

Luke 11:1-13

“Our Lord’s Principles On Prayer”

Until recently I never knew that the technical classification for whales and/or dolphins is cetaceans. What that means is that they’re not fish, they’re not fowl, they live subsurface (in the ocean) and never go ashore yet they have to rise from the depths at various intervals in order to breathe so that they might live. They’re of the ocean but the breath of life that they need to live comes *not* from *around* them, but from *above* them. From a different atmosphere altogether than the one in which they live/dwell.

As believers I find that in certain respects you and I are in a similar classification; living “subsurface” (if you will) that is, though our citizenship is in heaven we’re current residents on the earth. We are *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Yet the breath of life that sustains us, maintains us, causes us to survive and even thrive in this “environment” comes *not* from around us, but from *above* us. From a different “atmosphere” altogether than the one in which we live and/or dwell. But like these cetaceans (whales and dolphins) if we’re to maintain a fruitful and effective existence in this environment (which we call the world) in which we live, it’s critical that we “surface” at consistent interval in order that we might “breathe in” that “eternal o2”.

One of the ways in which we do that (in which we come into contact with the climate “above” us) is through prayer. We “come up for air” (so to speak) through time spent in prayer. Which brings us to Luke Ch 11; the passage that we’re spending time in today deals exclusively with our Lord’s principles on prayer. How it is that we make the most of our time spent “on the surface” so to speak... Let me encourage you to do your best to focus in and have ears to hear because anytime you have the *Son of God* teaching you personally the most effective/fruitful way to *communicate* with God you and I do well to simmer down and listen up.

Vs1

Few things it seems that we should at least highlight here right off the bat. We’ve noted before the priority of prayer in the life of Christ and how that if Christ (God the Son) found it necessary to commune with God and be in prayer before God so consistently how much more does the need arise in our own lives?

Many times Jesus would separate Himself from His disciples so that He might be alone in His prayer time, however here it seems that He was with in their hearing or perhaps with in eyeshot and there just seemed to be something about watching Him; they were observing Him, examining Him and it prompted them to ask Him for a lesson on prayer. There was just something about watching Him that made them want to learn to pray like that...of course it's *our* prayer that people would be encouraged to want to grow in *their* walk with God by what they see in *our* walk.

How we pray demonstrates what we think about God; there was something obviously wonderful about watching Jesus commune with the Father; the disciples wanted in on that, they wanted to learn to pray like that.

It's never a bad thing to ask the Lord to teach us how to pray. Hey, let's face we don't always know what to say, or how to pray (Rom 8:26), many times our requests are centered on self, we're seeking something selfishly, not for God's glory (Jas 4:3). But there was a purity in the prayer life of Jesus. It's interesting that we never read of the disciples asking the Lord to teach them to preach, or to prophesy, to cast out demons, to worship, to witness, to figure out God's calling or how to effectively evangelize. But they *did* ask Jesus to teach them how to *pray*.

Why? I suggest to you that they realized through the priority of prayer in the life of their Lord that all those *other* things sprang forth from this *one* thing. Prayer was the core of the life and ministry of their Master. They saw the connection between prayer, and the power of God, prayer and the peace of God; and they saw it demonstrated so profoundly in the life of Jesus personally and they wanted to learn to cultivate a relationship with God like He had. Meaning one of intimacy, of humility, of incredible usability; all of these incredible characteristics noted in Christ that are available to you and me but how can it be? According what the disciples observed they considered the primary key to be in His prayer life, so they asked Him for insight accordingly.

Vs 2-4

These are the Vs that we're going to spend the majority of our time on right here. There's a ton to be gleaned and I'm not going to pretend to plumb the depths of it but we'll certainly seek to scratch around on the surface.

I want you to know that this isn't the same prayer that Jesus shared in Matt Ch 6 though it is the same *basic* outline; that tells us a couple of things. #1 The fact that He approached the issue utilizing the same format shows us how important it is. #2 The fact that He doesn't repeat it verbatim shows us that it wasn't to be used as a "magic formula" of sorts or repeated as some kind of ritual; but rather these are our Lord's *principles on prayer*.

Now it's not *The Lord's Prayer*, the Lord *never sinned* and has nothing to be forgiven for (Vs 4). It's more of a disciples outline for prayer.

Let me give you 2 more bits of information regarding this prayer then we'll consider it a bit more specifically. #1 It can be broken down into 2 sections each drawing attention to 3 details. Section #1 "Hallowed be *Your* Name, *Your* kingdom come, *Your* will be done." Section #1 deals with the glory of God; that's primary. Section #2 "Give *us* our daily bread, forgive *us* our sins, do not lead *us* into temptation." Section 2 deals with the needs of man; that's 2^{ndary}. Primary: God's glory, Secondary: the needs of man.

The 2nd thing I want to point out is the brevity of the prayer; it's only 59 words in the NKJV. Yet in this brief prayer that takes around 15-20 sec to pray Jesus articulates 6 things that prioritize the glory of God and the needs of man. Here's my point (you've heard me say it before), the *strength* of prayer is never found in the *length* of prayer...Some people feel as though they have to spend all kinds of time in prayer before they get in tune with God or really have His attention or are communing with Him. I would encourage you to research the prayers found in the bible and see how long they are as a general rule. Some of the most powerful prayers in the bible are incredibly brief. Now I'm not saying I'm in anyway against spending time communing *with God* or waiting *upon* God in prayer; but don't think it makes you more spiritual or somehow places you in a position of favor with God...it doesn't. As a matter of fact the bible says, "*Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.*" Eccl 5:2

Ok, I want to take a moment here to point out the obvious, it's found in Vs 2 and that is this; "When you pray, say:" understand that prayer is simply speaking to God. The best way to learn to pray is to say, speak it out brother! Speak it out sister! Pray when you're alone, pray with other brothers and sisters. (You'll not that Jesus uses words like *our*, *us*, and *we*; those aren't words you usually employ when you're alone [though you might if you're interceding for more than yourself]) my point is that Jesus recognizes times of praying together with your family. Your brothers and sisters in the body. People get all weirded out when they pray out loud; hey, get over it! ☐ Break the ice, be bold!

Ok, 6 points, 6 principles that Jesus articulates here (if you're a note taker) that we want to look *at* and think *through* concerning this His pattern for prayer. OUR LORD'S PRINCIPLES ON PRAYER: #1 Realize the *personal* element; PRAYER IS PERSONAL. You're dialoguing with your heavenly *Father*, not some impersonal stranger, or some good luck charm or trinket upon an altar; He is your heavenly Father. This is the One who has adopted you by faith through the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ John tells us of Jesus, "...*as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*" John 1:12 He *loves* you, He's given Himself *for* you and has called you His Son, His daughter, He's your Father.

BTW no call here to pray to Mary, to some saint or anything or anyone else; through Christ we have direct access to the throne room of grace, don't be deceived into settling for anything less. Only God can hear you, and only God can help you when you call, no one else (no past person) can.

Now as a Father there are certain things that I've sought to instill in my children; one of which is that there is never *anything* they can't share with me; that they can come *to* me and be open *with* me about. There's nothing too trivial and nothing too big but that they can't share it with me; I want to know what's going on in their lives I'm their father.

So to with you and so to with me concerning our *heavenly* Father; there's a personal relationship of intimacy/family going on there, God wants to hear Your heart. #1 Prayer is personal

Of course having pointed out the personal nature of prayer I should probably state that prior to praying you need to make certain that He really is your Father. That happens (as we mentioned a moment ago) through believing in your heart that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again the 3rd day for your justification; when you trust Christ as your Savior you become a son, or a daughter of God. You can go to God and say, “Father.” Jesus doesn’t exhort us to call God, “Omniscient One” (though He is) or “I AM that I AM” (though He is), but Father. Why? Did God change? No, you did, through faith in Christ...

Prayer is personal; however Jesus emphasizes something else here and that is this; #2 Proper Perspective. “Our Father *in heaven, Hallowed be Your Name.*” God is high and exalted, He is holy, we are not, the fact that He’s in heaven reminds us that He’s on the throne; He’s the Lord of heaven and earth which translates into the fact that *nothing* will be too hard for Him. He’s a God a majesty and dominion. We read in 2 Chron 20:6, “*O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?*” He sees all (Ps 11:4) He’s Sovereign over all (Ps 115:3) and He is holy, there is no one like our God; He’s completely unique and set apart unto Himself.

A proper perspective of God maintains a proper perspective on everything else; the bigger my God is the smaller my problems become.

#1 Prayer is Personal, #2 Proper Perspective, #3 Here we have the Primary Petition; it may shock us to realize that it’s not our personal well being, our comfort/job security or anything that has to do with me or with you. It prioritizes the glory of God, “*Your Kingdom come, Your will be done.*” We’ve classified this in 1 category but we recognize it’s 2 requests.

“Your Kingdom come” not only that we want Jesus to rule this earth prophetically, but we want Him to rule and reign in our lives personally; we want His kingdom (not our kingdom) to come; prayer isn’t a means by which we seek to talk God into our will but rather we’re to seek to line up with *His* will. We want *His will* to be done; His desire to be 1st just like it is in heaven. In heaven there isn’t anyone resisting God’s will, rejecting God’s will, wrestling with God over His will; it’s obeyed instantly, joyfully and faithfully.

Now there are those who want you to believe that when you pray for God's will to be done it's a sign of weakness, lack of faith, "Your will be done" is sort of like an escape hatch in case your request doesn't pan out. I disagree emphatically; according to My Lord it's exactly how *we're supposed* to pray and it's a sign of defiance and disobedience to pray any other way. To impose my will (and call that faith) is to usurp the place of God, an act of pride presuming that I (with my finite reasoning and corrupted rationale) know better than God concerning the situation.

I suppose Jesus faltered in faith when in the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed concerning the cross, "Nevertheless not My will but Your will be done."? I don't think so, they're the words of submission and surrender to whatever the plan or purpose of God may be for your life.

#1 Prayer is personal, #2 Proper Perspective, #3 Primary Petition, #4 we're to pray for God's Provision in our lives. "Give us day by day our daily bread." No "self made men" in the kingdom, we all look *to* the Lord and trust *in* the Lord to take care of and meet (not our greeds) our needs. Notice there's no radical storehouse involved here, no huge savings account in view; it's great if God does that for you but here's the fact of the matter. "*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*" 1 Tim 6:6-8

Note the words, "Day by day." What's that mean to you? That we're to be communicating with the Lord each day if not multiple times throughout the day, God is concerned with our everyday ordinary needs and we're to depend upon and recognize Him as the One who provides for the needs that we have.

#4 Provision, #5 we'll call Pardon, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us." Now I want you to realize that this is a disciple's prayer; your salvation isn't in view here. It's true that we've been forgiven of what we might call "original sin," that sin which Adam committed and passed on to humanity separating us from God throughout eternity apart from faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

So there's positional sanctification; but practically we still make a mess of things, we still sin everyday and the scriptures are replete with passages whereby believers are crying out to God that He might forgive them of their sins. So though salvation may not be in view here our practical sanctification most certainly is.

Have we been forgiven of our sins in Christ? Yes; does that mean we no longer sin? No, as a matter of fact the bible declares, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" 1 John 1:8-9 Yet we note the hypocrisy of crying out for God's forgiveness yet not being willing ourselves to forgive anyone else. If we refuse to forgive someone else we're really in no position to receive God's forgiveness toward us. How could this ever say, "Forgive us our sins, even if I refuse to forgive someone else."? We might *want* it to say that, but it doesn't... Again, Ephesians 4:31-32, "*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*"

Which brings us to #6 Protection, "And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one." How we need the strength of God's Spirit in our lives; we're so prone to wander, so prone to be given over to temptation and it can happen in but a second. If you want to be a strong Christian than realize how weak you are and cry out to God for *His* strength, and *His* protection in your life.

Now the bible is clear that God will not Himself tempt us *with* evil nor to *do* evil; James tells us that the truth of the matter is that we are tempted when we're drawn away of our own lusts and are enticed. So the idea here is that we're aware of our own weakness; asking God to remember that all we are is dust, no real fortitude of our own; we need Him to hedge us about, keep us from temptation and deliver us from the evil one.

Ok; we're going to blast through these next 9 Vs, here's what I want you to see. The Lord has given us His principles on prayer, now He encourages us to be *persistent in* prayer. Vs 5-8 are the illustration, Vs 9-13 are the application.

Vs5-8

I won't get into the cultural relevance here; let's just get our attention on Vs 8. It's not their friendship, but His *persistence* that pays off. Now Jesus isn't saying that God is like a grouchy old neighbor who really doesn't want to help you but if you bug Him enough He'll do it just to get you off of His nerves. It's just the opposite; He's arguing from the lesser to the greater. If this tired and self serving neighbor will respond positively even though he really doesn't want to, how much more will your heavenly *Father* (Vs 2) readily rise up and tend to the needs of His own dear children? God delights in meeting your needs, you're not getting on His nerves believe you me...He wants you to grow in godliness, to excel in holiness, He wants to be there for you and readily help you.

What's the point of persistence then? It demonstrates both passion and priority. It doesn't change God, it changes us; it sifts out what's truly important Vs what's really a non essential. I had someone ask me one time if they should keep praying for something after they've sought God about it once (the implication was that they'd entrusted it to God, God knew the need and they were comfortable letting God be God and either respond affirmatively or not and trusting Him with it) it sounds real spiritual, however it's not biblical. I've discovered that when something is important to my kids they have no problem asking me over and over and over again. If it's important to you, if it's important to me we're instructed by the word of God to continue to seek God concerning the matter (if it's not important to me or a priority to me, why should it be to God)? Persistency has a way of weeding out the true passion of my heart, priorities in my life...if it's truly a burden I won't fail to bring it to God; if it doesn't really matter I'll eventually forget about it.

Vs 9-10

“Ask and it *might* be given to you, seek and *maybe* you'll find, knock and *perhaps* it'll be opened unto you.” Is that what your bible says? It's not what *my* bible says; now again you guys these verbs “Ask, seek, knock” are all PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVES which speak of habitual lifestyle kind of commands, there's to be persistency, consistency to our prayer lives.

We're to ask and keep on asking...there's a progressive passion here, ask, seek, knock and trust God to meet your needs. Now this is all still with in the context of discipleship, denying ourselves, seeking His will not our own; if I'm persistent in seeking the things that God desires for me, my life, or a certain situation I can be confident I'll see them happen.

Jesus gives us the rationale...

Vs11-13

Here's the idea, we're a sinful people. Yet we have a desire to bless and nurture our children. To prepare them for the world that lies ahead of them, to equip them to survive in an environment that has way more potential to harm them than to help them. If that's true of us as sinful parents; how much more than does our heavenly, holy, pure and righteous Father want to equip *His* children, nurture and strengthen *His* children to survive and thrive that they might be *in* the world, yet not *of* the world? We have a tendency to think it's an egg; when it reality it's a scorpion, "Give us that fish" "No, it's a snake", God's got your back. You look *to* Him and trust *in* Him; He'll take care of and equip you...

Cetaceans; remember them? The lungs of a whale are proportionally somewhat smaller than human lungs. But they're far more *efficient*. Human lungs exchange about 15-20% of their contents with each breath, the lungs of a whale exchange nearly 90% with each breath. That's why they can hold their breath so much longer than you and/or I can. Here's the point: we weren't designed to stay, "subsurface" for very long; we're intended to surface much more frequently if we're to live.

Learn our Lord's principles on prayer; then surface for that air as often as you can and you'll see both the power of God and the peace of God unleashed and at work in your life...

Prayer Points:

Father; we thank You that nothing is too hard for You. That it's impossible for us to overwhelm You, or lay something out there that's too much for You. You are enthroned in heaven and rein over all the earth. Ignite our prayers with a passion, give us proper priorities and may we trust You more. Jesus we thank You for graciously taking the time to teach us to pray; may we heed Your word and bring glory to Your name.

Listen, before you can approach God as your Father it's essential that He be your Father. How does that happen? Through faith in Jesus Christ trusting in the shedding of His blood, His resurrection from the dead on your behalf as sufficient to cleanse your sin and make you right in the sight of God. Trust in Jesus today and leave this place as a child of God.