

**Cross Fellowship Church**  
**Overland Park, KS**  
**June 16, 2019**  
**Luke 11:1-13**  
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We are continuing our study in the book of Luke this morning. This lengthy center section of the book runs from the end of chapter 9 to chapter 19. In this section, Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem and he is teaching his disciples about following him as they literally follow him on the way to Jerusalem. We have been here for a few weeks and we will be here for a while. To reorient ourselves on the flow of this, we saw back at the end of chapter 9 the cost of following Jesus, and in chapter 10, to be ambassadors, and then we saw loving God with their entire being and loving God as themselves. Last week Eric preached on Mary and Martha and we saw the first section in that part of the passage there about what love for God looks like in followers of Jesus. We learned that love for God is not primarily about doing things for God. It's primarily about sitting at Jesus' feet.

Luke's next focus is on Jesus teaching his disciples—and us—about prayer: sitting at Jesus' feet listen to his words and talking with God in prayer. That is what we see in chapter 11. Let me pick up where Marsha was reading. Chapter 11, verse 1. **“Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’”** We are not told when or where this happened, but Jesus' disciples heard him praying and it stirs in them a desire to pray like him. This is the only time where we have recorded where the disciples ask Jesus to teach them something. Makes you wonder what they heard and saw in Jesus' prayer that made them ask him to teach them how to do what they just heard.

It's not like they didn't already know how to pray. It's not like they heard Jesus pray and said, what is this strange thing that you are doing? We had no idea that people talk to God? No, prayer would have been a normal part of their lives, as it is for us. They are hearing Jesus praying, and there is something about it that exposes their prayers and shows them how much they have to learn. They ask Jesus, teach us to do this. This is the part of the sermon where I am supposed to convince you why you need to listen to this passage. I'm guessing this isn't the first sermon you have heard on the Lord's Prayer. Probably you have memorized this at some point or prayed it at some point. I am guessing that some of us in the room are like the disciples in that we have a lot to learn about prayer. Maybe it is a normal part of our life, but it's not nearly what it should be. How many of us spend more time in prayer before meals than the rest of the day combined? How many of us get up and go through the day and realize at the end of the day or even the end of the week that we totally forgot to pray? When was the last time you actually listened to yourself pray? Are you surprised when you do that at the things you hear yourselves saying or asking? Have you fallen into a rut saying the same things, same words without

thinking about what they mean? Do you find yourself asking for God for things because you don't want to ask him for that one little thing?

I am encouraged by how many people in our church that I would look at and think, man, they are faithful in prayer, and we see it so much. As we gather in our worship and prayer gatherings and even in our members' meetings, prayer characterizes a lot of what we do, and I'm thankful for that.

If I would ask you personally where you need to grow in your walk with Jesus, and where you personally need to grow, prayer, if not at the top of the list, is certainly in the top three. Our ears perk up because we need to hear this too. Jesus is going to answer this question. First, Jesus is going to give the answer the disciples probably expected to hear and give them a model prayer that teaches them what to pray for. After that, he is going to ask them two questions intended to stir their hearts to want to pray, so he's going to teach them what to pray and then he's going to stir their hearts to want to pray. We struggle with what to pray for, but maybe a bigger problem is we often don't pray because it's just not what we want to do or because we don't believe God really wants to hear our prayers or that he will give us good things when we ask him. My prayer for us is that God would work through this passage to refocus the content of our prayers and to refuel our desire to pray.

Let's look at the text here. Let's start with verses 2 through 4. **“And he said to them, ‘When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.””**” What are we supposed to do with this prayer? Are we supposed to pray these words when we pray or see this as an example that gives us categories that shape our prayers? The answer most likely is yes. The way this prayer is set up seems to make it totally appropriate to pray these exact words. Memorize this prayer, pray this prayer, you can do that, that's good. When you think about the phrase, “when you pray, say,” either that means you should not pray anything but these words, which we know that is not what Jesus is saying. Even thinking about it right here, Jesus must have prayed other things like this or the disciples wouldn't have had to ask them to pray like him. Jesus intends the model prayer to function like a tuning fork to check whether their prayers are in the right pitch. Isn't that good? He intends for the prayer to measure like a tuning fork.

If that is true, what does this model prayer teach us about what we should pray? Here are a few lessons for us. As I was doing research this week and looking up how others preached this passage, what I found is most other pastors who have done this take one phrase per sermon. There is a lot of material here and no way we can do it that in depth if we are going to get through this passage and get to the second lesson about Jesus's teaching about prayer as well. We are going to have to move quickly. The first lesson for what we should pray is our prayer should be rooted in relationship.

As the next couple phrases remind us, he is the God who deserves worship and the king who rules and reigns over all things, but when we come to him in prayer, we remember he is also our kind and caring father. It's a term of respect, but also a term of intimacy. Prayer is to be as simple as a child asking their father for what they need, and so prayer begins rooted in that relationship with God as our father, and secondly, prayer is rooted in our relationship with one another. Notice verses 3 and 4 here. Notice the plural pronouns. Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our sins. Lead us not into temptation. This is a corporate prayer. I don't think that means we should never pray individually, but it says something about the importance of praying together and something about the awareness that we should have when we pray that we are part of something way bigger than just ourselves.

So when we pray, we pray rooted in these two relationships, we pray to the Father as part of his people, the church. That means the gospel has to be at the root of our prayers and our prayers are ultimately rooted in the gospel. The only reason we can pray to the Father as our Father is because of the work of Jesus on our behalf. Apart from Jesus, we have no right to address God as our Father or consider ourselves part of his people. Apart from Jesus, we don't have a relationship of care and kindness and intimacy with him. We are under his judgment and wrath.

If you are not a Christian, you have to realize you have no basis to pray this way yet. You need to begin not here, but in repentance and humbling yourself before God as your judge and confessing your sins and your need for Jesus' sacrifice. That is where you need to start this morning if you are not a Christian. Got sent his son to live the perfect life that you fail to live and to have his first born son die on the cross. Through faith in that and repentance in Jesus, we can be adopted in his family and made sons and daughters of God and be united in Jesus through repentance and faith. If you are a Christian, your prayers need to start there and be reminded of the beauty that we have with God and God's people and your prayers should flow out of and reflect those relationships.

The disciples would have immediately recognized these as prayers and purposes of God waiting and longing to be fulfilled. The first request is "Hallowed be your name." For something to be hallowed is for it to be made holy or sanctified. The request is for God to make his reputation and name to be seen as holy or sanctify his name. God promised this all through the Old Testament. Page one of the Bible, God created Adam and Eve and told them have lots of kids and fill the earth with lots of people that will glorify God. Instead they disobeyed God and people sought their own glory, and so God called Abraham and made a people from Abraham's family and the goal in that covenant was that all of the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's family by knowing and glorifying God. Further down, they disobey God. All through the Old Testament this longing is building and through the prophets, we see the longing building that God will glorify his name. Let me read Ezekiel 36:22. **"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I**

**am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.”** God's purpose is that we do this. We can't; we have failed his name but God will act on his own behalf and he will glorify and sanctify his name among all the nations. That is what the storyline is about. Jesus teaches us to long for and pray for the day when that actually happens. To glorify his name among the earth. God has promised to do it.

Second is to bring his kingdom. This would be connected to the promise God made to David, and that purpose is all over the Old Testament and something that the disciples would have recognized right away, praying for God to fulfill those promises. Those statements summarize and represent God's primary purposes he is working towards in history and all of God's promises are related to these two things. The point of the statement is that God's purposes and promises should drive the prayers. The beginning of the model prayer probably has something about the priority over the things that we will pray for. Think about that for a minute. Are your prayers driven by the promises and purposes of God? Is that where you begin when you pray? Do you have a big picture focus like that? That might mean that more of our prayers say, “You said you would do this, will you keep and fulfill that promise?”

Our prayers should reflect our dependence on God for our daily physical needs. This is what we see in the request that God would give us this day our daily bread. In the disciples' day, people didn't have refrigerators and pantries, so they were literally in need of bread every single day. Most of us cannot even relate to that. Our fridges and pantries are full and we have grocery stores down the street and our closets are full and all of that numbs us for dependence on God for our physical needs. We think we are okay. It's not that we need to pray less for these things now and for our daily provision than they did then. In fact, maybe it's more important for us to pray for our daily physical needs because we need that reminder every day that even though my refrigerator is full and my closet full of clothes, I am dependent on God for the next beat of my heart and the next breath in my lungs. I am just as dependent on God as the disciples were. I think these can be the easiest requests to convince ourselves to leave out of our prayers. Jesus tells us to ask God for our daily provisions because we are dependent, whether we realize it or not. If you don't pray this way, who does it show that you are depending on to provide these things for you?

Finally, our prayers should reflect our dependence on God for our daily spiritual needs as well. Jesus mentioned two requests for this. First, we need to be forgiven for sin. As followers of Jesus we are aware of how often we fall short, and so Jesus teaches us that forgiveness of sins is one of the things that we should regularly be praying for. Jesus connects our own forgiveness with our forgiveness of others. That demonstrates how much we need forgiveness and so we should pray for it because we know we need it, and that should be reflected in our forgiveness of others. Practically speaking, do you spend time before you pray asking God for forgiveness? Not only do we need to be protected from past sin but protected from future. We know that we are weak and vulnerable. Our spirit is willing but our flesh is weak.

He tells them when they go into the garden, he says pray. Your spirit is willing and your flesh is weak. We are too likely to give into temptation. We want to think that we should pray that we beat temptation, but Jesus teaches us to pray to avoid it altogether because we are weak and we don't know how to do that well. Jesus teaches us to pray and not be led into temptation in the first place. How often do you pray that God would guard you and protect you from temptation? I wonder how my failure in temptation is related to my lack of prayer for protection from temptation. These requests remind us that as much as we need daily mercy, we need daily forgiveness. Do your prayers reflect dependence upon God for your needs, to grow, to be forgiven from sin? If not, who does that show that you are depending on for those things? Just like physical temptation, that says a lot about our hearts.

We could easily spend all of our time on those lines. There is so much depth and richness. When you read that in your Bible, it is so simple. It's just a few short lines and a few notes. Three or four words in each sentence, something that the disciples could easily remember and apply. I would encourage you to do two things based on the lessons we just talked about. These aren't on your handout here. Two practical applications in light of this. First, I would encourage you this week to examine your prayers in light of the model prayer this week. Listen to the things that you have gotten into the habit of praying for and see how they line up with the priorities that Jesus gives us in this prayer here. Are there adjustments that you need to make? Are there focuses in your prayer that need to not be the primary focus on your prayers?

Examine your prayers. Use this prayer as your outline this week. This is a good way to help grow in this. Start with these lines. Start here and let them be the springboard for your prayers and let this model prayer refocus what you pray for and see if this begins to shift some of the focuses you have when you pray. That is the practical instruction the disciples were asking for and Jesus gives it to them. I love it that he didn't stop there. You can pray a really impressive eloquent, and theologically accurate prayer that can be empty and pointless. The other part is having your heart stirred to desire to pray. It's wanting to pray.

We see this in the next part of this passage. Both of these questions set up extreme scenarios that are really designed to cause an emotional response in us. They are supposed to cause something in us to well up as we hear these situations and then that emotional response is supposed to cause our hearts to explode in wonder and awe over how kind God is and how he answers us.

Look at verse 5. "And he said to them, 'Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him"; and he will answer from within, "Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything"?''" Let's stop there. This is a long confusing sentence. The question mark on the question doesn't come until the very end. It's so long that we lose track part way through.

We tend to hear the question asking if we are willing to be this kind of bold person

that would wake up their neighbor at midnight to provide for their guests. What we see is this guy knocking boldly on the door. The Bible does teach that we should be bold and consistent in our prayer, but I don't think that is what this question is asking. When you trace this question here and follow the flow of thought, the question is about the neighbor who gets woken up. Who of you has a neighbor that would respond like this, and we assume the answer is that none of us do. Nobody's neighbor would respond that way.

That leads to another problem because in our culture and context, none of us can imagine having a neighbor that would respond that way. If somebody banged on our door at midnight, we would think they were being crazy and rude. Wal-Mart is right down the street and they are open, go buy yourselves some bread and let me sleep. In the culture and context of this passage, however, the exact opposite would be the case. If you had a visitor come to your house, no matter what time they arrived, you were honor-bound to take care of them. When this guy shows up at his house, there is only one option and that is to go to his neighbor and his friend and find somebody who could loan him some bread. That is the right thing for this guy to do and the right thing for the neighbor to do in that context.

The point here is that it would be crazy for the neighbor to respond with these kind of excuses if his friend comes to him at midnight asking him to provide for his guests. In this context the excuses listed would have sounded like a job. We would have nodded our heads, that sound reasonable, but the disciples would have been laughing at how ridiculous that sounds: "my doors are locked and my kids are in bed with me." I think this is helpful for us to understand this situation in a Western context. We may not need to provide hospitality at all hours of the night for guests, but imagine a friend who calls in the middle of the night and his wife is in labor, but his car won't start. "Can I borrow your car?" he asks. Who would say, "No, the kids are asleep and I can't wake them up."? No one would say that and leave their friends in such a lurch. No one would say, "Sorry friend, my garage is already closed up." Well, push the button and open it up.

The point is there is no way he would actually say that and do that, and if he did, it would have brought shame on him. The neighbor would get up and help him no matter the request. **"I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs."** "Impudence" is not a word that we use a lot in English. The word behind it is "shamelessness." It has to do with the desire to avoid shaming himself and with breaking cultural norms. The neighbor whose door is knocked on does not want to be shamed. When you trace the sentence here through verse 8, we see only one phrase talking about the guy knocking on the door. Every other one is talking about the neighbor who got up to give the guy what the guy asked for, not because the neighbor is his friend, but because of the neighbor's impudence. The guy whose door is knocked on—his impudence is the point. Even a sleeping neighbor can be counted on to respond to inconvenient requests. They may not do it just because they are your friend, but will

do it to avoid being shamed and to save face. The point is this guy has to beg and plead and keep knocking. All he had to do was ask one time and even in that inconvenient situation, everyone would have expected the neighbor to help.

See if the next stories strike you different. Starting in verse 9 here, Jesus says: **“And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”** You probably heard these verses as, “Ask and keep on asking. Seek and keep on seeking. Knock and keep on knocking.” You might think the application is about being persistent in prayer, but if the story about the neighbor is not making the point, then these verses aren’t making that point, either. The point is to compare God with that neighbor and see just how willing and eager God is to respond to our prayers.

The point of this story is that if even a sleeping neighbor can be counted on to respond to requests, just think how eager God is to respond to your prayers. All the friend had to do was go knock on the door and he could be confident that his neighbor would respond. How much more should we be confident to ask God for what we need? The point isn't just keep begging until you get what you want. We think that God is going to be like our version of the grumpy neighbor and we think God is going to be frustrated with us for bothering him. We are supposed to see him the exact opposite. He is never annoyed or impatient with us. He is eager to respond to us. When we knock on the door of heaven in prayer, we find it open for us. When we seek the hope of our Heavenly Father, we find it. When we ask in prayer for the help that we need, we are supposed to be in awe of how willing God is for us to come to him with any need at any time. Doesn't that make you want to pray?

Jesus continues: **“What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?”** Both of those are “who among you?” questions. The answer is expected to be “none of us.” The sentence structure here helps us get the point a lot quicker than the one about the neighbor. The situation here is what father, if their child asked them for something good, would give them something harmful instead? What father is going to say to a son asking for a snack, “Sure,” but then give him a cobra or a scorpion? Only the worst father in the world would do that. Good fathers love to provide for their children and they find joy in giving good things to their children.

We didn't plan for this passage to happen on Father's Day. I know that unfortunately not all of our fathers have been good fathers and not everybody has had a good experience with their dad, and if that is you, I am sorry. These verses still support the point that we know in our minds what a good father is supposed to do and how dads are supposed to treat their kids. It is messed up and wrong when fathers don't respond to their kids this way. Good fathers love to give good gifts to their kids. Here is the punch line. **“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”** Even the best father on earth is a sinner. I know lots of dads are

getting world's best father T-shirts and mugs today. They can't all be true. [Laughter] We are all sinners and fall short of that, but even sinful fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, and if they do, how much more will our heavenly Father know how to give good gifts to us?

Just think how much God delights in lavishing good things on us when we ask. Why would we be hesitant to ask him for what we need? Doesn't this make you excited to pray and to ask your Father? I don't think it's an accident that Jesus began and ended this teaching on prayer by addressing God as Father. He is so good and so kind. He delights to give you good things when you ask. Why would you not want to ask him for what you need?

One note on this, you might notice that is not exactly how Jesus finishes that sentence. It says, **“how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”** What does that mean? I think it is supposed to be interchangeable with good things and maybe even with the best thing, so just think about that for a second. Why is that the best thing that God could ever give us? What is the best thing that God could give us? Himself, right? That's what he gives us in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God himself dwelling with us, in us. He has the wisdom, power, love, everything else that God is, dwelling in us, so what better thing could God give?

Let's close by thinking about two ways the Holy Spirit is the best gift God could give us. Look at Romans 8:15-17. **“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”** The Holy Spirit is the one who unites us to Jesus and makes us adopted sons and daughters of God. God is giving us this relationship with him that everything else in this passage is based on.

Just a few verses later, in Romans 8:26, **“the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”** Not only is the Holy Spirit the one who connects us to Jesus and gives us the relationship when we pray this way, he is the answer for where we fall short in our prayers. God gives us the Holy Spirit who helps us in weakness by interceding for us. We don't know what to pray for as we ought, but the Holy Spirit does and intercedes on our behalf and his prayers for us are perfect and exactly what God desires for us. What better gift could your heavenly Father give? Doesn't this stir your heart to want to pray?

My prayer for us has been that God would use this passage to refocus the content of our prayers and refuel our desire to pray. Those are my applications. Let the model prayer focus the content of your prayers and take time this week to evaluate the content of this prayer and second, let this fuel your desire to pray. Hopefully you are already feeling that and thinking about how eager God is to hear your prayers and how much he delights to give you the best thing when you ask. Spend some time meditating on those truths and let them stir your heart to want to pray. In light of all that, I can't think of a better way to end our time together than by

praying together. Let me just ask you to do this. This is slightly different than how we normally end. Why don't you stand with me now? I would like to take a moment to let you pray silently to yourself, however your heart is stirred to pray in light of this passage and then I will pray for us corporately.

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Father, you say in your Word you are the one who is at work to glorify your name in all the nations. We read about that in your Word and in the songs that we sang and one day we are all going to gather around your throne and sing, "worthy is the Lamb." God, would you do that and work in the world toward that end and cause your name to be glorified? We know that is the way things are headed and you promised that Jesus is going to rule on the throne. God, our hope is in that. Would you stir our hearts? Jesus is coming to do that and establish his kingdom. We saw it in his miracles and in his teaching. God, bring that day to come soon. Rule and reign in our hearts in the meantime and make us faithful witnesses for your kingdom. But God, we long for that day, help us to long for it even more. God, give us what we need for today. Our hearts are so easily numbed to the practical things that we need. We think we're good on our own and we have it taken care of, and our needs are met, but apart from the next breath from our lungs, God, we can't do anything. God, would you meet our physical needs and remind us how dependent we are on you?

Would you forgive us our sins? God, this week we have let other things take your place in our hearts. We have especially tried to do that ourselves, so God forgive us for how we have sought to be our own god and go our own way and not been obedient to you and not sought your glory in all things. Would you forgive us and have mercy on us and protect us from temptation? My heart is sensitive to the temptations that come and how prone I am to give in, would you guard me against that, guard us against that, and protect us from that and fix our eyes on Jesus so we see him as better and more beautiful?

Father, would you do these two things that I have just mentioned that I have been praying for our church? Would you focus the content of our prayer and would you show us where our prayers have gotten out of whack and where our priorities are not the things you have caused us to prioritize in our prayers? I pray that the truths we saw this morning would give us hearts that are excited and can't wait to come before your throne, that we would be stirred to come to you often and come to you eager, knowing you will hear our prayers and you will lavish good gifts on us when we come to ask. I pray you wouldn't be hesitant to come to us and you would not be the grumpy neighbor, but the good Father. I pray that we would hold nothing back and be faithful pray-ers as we have learned from the passage this morning. We pray that you are glorified in this text and you will be glorified in our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

We are going to respond now by taking the Lord's Supper together, a really appropriate way to respond to the things we heard this morning. We have a good Father, whose

love is vast beyond all measure—that is what we are going to sing as we take the Lord's Supper as we walk along here and take the bread and take a cup. God in his great mercy sent his Son and gave his blood to be spilled and body to be broken in our place, making us able to relate to him as Father and pray to him as Father and to look at one another and count ourselves as his people. We remember what Jesus did for us to unite us to his Father, and we remember what he did to unite us to one another and we take these elements together.