will your heavenly Father give if you ask?

That's the heart of it all! Prayer isn't about getting stuff from God. It's about receiving God's Spirit. His presence. His power. And when you pray, what are you asking for? Is it comfort? Security? Answers? Or is it something else? Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with God's presence and to be guided by His will. That's what Luke 11 is teaching. Prayer is not complicated! But it's not like having a conversation with your *earthly* father. It is having a conversation with your *Heavenly* Father. And Jesus wants you to pray simply. Sincerely. Persistently. Not giving up. Pray trusting that your heavenly Father hears and will answer you. He may have you to wait a little while longer. But He will answer! Let your prayer life be marked by trust. Shaped by His Word. And driven by His Spirit.

But how do you build a prayer life? Building a prayer life is about developing a regular, honest, and growing relationship *with* God. It's not about following strict rules. Or using the right words. It's about being with God. Learning to hear His voice as you open your heart to Him.

So, here's an easy guide on how to have a prayer life. Start with a time and a place. Set aside a regular time each day, morning, lunchtime, or evening. Find a quiet place where you can be without distraction. Five to ten minutes is good to start. Luke 5:16 says, "*Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*" Prayer doesn't require fancy words. You can even pray silently. Put your prayer in your mind. God fully hears it. He understands. And will respond. You'll know God is responding to your prayer when you sense peace beyond understanding. When the circumstances you are praying about change. God always responds. Not always how you expect. But always in love. Whether whispered, shouted, or completely unspoken, prayer is about your heart connecting with God's. Speak to God honestly. Be real. Tell Him what you're feeling. Share your worries. Your hopes. Your needs. Thank Him for what He's done for you. And confess anything that's weighing you down. The Psalmist said, "*Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*" (Psalm 62:8)

And use Scripture as a Guide. God speaks through His Word. And praying it back to Him draws you into His Will. Try praying a Psalm. Reflect on *the Lord's Prayer*. (Luke 11:1–4) Turn a verse of Scripture into a prayer. For example, "*Lord, create in me a clean heart...*" That's Psalm 51:10. And then listen. In silence. Prayer isn't just speaking. It's spiritual union that is deep, mysterious, and life-giving between a believer and God, through Jesus Christ. It's not just knowing about God. Or following His teachings. It's being with Him in spirit. In life. And love. Sit quietly. Open your heart and mind. Rest in God's presence. He's right there with you. Ask, "*Lord, what do You want to say to me today?*"

Some keep a *Prayer Journal*. They write down their prayers. Scripture that speaks to them. Or how God has answered or spoken over time. That can help you stay focused and see growth in your prayer life. And pray with others. Join a prayer group. Or pray with a friend. It strengthens your faith and reminds you, you're not alone! "*Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.*" (Matthew 18:20) And make prayer a lifestyle.

Prayers don't have to stop after your quiet time. Whisper prayers throughout the day. Talk to God while driving. Walking. Or working. As the hymn says, "*In joy or in sorrow, speak oft with thy Lord.*" Invite God into every moment of your life. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us, "*Pray without ceasing.*"

So, have prayer for your entire day. Prayer is not just something you *do*. Prayer is how you *live* with God, moment by moment, breath by breath, all day long. Let us pray.

Father, teach us to pray. Not as a duty. But as a joy. Help us come to You boldly. With determination and trust. Fill us with Your Spirit, Lord. Mold us with Your Word. And draw us closer to Your heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.