



WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT PRAYER SPRING 2022

Growth Group Curriculum
May 1, 2022 – Luke 11:1-4

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

During the season of Lent we looked at chapters 9-19 from the gospel of Luke. We talked about the journey that Jesus made through Samaria on his way to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. For the next four weeks we will look at some additional texts from that journey as we take a look at what Jesus had to say about prayer.

As we begin our text the disciples have been noticing that Jesus spent time praying to God. We know that before major events Jesus would pray. The disciples knew that other teachers had taught their disciples how to pray (John the Baptist) and, thus, they wanted Jesus to teach them to pray. It is interesting that they do not “ask” Jesus to show them how to pray, but instead Luke uses an imperative voice and has the disciples telling Jesus to “teach us to pray.”

Jesus does not give them a long theological diatribe about prayer. Instead he offers them a prayer that has 38 words and says this is the model for prayer. There is an invocation to God, there is prayer for the movement of God, and there is prayer that focuses on the needs of the people who are praying.

This prayer has often been called the Lord’s Prayer, but a closer examination shows us that this is really a prayer for the disciples and could easily be called the Disciples Prayer. Yet, this prayer that Jesus teaches also emerges out of the work he was already doing. He was talking about holiness. He was bringing the kingdom. He was breaking bread and feeding thousands. He was forgiving sins. This prayer that we are taught to pray emanates from the mission that Jesus is on as he makes his way through Samaria.

In the middle of the prayer is a petition for daily bread. This image hearkens back to the book of Exodus where God provided enough “manna for the day” as the people of Israel made their way to the Promised Land. God gave them just enough for each day and a double portion on the day before the Sabbath, so that they did not need to work on the Sabbath (Exodus 16).

Bread is important for survival just as prayer is important for those who follow Jesus. Part of what this prayer does is remind us of our dependence on God, just as we are dependent on bread. We cannot “live” without the God who provides sustenance in our lives.

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Exploring the Text

Luke 11:1-4

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.” ² He said to them, “When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Share about someone you know, or have known, who was devoted to prayer.
- 2) What do you think the disciples witnessed that made them implore Jesus to teach them to pray?
- 3) Jesus gives the disciples a pattern or template for prayer. Do you have a certain model or pattern of prayer that you have found helpful?
- 4) Does it surprise you that Jesus offered no introductory comments to his prayer and that he then used so few words when teaching the disciples how to pray?
- 5) What does it mean to “hallow” God’s name?
- 6) What does “daily bread” or “manna for the day” look like to you? Jesus may have been talking about literal bread for the people of his day, but does it mean something different for us today?
- 7) In the movie *Shadowlands*, CS Lewis says, “I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God, it changes me.” Do you agree or disagree with this? Why?
- 8) Pastor Paul quoted from Matthew 6:34 where Jesus says, “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Is there something about the future that is causing you to have anxiety or to worry. Share about that and pray for each other.

