**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 11-7-2021**

I truly love to preach and to teach. I feel God’s pleasure in these moments. But as much as I find joy in them, there is usually a moment before I preach each week or before I lead in a Bible study, when I feel very inadequate, very aware of my need for God’s help for anything good and lasting to come out of what I would share.

It is not that I don’t prepare for these moments, but it’s me recognizing time and time again that I need God’s help and grace and guidance and power if what I say will make any impact whatsoever.

Truly, without His anointing, anything I say or try to teach will not be very helpful. But with the Lord’s anointing, God can do great things through my words. And to Him alone be all the glory.

And then there are weeks like this past week that are extra busy and very draining. On Friday we unexpectedly had to put our cat Calvina down, which was very difficult and my week was filled with an unusual amount of meetings.

Although those things are challenging, they make it even easier for me to remember that without the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, I cannot do anything of significance. I am desperately in need of His help.

Perhaps you can identify with me. Whether you have preached or taught in the church before or not, there are certainly many things that you just know that without the Lord helping you, you are in sore shape.

And this is true whether you have prepared for something or it comes as a surprise. Perhaps it is a skill for work or learning a sport or instrument. Or it is a crisis that comes up. It is important for you to realize that without God’s help, you cannot succeed.

And I just want to share that when we are at this place, it is actually a great place to be. Yes, we are to be mindful to be diligent as we prepare to step out and impact others in some way, but we are jars of clay in God’s hands and it is healthy to remember our need for His constant grace.

This is what it means to be poor in spirit. To recognize our continued need for His help and His grace and mercy every step along the way.

This dependence, this recognizing our need as we look up to the Lord, this is to be a critical part of prayer.

Over the last several weeks, we have been highlighting one of the seven moments in Luke’s Gospel where we find Jesus praying. There are many, many other times, I am sure. But these 7 moments are all very significant and they all instruct us in some way.

Today, as we turn to the Scriptures again, we find that the disciples themselves were curious about how Jesus prays.

**Let us turn to Luke 11:1-13**

**11 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.”**

**2He said to them, “When you pray, say:**

**“‘Father,[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25408a)**]
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25408b)**]
3Give us each day our daily bread.
4Forgive us our sins,
    for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25410c)**]
And lead us not into temptation.[**[**d**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25410d)**]’”**

**5Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ 7And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ 8I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[**[**e**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25414e)**] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.**

**9“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. 10For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.**

**11“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for[**[**f**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25417f)**] a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13If 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!”**

But this time in Jesus’ ministry, it was very clear that Jesus prioritized time in communion with His Father in prayer. His disciples were taking notice. And then we are told in this passage that following one of Jesus’ times in prayer, one of His disciples makes a really profound request. He says **“Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”**

At that time, there was various prayers that the Jewish people prayed, at different times of day or within the year.

For example, there are a group of psalms that are known as the songs of ascents. And these would be psalms that would be prayed or sung as the Jews ascended to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is at a higher elevation.

And so as they would go to that city where the Temple of God was, there would be certain psalms that one would expect to hear being prayed.

There was the daily Shema --- **Hear oh Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is One, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and all your strength.**

And then there were other prayers that became part of their traditions as well.

John the Baptist had apparently taught prayers to his disciples that were in addition to these prayers.

So this was just such a great request and it is also acknowledging Jesus as Lord or Master. He is not just their rabbi or teacher, but also their Lord and Master.

And this is true for us as well. He is not just our teacher, but He is our Master, our Lord.

And what follows this request is a version of what has become known as **The Lord’s Prayer**. We also find a version in Matthew’s Gospel.

And I do not know if you noticed, but the versions are not identical. And this is actually great news.

It is a reminder that it is not about having to memorize one exact phrase of words, but it is about teaching what are important things to keep in mind as we pray. The Lord’s Prayer is a model prayer. In this prayer, Jesus is teaching us what are the biggest things to remember when we are praying.

I believe that when Jesus prayed, He wasn’t always praying the exact same words to His Father. But what Jesus shares with His disciples is a roadmap on how to pray.

So what did Jesus think was important? What was critically important to Jesus was first acknowledging God.

And not only God in general, but Jesus refers to God as Father or Our Father.

Jesus wanted them to approach God in prayer as family, as a child coming to a loving Father. When we come to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, we are adopted into God’s household. We become His sons and daughters. God is truly our Father.

And then Jesus focused on teaching them to pray in a way that honors God’s Name, advances God’s Kingdom, and releases His will on the earth.

Notice that Jesus was teaching them that their prayers were to be very God-focused, rather than them-focused.

Prayer is meant to turn one’s attention to God and God’s perspective over things, rather than human perspectives.

Prayer is so easily made people-focused. I need this and I need this and I need that.

Our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask Him. And yes, there is a place for asking for those needs to be met --- that is the next part of the Lord’s Prayer. --- **our daily bread, God’s forgiveness, and to be led not into temptation.**

And then Jesus interestingly goes into a story. He loved to tell stories. Stories can teach so well.

His story is about asking and seeking and knocking. These are different words to describe praying. He is still talking about praying here.

**And he says that even though people are evil, they know how to give good gifts to their children. How much more will our good and loving and perfect Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him.**

This, brothers and sisters, is Jesus’ last big take away as He is teaching his disciples to pray. He is teaching them that they are to ask their Heavenly Father to guide them and direct them and empower them through the Holy Spirit.

In other words, a very important part of their prayers is that we would be led by the Holy Spirit.

So friends, as we consider this passage and how Jesus was teaching His disciples to pray, what are we as disciples of Jesus today to make of it?

And it is simply this – we are to pray in ways that are God-centered, rather than man-centered.

God-centered prayers focus on remembering that He is our loving Heavenly Father, that His Name is to be honored and His will (and not necessarily our own) is to be prayed for and His Kingdom is to be advanced in different situations.

God-centered prayers remember our need for the Holy Spirit’s help.

And God-centered prayers do include lifting up our needs to God, but not necessarily our wants.

The Lord’s Prayer is a model prayer to help us as we make prayer a daily practice in our lives.

Let us pray…