

## PRAYER: LUKE 11:1-13

**Three Phrases that will revolutionize your Prayer life****1. Father**

Prayer is a central practise of every religion. It is universal, certainly not unique to Christianity. At its most basic, it is a person reaching out to the divine. Therefore, how one sees the divine is central to the character of the prayer of that religion.

Prayer can become magic. If I say these words in the right way, then I can manipulate the divine. Alternatively, even threaten or coerce the divine. This is a deviation of prayer but it happens in every religion as well. Christians can start to believe that there are formulas in prayer and treat certain prayers like magic charms. If I say these words then no harm will befall me

Therefore, if the nature of the divine is crucial to how prayer is practised then how God instructs us to address him is crucial.

In addition, how does the Lord's Prayer start? Father, may your name be honoured. God instructs us to address him as Father

May your name be honoured is to be expected. God is all-powerful, all mighty. That is a frightening prospect. If you were to approach a being who is all powerful, and all knowing and holds your life in your hands, and knows your very thoughts then that is scary. It is absolutely beyond any encounter we have ever had which is when we see people encounter God in the Bible they fall on their knees. Overwhelmed. It would be the most frightening thing ever encountered. If we were out walking one-day Queens Park, and we came across a lion, we would be terrified. Why. One move and the lion would kill you. Might be a tame lion. However, you do not know that.

"Father" tells us we are his children. It tells us that he deeply cares for us now that is not to neglect the other attributes of God. He is all-powerful etc. But the primary way we come to God is as children. Fathers want to bless their children. They want provide and protect. Do not get hung up in it saying father. Many places the analogy is used as God as mother as well to illustrate care and concern.

Common reminds us we have a God who invites us to be his children. We have a God who is not distant but

dwells in us by his Spirit. We have a God who passionately deeply loves us as a parent loves a child. This is how we are to approach God.

In Luke 11:1-13 we have the Lord's Prayer. It tells us we are to come as children, and in an attitude of worship. We are to pray for four things. His kingdom, our practical needs, forgiveness, and strength from temptation. Then there is a little parable about waking up someone in the middle of the night asking for bread. To help understand the story, we need to realize that a family would have all slept in the same room. The point. We are ask God with a shameless and persistent audacity, i.e. ask seek; knock and God will come through. Jesus then comes back to the idea of God as a Father and talks of how a father will not give bad things to their children when they ask for something. He concludes with these words

So if you sinful people 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?**"

**2. How much more**

The two stories told are ones of contrast. If the man gets out of bed to give his friend what he asks because of his shameless audacity in asking persistently how much more will a Father give to his children?

A father will not give bad things to his children. Yet we are far from perfect as parents. However, we still know to give good things to our children. Therefore, God is perfect. How much more will God give to his children who shameless and body ask.

**How much more** suggests we can come to God with an expectancy. He will give us what we need because he is a good God. He will give us what we need because he is a good Father who knows what his children need before they ask. James 1 says this will get us nowhere if we come double minded: I we come without an expectation that God will supply our every need.

How much more suggests that we do not ask for enough. God wants to give us far more that we realize.

**So when we pray why do don't expect God will answer**



Our view of God is wrong; we have a view of God as somehow reluctant, and stingy. We do not see God as generous. We do not see God as extravagant

Our God is too small; we think of God as just a little bit bigger than us but smaller than the issues, we face. God does not give us more than we need. However, he will more than give us what we need.

### 3. To those who ask him

The implication here is that we do not receive because we do not ask. Exactly what James 3 says?

So why would we not ask God?

**We have been burnt in the past.** We feel we have prayed and God has not answered. Therefore, we think what the point in asking is. God does not listen to me. James says we do not have because we ask with the wrong motives. We are asking for things selfishly. Here Jesus says God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. In Matthew 7 (very similar teaching) it says God will give good things. The idea is not that God will just give us anything. We instinctively know this is not true. Just as no-good parent will just give their children anything and everything.

The Lord's Prayer shows us what to pray for. His kingdom extended his provision of daily needs, his forgiveness and strength for temptation He will give us the Holy Spirit is empowering to deal with whatever we are facing. He promises that he will presence himself in us as our guide, our comfort, our empower. He will give us whatever resource we need. Note what we need not what we want. He will give us the power we need to be his witnesses

But we need to ask. How much are we missing out on because we don't ask.

#### **We think we don't need God.**

Deep within us is the desire to be independent. That is what Adam and Eve centuries ago did. We want to do our own thing. We want to be like God. And that is still the primary issue with us today. We want to be in control. We want to feel as if we can do it on our own. So the issue at stake is one of pride and independence. Are we willing to come that point of saying, "God I need you I need your empowering God I can't do this on my own." Why does God often allow us to go through crisis points in our life? Because it is in crisis that we finally humble ourselves and cry out to him. Look back at your own life journey. When have been the greatest times of

growth? In times of crisis when you knew you had to cry out to God. When you knew that things were beyond your control and resources.

Actually, prayer is the key way we humble ourselves before God. God doesn't just give us what we need. He waits for us to humble ourselves. He waits for us to come to him. He does not impose himself or just give us what we need without us asking. He is waiting for us to come to Him, not demanding but acknowledging our need.

However, the parable and the picture of Father God says that we can come boldly to God and we can come and ask with a shameless audacity.

<b>Father</b>	Reminding us how we are to come to God.
<b>How much more</b>	Expect God to answer because he is good
<b>To those who ask</b>	ask him so we can receive all he has. Keep asking. Shows we are serious

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#### REFLECTION + DISCUSSION

- Give your prayer life a rating out of 10?
- Why do we find it so hard at times to pray?
- The sermon suggests grasping these 3 phrases can revolutionize our prayer life. Do you think this might be possible?
- Which of the 3 do you struggle with the most? Knowing you are a beloved child, praying with expectation, or asking (for the right things)? Why do you find this area hard?
- Take one phrase that is the weakest and choose to work on that. What lie do you need to counter to make this truth a reality? Where did that lie come from?
- Share with each other things you have found helpful when it comes to prayer. Patterns, places, etc.



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