

Luke Chapter 11:1-13

Our section deals with a very specific subject – teaching given by the Lord to His disciples in the matter of prayer.

From verse 1 to verse 4, we deal even more particularly with what has become known as "the Lord's prayer". This is a misnomer for we should really call it the "disciples prayer". It is not a prayer that the Lord Himself would have offered, but one which was suitable for the disciples at that point in time. If we want to know what the Lord prayed about, we should turn rather to John 17, as He prayed about Himself and then about His disciples whom He was about to leave behind in the world.

1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

The prayer is also included in Matthew's gospel. Matthew adds the following expression:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The highlighted phrase is unique to Matthew, not surprising given that this is the gospel of the kingdom. Yet many commentators tell us that this expression is not found in the original manuscripts and has been inserted by some copyist. This brings the two accounts by Matthew and Luke even closer together.

It is fitting that the Lord's prayer should be found in these two gospels. Matthew is the gospel of the kingdom – the word "kingdom" is found 50 times in this gospel. The prayer is found half way through chapters 5 to 7 in which the Lord gives us a description of the kingdom of heaven. Luke on the other hand is the gospel of the dependent man, and He teaches His disciples to pray in the same manner as Himself, looking to God for their daily bread.

Luke, as we have said, is the gospel of the dependent man. Though He is Lord of all, He still needs to pray, and we find the Lord in prayer no less than 11 times in Luke. In verse 1, the Lord is praying, and when He had stopped, one of the disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. They are so impressed by His prayer, that they wish to pray like Him. So often our prayers in public might put others off, either because of their content or maybe because of their length. The disciple adds, "Even as John taught his disciples". There was obviously some contact between the Lord and His disciples, and John and his followers. But why should men need to be taught how to pray? Every Christian would probably acknowledge that it is easier to attend meetings and to read

our Bibles than it is to pray. It is maybe the most difficult part of our Christian life to sustain.

It is ironic that this prayer is often used by men in a repetitive way, when the very thing that the Lord warned His disciples about in Matthew 6 was the use of "vain repetitions". Yet a vain repetition is just what it has become in many circles.

So where would we place the style of this prayer in the overall context of the Bible? Is it a prayer that is more suited to a Jew than it would be for a Christian? Should we be saying this prayer today? To answer this, we have to take account of where this prayer is in our Bible. It is not in the Old Testament but neither is it in the New Testament epistles. It is half way between both. The prayer is addressed to "Our Father". This is a huge advance on the Old Testament where God is known as Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. In the OT, He is referred to as "our Father" in only three verses: twice by Isaiah and once by David:

1Ch 29:10 Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

Isa 63:16 Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

Isa 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

These two men are hardly typical of the nation as a whole. They were men who enjoyed a close intimate fellowship with God, beyond the experience of most Jews. God indeed was the father of the nation, as He Himself says in Hosea 11:

"Out of Egypt have I called My son"

But with the exception of the two men above, no Jew would address God as "Our Father".

The Lord however brings us nearer to God in John chapter 4 when He tells the woman at the well how men would worship God in future. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him". The Lord also speaks to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection of "My Father and your Father". We have entered into a far more intimate relationship with God than before.

It is a simple thought to begin with – our prayer is addressed to the Father. But why did He not teach them to pray to Himself. You will hear many Christians praying to the Lord. Who is correct? There is evidence in the New Testament of prayer to both the Father and the Son. Thus Stephen in Acts 7 prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit". Paul also besought the Lord three times to remove his thorn in the flesh. But these were individual and personal prayers. In Acts chapter 4, when saints were gathered together to pray about the persecution that had come upon them, they prayed to "God". Paul, in the epistle to the Ephesians, prayed first to "God" in chapter 1, then to "the Father" in chapter 3. The Lord also in John's gospel told His disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will do it". In public prayer, then, it would seem that we

pray to the Father and not to the Lord. We pray to the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Where is our Father? – "Which art in heaven". He is above and beyond any father we might have on earth. In Matthew chapter 23, the Lord warns against calling men on earth our "father". Only one is our father, and that is God.

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Though we enjoy a more intimate relationship with the Father than the Jew had before, we are always to bear in mind the true character of God – He is "hallowed" and His name is "Hallowed". "Hallowed" means sanctified or holy. At the end of Hebrews chapter 12, the writer reminds his readers that "Our God is a consuming fire". We are to approach Him with reverence and with godly fear.

So far, this prayer has been an acknowledgement of who God is. He is "our Father". He dwells in heaven. He is "hallowed" as to His essential being. In the first recorded prayer of the church in Acts 4, the believers also first acknowledged God in His omnipotence as creator of all things, then in His omniscience as seen in Psalm number 2. It is a good place to start, before making direct requests to Him in prayer.

We now come to the first of five specific requests in this prayer.

1 "Thy kingdom come"

Is this a prayer request that might come from a Christian in a church today? There are doubtless many lessons that we can take from it, as is the case with each and every scripture, no matter where it is found. But are we looking for the kingdom to come? I would have thought that our first priority would be the coming of the Lord Jesus for His church – what we call the "Rapture". But this was hardly the case when the Lord was still here upon earth. John the Baptist came to raise expectations among the Jews of the coming king and His kingdom. He called upon men to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Had Israel as a nation repented, then the kingdom would surely have been introduced. In Luke 24, the two walking on the road to Emmaus were sad because, as they said to the stranger who joined them, "We trusted it had been He which should have redeemed Israel". Even the disciples in Acts chapter 1, speaking to the Lord now in resurrection, asked Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

We of course long for that day when we know He will come and take His place as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords", but we know that the Rapture must come first. We are looking for Him, not His kingdom.

But will not this request be foremost in the prayer of the persecuted remnant during the Tribulation? Because of the timetable of events in Daniel chapter 9, it will be possible for the Jew to calculate when He will come. He will be able to count seven years from the signing of the covenant between the Beast and Israel. He will be able to count three and a half years from the time that the covenant is broken and the Beast will sit as god in the house of God. The faithful Jew will pray daily, "Thy kingdom come".

What else will he pray for?

2 Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth

The establishing of the kingdom in Israel will see the New Covenant being introduced and accepted by Israel. On hearing from Moses the demands of the first covenant, the Law, the people responded with "all that the Lord hath spoken, we will do". But how soon, they failed.

But God will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. We find its principles laid out for us in Hebrews chapter 8.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

This time the laws of God will be written, not on tables of stone but on the fleshly tables of their hearts. God will put His laws in their minds.

The Gentile nations will also be part of this covenant and this kingdom. It will be a time when the second request of this prayer will be answered.

Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Until that day is brought in, the faithful Jew will pray for it and look forward to a day, when the will of God will be done just as it is now in heaven. In heaven, angels are His messengers and gladly do His bidding. Just think of a day when the will of God will be done on earth, and that for a thousand years.

The next request follows on.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread

The words "day by day" and "daily" seem to be saying the same things, but there is no redundancy here. "Day by day" gives us the sense of "each day" or "daily". The word for "daily" in our AV has the sense of "necessary". The supplicant is to ask each day for the bread that is needful for that day. It reminds us of the manna which God gave on a daily basis to Israel in the wilderness.

Ex 16:18 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating.

Thinking again of a future day, why will this prayer be necessary? Revelation chapter 12 describes the time when Michael and his angels will cast out of heaven the dragon and his angels. The dragon comes down to earth having great wrath. He vents this wrath against Israel.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted

the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

During this time of persecution, the dragon will give his throne and his authority to a man who is described as "the Beast". Men will take the mark of the Beast for no one can buy or sell save he that has the mark of the beast. If the faithful remnant refuse to take the mark, then they will starve. Then the faithful Jew will pray to the Father for his daily bread – just enough for the day ahead.

It is then that we see the relevance of what we call, "The judgment of the living nations", for those who shelter and feed His brethren will be rewarded with a place in the millennial kingdom.

Another request follows in verse 4.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us

The Lord is saying here, "Forgive us our sins because we also forgive those who have sinned against us". It is put more strongly in Matthew chapter 6:

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Forgiveness here is conditional upon us being willing to forgive those who sin against us.

It reminds us of the story told by the Lord in Matthew 18 regarding two debtors. The first owed his master ten thousand talents and his master released him from his debt. But he then went out and met a second servant who owed him one hundred pence. Rather than releasing him from this relatively paltry sum, he took the second man by the throat and cast him into prison. Having himself been released from his huge debt, he did not forgive the small debt owed to him.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

It would appear then from the Lord's prayer, that God's forgiveness is dependent upon us forgiving others. But is not forgiveness in this church age on a different basis altogether? We are called upon to forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake, has forgiven us (Eph 4:32). We are to forgive **because** we have been forgiven. The Jew will be forgiven **if** he forgives others.

In the prayer in Luke 6, the Lord speaks of "sins". In the corresponding prayer of Matthew 6, the Lord speaks of "trespasses". What's the difference? Sin is often seen as a falling short of a mark – a failure to reach the standard set out for us by God. A trespass is seen rather as a going beyond the mark – a transgression of a known law. In the early chapters of Leviticus, God made the distinction in the sin offering and the trespass offering. In the Lord's prayer, the same principle of forgiveness applies to both.

And what is the final request in this prayer?

5 And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil

By "temptation" here, I presume it is used in the sense of trial or tribulation, and not in the sense of a temptation to do something sinful. James says in his epistle:

Jas 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

No man, be he Jew or Christian, would willingly seek to enter into a time of trial. We would therefore pray rather, "Deliver us from evil". "Evil" I suppose would not be moral sin but rather from evil deeds, brought upon us by difficult circumstances.

There now follows from verse 5 to verse 13, two illustrations which would give us encouragement to pray. First of all, we have an imaginary conversation between two friends.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

The friend in the house is reluctant to respond because of the inconvenience of

the hour, yet he responds because of the insistence of his friend outside.

God is not only "our friend" - He will respond for a second reason – if we keep on asking.

The Lord makes the application in verses 9 and 10:

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

What is it that hinders us from getting the answers we seek in prayer? There are several. The most obvious one is that we just don't ask- we fail to put our petitions before God in prayer.

We have not because we ask not.

The Lord knows what we need before we even ask Him, but He wants to hear us asking. Did the Lord not know what was in the heart of Mary as she wept outside the tomb? He asked two questions. "Woman, why weepest thou?" "Whom seekest thou?" He wanted to hear her tell Him, before He gave her her heart's desire.

A second reason is given us in James chapter 1: How often do we ask for things in prayer but we do not really expect God to answer positively? It is James who writes about the double minded man, full of doubts before he even begins to pray.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

The third reason is given us in James chapter 4. Here are men who have asked for the wrong thing and for the wrong motive.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Here are men who are not praying according to the will of God but only to satisfy their own desires. So what is the real way to approach God in prayer? The apostle John has the answer in I John 5:

14 ¶ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

To know His will, we need to know and keep His commandments.

Finally, in our portion in Luke 11, we have the illustration given to us of requests made from a son to a father. How would the father respond to the son's requests?

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

No earthly father would give evil things in response to his son. Luke therefore argues, "How much more shall your heavenly father...?" And what will our Father give to them that ask Him? Not just good things or things that are material, but the Holy Spirit Himself. Does this mean that we need each one of us needs to pray the Father in order to receive the Holy Spirit? This has been the practice amongst many Pentecostal Christians. The gift of the Holy Spirit is said to be accompanied by the ability to speak in tongues.

We believe that the church received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and that we as individuals receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul tells the saints that after that they believed, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It is impossible to be a Christian and not have the Spirit. Paul states this in Romans 8:9.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

So what does our verse in Luke 11 mean? Did believers have the Spirit of God before Pentecost? It would appear from the early chapters of Luke's gospel that this indeed was the case. In chapter 1, we read of the child to be born to Zacharias and Elizabeth, that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb. Gabriel says to Mary that the Holy Spirit would come upon her. We read also of the old man Simeon, that the Holy Spirit was upon him. There are examples too in the Old Testament of the Spirit giving power and revelation to men. In I Peter chapter 1, Peter tells us that the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets when they wrote about the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. David prayed that the Lord would not take the Holy Spirit from him.

But here in Luke 11, we have a new thought. The Father would give the Holy Spirit to them that asked Him. He would come and dwell in them, but it is not like the presence of the Spirit that we have today. Up to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would come upon men and use them to do a particular work. But when the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples about the Spirit, He said that He would be in them and with them for ever. OT saints never had this promise.