

Intro:

We are coming today to the end of the Luke 11 teaching on prayer. I want to continue this series, but I am not yet certain where we will go from here.

Today I want to give us a little review and then conclude with our Lord's dramatic illustration intended to give us confidence in our praying. In fact, that is the whole point of the passage, I think. The Lord wants us to pray.

So let's read Lk 11.1-13 again and get the sense of the passage.

Proposition: God wants you to pray.

I. Teach us to pray (1)

- A. The heart cry of the disciple
- B. The prayer the Lord delights to answer
- C. The practice modeled by men of faith from all dispensations
 - 1. John the Baptist
 - 2. Jesus
 - 3. The apostles

II. When you pray (2-4)

- A. A frequent teaching of our Lord (differences with Mt 6)
- B. Petitions for disciples
 - 1. That God's name would be hallowed
 - 2. That the kingdom would come
 - 3. For our daily bread
 - 4. For forgiveness of sin
 - 5. For deliverance from temptation

"It is useless to mouth the words of this prayer without meaning them."¹

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981). 4:295.

III. Ask (5-10)

- A. A parable of friendship contrasted to our relationship with God our Father
- B. The principle of persistence, even when asking God our Father
- C. The promise of God: God answers prayer – not because of persistence, but faith in God’s promise encourages persistence

IV. God is Good (11-13)

The purpose of the parable is to eliminate doubt in the promises of God.

- A. The presuppositions concerning human nature
 - 1. Man is evil – utterly depraved.
 - 2. Man, in his evil, is not as evil as he could be.
 - 3. Man, in his evil, yet knows how to give good gifts to his children.
 - a. If a son asks for bread, a father will not give him something useless instead, like a stone
 - b. If a son asks for a fish, or an egg, a father will not give him something dangerous like a serpent or a scorpion

“The point at issue is not merely the parents’ willingness to give but their willingness to give good gifts — even though they themselves are evil. Jesus presupposes the sinfulness (v. 11) of human nature (himself exempted; ‘you,’ he says, not ‘we’) but implicitly acknowledges that does not mean all human beings are as bad as they could be or utterly evil in all they do. People are evil; they are self-centered, not God-centered. This taints all they do. Nevertheless they can give good gifts to their children.”²

- B. The conclusion concerning God’s response to prayer
 - 1. If evil men know how to give good gifts...
 - 2. How much more will the good God give the best gifts to his children?

“What is fundamentally at stake is man’s picture of God.

² D. A. Carson, “Matthew”, *Expositors*, pp. 186-187.

God must not be thought of as a reluctant stranger who can be cajoled or bullied into bestowing his gifts (6:7-8), as a malicious tyrant who takes vicious glee in the tricks he plays (vv. 9-10), or even as an indulgent grandfather who provides everything requested of him. He is the heavenly Father, the God of the kingdom, who graciously and willingly bestows the good gifts of the kingdom in answer to prayer.”³

C. The great gift of the Holy Spirit

1. All Christians receive the Holy Spirit at conversion – we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit
2. But there are two things about this promise in this place
 - a. The immediate context calls disciples to an exceptional way of life
 - 1) The Good Samaritan – ‘go and do likewise’
 - 2) Mary and the better part – ‘it will not be taken from her’

The disciple needs the power of the Holy Spirit to go beyond the norm and live up to the discipleship we are called to.

b. The words ‘Holy Spirit’ here have no article

“Professor H. B. Swete pointed out that when the article is present, it refers to the Person Himself, but when the article is absent, it refers to His gifts or operations on our behalf. So in this passage, it is not so much a prayer for the *Person* of the Holy Spirit, but rather for His ministries in our lives. This is further borne out by the parallel passage in Matthew 7:11 which reads, “... how much more will your Father who is in heaven give *good things* to those who ask Him!”⁴

- 1) Do you lack the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Pray!
- 2) Have you lashed out at someone in the flesh? Pray!
- 3) Do you want more victory, more grace, more of the sweet

³ D. A. Carson, “Matthew”, *Expositors*, p. 187.

⁴ William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Lk 11:13.

temperament of Christian discipleship? Pray!

4) Do you wish there was less of self in your life? Pray!

Conclusion:

The Lord intends for our understanding of this passage to encourage us in prayer. But one thing must be clear, as J. Vernon McGee so bluntly puts it:

“Before you go to God in prayer, make sure He is really your Father.”⁵

⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981). 4:296.