

If there was one area in which you could experience Spiritual growth this year, what would you want it to be? How about your prayer-life?

I'd be excited... I would be so excited to see what God was going to do next, if we as a church, were to become a deeply, prayerful church; praying as Jesus taught us; praying **in** The Spirit, for things of The Spirit...

Today, we're continuing our series on the Gospel of Luke, but more specifically, this week is the 2<sup>nd</sup> week that we're spending on prayer.

As a little recap:

One of Jesus' Disciples, asked Him to teach them how to pray. And Jesus responded, by giving them The Lord's Prayer, although in Luke, it's a rather short version of The Lord's Prayer.

And I didn't draw our attention to this last week, but everything in The Lord's Prayer, is about praying for [the necessities of Spiritual Life](#).

It's not about:

- praying for the excesses of life;
- praying for comfort and physical blessings; and
- it's certainly not a prayer, seeking the fulfillment of fleshly desires. ,,

It's a prayer, seeking [the necessities of Spiritual Life](#).

Now, even the title: “The Lord’s Prayer”, probably isn’t a very good name for it. A better name might be, “The Disciples Prayer” – it’s a prayer, that **Disciples** of Jesus pray, because our hearts are **not** set on the things of this world – our hearts are set on our Heavenly Father’s business.

And so, this is what we pray, and we looked at this last week:

**“Father, hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come.**

**<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread,**

**<sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins,**

**for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.**

**And lead us not into temptation.”**

Alright, that is a prayer, that Disciples of Jesus pray, because our hearts are set on the Father’s business. The only bit of that prayer that caters to our physical needs, is that simple request: **Give us each day our daily bread**, it’s about daily sustenance – just give us what we need to survive this day, as we engage in our Father’s Kingdom business.

But, Jesus' lesson on prayer, doesn't end with the Lord's/Disciple's Prayer. The lesson continues. And He has more to teach us on prayer, today.

Righto:

The Lord's Prayer focuses on seeking the **necessities of Spiritual Life**:

- Communion with the Father;
- Worship of God;
- Seeking the coming of God's Kingdom;
- The forgiveness of sins;
- Us forgiving others;
- Provision of our daily needs;
- Seeking to avoid temptation – to live in righteousness...

(those are **the necessities of Spiritual Life**).

And so, we shouldn't be surprised, that as Jesus **continues** to teach us about prayer, it's in the context of this – it's with the understanding that our prayers are focused on **the necessities of Spiritual Life**.

Sadly, most Prayer seminars, and most books on prayer, I've seen advertised, are structured for people who are basically wanting to focus on things of the flesh. You see, there are many folk, who are wanting to learn about prayer, but what they're looking for, is some kind of prayer formula, that will help us to meet our **fleshly** wants and needs:

You know what I'm talking about?: prayers for health; wealth; and a long life – prayers to **prosper** in all manner of physical blessings....

And you know what: if that's the sort of lesson that **you** want to have on prayer, well you might have to ask somebody other than Jesus... Some folk would be sorely disappointed with the teaching that Jesus gives us on prayer...

**But** if you are Spiritually minded, and if you desire to be praying for things of The Father's business, then **wow**, what a word God has for us today...

So, let's get into it.

And as we begin, I want us to go to the **final** verse of today's reading. And the reason for that is because it's pretty-much the key to understanding the stories within this passage...

V13 says;

**13 If you then, who are evil** (BTW is anyone offended by that? It's just acknowledging that we humans are sinful creatures [through-&-through])

**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!"**

How does that one verse, unlock what we're looking at???

Firstly, it's letting us know that these prayers are for things of the Spirit – to use the phrase I've been using: **the necessities of Spiritual Life** ...

And secondly, within today's reading, there are a few different stories, that naturally lead us to compare God to the characters within the story... But they're not comparisons – they are **contrasts**... Do you know the difference? A comparison is saying "This is like". A contrast is saying "This is different". (Are you with me?)

God deals with things differently, to humans... Humans deal with things in this way, but God is different to that...

Alright, so in V13, the contrast is made clear: If we sinful humans, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our **Heavenly Father** give to His children, what is good??? Alright, it's a contrast. (We who are evil; God who is good). And we're going to see contrasts in several of these stories...

The first story, is the story of the Midnight Munchies SOS.

A friend from another town turns up on your doorstep at **midnight**. They've had a long journey; They're tired; They're hungry; ... The right/Godly thing to do, is to be hospitable – to serve them by welcoming them into your home, and giving them a feed and a bed for the night.

The bed? That's not a problem – you'll just give them yours. But you've got no bread left in the cupboard. The day's bread was baked in the morning, and it's since been devoured, and there won't be any more until you can bake it in the morning....

What do you do? Well, how good is that friend of yours, who lives down the street? If you go and knock on his door, you know he's not going to be happy about it. Who is happy to be woken up at midnight, to dole out a bit of bread????

And Jesus asks the question:

**"Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, (not give me 3 loaves – lend me 3 loaves – he's going to get paid back) <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';**

Would your friend say, Go away; Don't bother me; The door's shut; Everyone's asleep; **I cannot get up and give you anything'?**

Would your friend say that? No!!! What will he do?

Jesus **didn't** say "That's what your friend will say". He asked, "Would your friend say that?"

Would he? No.

He's going to get up and give you what you need. Why? Because he's your friend and he loves doing nice things for you? No. Because you had the hide to come and knock on his door at midnight – **that's** why he's going to give you what you need.

Right, so let's make this clear:

1. The request, wasn't for himself – it was so he could serve;
2. It was a request that was going to cost him – "Loan it to me" – he was actually going to pay it back;
3. He was bold enough to ask...

*Me personally, I hate borrowing stuff. I always worry, that if I borrow something from somebody, I'm going to break it. And I don't want to presume upon my friends*

*(although sometimes I do)*

He didn't want to presume upon his friend, because he knew his friend would be cranky.... But he was bold enough – he had the hide, to go and knock on that door at midnight, knowing that his mate **would** get up, and give him what he needed – not because he was a mate, but because he was bold enough to ask – no matter how inconvenient it was....

Now, how does that relate to a lesson on prayer?

Well, for a start, it's a Spiritual prayer. Jesus has just taught us how to pray – our prayer-focus is to be on [the necessities of Spiritual Life](#).... And the example that's given here, is praying for something so that he can serve....

A ministry was there before him, but he didn't have the means to meet that ministry. What did he do? Did he say, "Sorry. Got nothing...." No. He was bold, and went to ask for what he needed (to fulfill that ministry)....

Now, I reckon every time I've heard this passage preached on, it's been presented (along the lines) that he went and knocked on the door, and his friend sent him packing, and so he persisted, and just kept on knocking on the door.

And because he was persistent, and kept knocking, his friend got up and answered, and gave him what he wanted... And the message then gets given (in relation to prayer), if God doesn't give you what you want, just keep asking; and keep asking; and keep asking, and He'll eventually give it to you.....

Jesus didn't say any of that. And some of you are going to have to unlearn what you've been taught in the past.

The man **didn't** keep knocking on the door – he just did it once. And his friend **didn't** get up because he was his friend – he got up because his mate had the hide to knock on the door (in the middle of the night) in the first place....

So, what is it really telling us about prayer? It's a contrast. The friend (who grudgingly granted the request), is nothing like God....

When we come before the Lord in prayer – if we are bold enough to ask, He is quick to respond...

But remember, we're not talking about a prayer for a new car or a flash house – The whole context is about [prayer for the necessities of spiritual life](#). And more specifically, in this case, "Prayer to be equipped for serving".

Jesus said:

<sup>9</sup> **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.**

<sup>10</sup> **For everyone (who? **everyone**) who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.**



And those 3 words are really important when applied to prayer: Ask; Seek; Knock.

- Ask, is what we seek in prayer;
- Seek, is pursuing God and His will;
- Knock, is coming into God's presence and blessing.

Something I've learned (probably initially through the Henry Blackaby bible study series [*Experiencing God – knowing and doing the will of God*]), is that when God calls us to serve Him, the assignment He gives us, will usually be a God-sized assignment... You see, if God calls you to serve Him in a particular way, and you go, "Yeah, I can do that", and if you achieve that, who gets the glory????

But usually, if God calls you to serve Him, you'll quickly realise, "But I can't do that." "I don't have the skills/knowledge/gifts/education – I'm just totally inadequate...." What do we do? Do we say, "No"? No... We pray. And in our prayer, we ask....

Lord,

- You've called me to serve You, and I can't do it.
- Lord, give us the gifts we need;
- Empower us by Your Holy Spirit.

We are bold enough to ask – not because God is going to grudgingly give it to us because we've nagged Him, but because **everyone who asks receives**

When God calls us to serve Him, He is very quick to answer our prayer, to be equipped for that service.

So, when we pray, don't be backwards in coming forwards – **Ask...** But remember, it's not about asking for physical benefits – it's about asking **for the necessities of spiritual life.**

Seek...

Jesus said: **seek, and you will find**

And He said: **the one who seeks finds**

Who finds? **the one who seeks**

There might be somebody here today, or someone listening to this recording, and you're 'kicking the tyres' of Christianity – you're not a Christian (not yet), but for some reason, you're being drawn to Jesus, and you want to know what it's about...

Jesus would say to you today: **seek, and you will find**

In other words, pray. Lord Jesus Christ, show me what it means to be a Christian. Show me Who You are, and show me the way to be saved....

And then, **seek**. Read the Bible. Start off with the New Testament. And if you truly are seeking God and who He is, He **will** reveal Himself to you....

The trouble is, some people expect there to be an audible voice, or an apparition to appear before them, and say "I am Jesus – follow me" .... You know, that's not seeking.

The original Greek word that's used here, means to strive/search to find something....

Do you want to know Jesus? Strive. Search. Search the Scriptures, and accept what you find.

BTW, Ask; Seek; Knock – all 3 of those words, are in the continuous tense.... Don't merely ask God for one thing – we **continue** to ask Him, as needs arise. And don't only say to Jesus, "Show me yourself" (once).... Seek – continually seek....

And our searching doesn't end when one becomes a Christian. As we learn to live, day by day, following the teachings of Jesus, sometimes there's going to be things that are hard to understand; or hard to accept, because the ways of God (and His righteousness), are so very different to the ways of man, and the so-called morality of this world....

So, we seek understanding from Him. We read the Scriptures; We listen to Godly Bible Teachers; We seek the ways of God – not the ways of this world....

We seek, and we keep on seeking..... I don't care how old you are. Don't ever stop seeking.

Knock.

**knock, and it will be opened to you.**

**to the one who knocks it will be opened.**

So, maybe you've been seeking God for a while, but you're not sure if you could ever become a Christian.

- You might feel you're not good enough; or
- You don't come from the right family; or
- There's things in your past, that can never be forgiven....

Jesus says: **knock, and it will be opened to you.**

I can tell you now, if it depended on my past performance, whether I could ever become a Christian, I'd be lost forever.... Every single Christian/Disciple of Jesus, **was** a sinner beyond redemption... Every person in this room, **was lost**.... But we knocked...

Who here, knocked on the door of salvation, and Jesus opened the door, and ushered you in????

Any takers? Has anyone done that? Is anyone ready to do that today???

No good waiting until you think the timing is right.... The time is right now.... Knock, and Jesus will welcome you in....

And knocking, is also a continuous thing – we keep on knocking.... As we walk day by day with our Lord, there's going to be new opportunities:

- New challenges;
- New ways to serve
- New opportunities for the Gospel....

**Knock. Lord, open up the next thing. I am Your slave/servant. Open the next door...**

And in **all** of these things, it's not like God is the friend who's annoyed at us, and only gives us what we ask because we're so impudent....

The Lord is ready and willing to answer our prayers. We've just got to pluck up the courage to ask...

- Do you want to grow spiritually?
- Do you want to be used by Jesus, in ways you've never been used before????

Ask; Seek; Knock.... Be bold. Have confidence. Our Heavenly Father – He's not annoyed when we ask... He's waiting for the call... with His finger poised over the button that says, "YES".

V11

**11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;**

Anyone???? You wouldn't do it, would you.... Why not? Because you only want to give your kids what's good for them.

**12 or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?**

Anyone???? Why not? Same reason. You only want to give your kids what's good for them....

Now, this is where the teaching of Jesus diverges markedly from the prevailing teaching of today, and particularly within the Pentecostal realm....

The message we often hear (and it's well-received by many) is "Jesus wants to bless you, and make you prosper"... He wants you to be lacking nothing:

- plenty of money;
- plenty of things;
- nice house;
- enjoyable holidays;
- a nest-egg of security;
- promotion;
- high-position....

And the message is, ask for these things, and keep on asking for them, and God will give them to you....

That's what gets taught... But the thing is, our heavenly Father only gives us what's good for us... Does God give us wealth? Not usually. God gives us "contentment". Why? Because seeking wealth, is not a good thing. Seeking contentment is...

1 Timothy 6:6-10 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain, <sup>7</sup> for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

What's he talking about? Spiritual necessities: Godliness; Contentment; daily provision...

<sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich (in other words, are you praying for money? Are you praying to be rich? What's the outcome of that?) they fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

What do we pray for? Most often, we will pray for what we desire/love. Are you praying for 'things'/prosperity/physical blessings? That reveals a love of money, and that's not good... Jesus has been teaching us to pray for things of the Spirit.

What are the good things that Jesus wants us to pray for? We've already seen it: We pray **for the necessities of a Spiritual Life**.... And in v13, we come to the **pinnacle** of **the necessities to live a spiritual life**: The Holy Spirit.

If humans, who are sinners, know how to give good gifts to their children, **how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"**

How can we, live a life for God – a spiritual life – a life where we desire the things of our Heavenly Father? How can we mere mortals be in tune with God, and pray for things of the Spirit, instead of those shallow, empty prayers of, “Give me more” .....

The good gift:

Our Heavenly Father will **give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him**

The pinnacle of what we need, **to live a spiritual life**: is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And when a person is truly filled with the Holy Spirit, they won't be seeking things of the flesh... The prayers we pray, will be guided by the Spirit, and they will be Spiritual prayers – not prayers of the flesh (dressed up to look spiritual).

So, when we pray: Don't hold back.

- Ask for whatever you need, to help you live a spiritual life.
- Be bold / dare to ask, because we know our Heavenly Father is keen to answer **every** spiritual prayer.
- And be filled with the Spirit, for He is the Good gift of the Father.

Let's pray:

**“Father, hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come.**

**<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread,**



<sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins,  
for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted  
to us.

And lead us not into temptation."

Amen.