

MEET YOURSELF IN LUKE'S PARABLES

Part 4: The Parable of the Friend at Midnight

Lessons on Prayerfulness (Luke 11:1-13)

INTRO. –Frequent flyers treat pre-flight safety announcements lightly. I've flown many miles and have only seen oxygen masks during pre-flight ritual. If did fall down, I'd grab quickly and use gratefully. We tend to view prayer as a spiritual oxygen mask and only use it in times of emergency. Truthfully, prayer is more like oxygen than an oxygen mask. Honesty forces many to admit:

1. We don't pray as we should – not as often, as specific, as confident.
2. We lack the power and relief prayer could bring – lose power, wisdom, peace, joy and tend to fear & worry.
3. We need help to be more prayerful.

We are not left alone. No one is better able and more willing to teach about prayer than Jesus Himself. Much of our failure to pray is not so much content or methodology as it is misconceptions about God. Let's learn some lessons on prayerfulness in this parable.

CONTEXT: Since 9:51 Jesus is heading to Jerusalem and the cross. See CHART and MAP of Palestine in life of Jesus.

MAIN TRUTH: We should pray shamelessly, persistently, and expectantly.

I. THE **PRIORITY** OF PRAYERFULNESS (11:1-2a)

* S.D. Gordon, "Prayer is not the only thing, but it is the chief thing."

- A. It follows the *EXAMPLE OF THE SON OF GOD* (v.1). This is the only recorded thing disciples asked Jesus to teach them. Note, request is to be taught to pray not *how* to pray. Saw power of prayer (5000), Transfiguration, Lazarus). I think disciples struggled with prayer as we do. Also, prayer is not natural, must be taught. Jesus was a person of prayer (Mk. 1:35). His ministry was bathed in prayer (Lk. 3:21; 5:15-16; 6:12-13; 9:16, 18, 28-29; 23:46). He continues to pray (Heb. 7:25). If both John & Jesus with all their advantages saw priority of prayer, what about us?
- B. It shows *OBEDIENCE TO THE SON OF GOD*. "When". Prayer is essential, not optional. It is not an issue of time and technique, but of obedience.

II. THE **PATTERN** OF PRAYERFULNESS (vv. 2-10) cp. Matt. 6:9-13

- A. Prayer is *TO OUR FATHER* (v. 2). He is more than a friend. Sonship supersedes friendship. After all prayer is more than transfer of information; it is to deepen relationship.
- B. Is about *GOD'S GLORY* (v. 2). We want God's reputation to be honored.
- C. *GOD'S WILL BEING DONE* (v. 2). We desire God's reign to be established. His will takes priority over ours. More about finding His will than telling Him mine.

- D. For *OUR NEEDS* (vv. 3-4). Petition is okay. Be specific. Pray for: provision (physical), forgiveness (spiritual), protection (moral).
- E. (vv. 5-10) *With BOLD PERSISTENCE* – He had confidence in his friend and came boldly at midnight. Describe typical home. . . Pray persistently. Formula in vv. 9-10 (all present tense verbs):

Ask...Receive – make request known ("What I want"). Avoid selfishness Jam. 4:2-3

Seek...Find – time to perfect & get God's perspective ("What do you want?").

Knock...opened – is submitting to His will ("I will").

III. THE **PROMISES** OF PRAYERFULNESS (11:11-13)

- A. God **ANSWERS** prayer (directly, differently, delayed, denied).
- B. HE **RESPONDS** CONSISTENT WITH HIS CHARACTER. Parable is a contrast not comparison. God is not like a Friend at Midnight – If a sleeping friend grudgingly and reluctantly finally responds to a need when he's basically unavailable, how much more will God, our Heavenly Father, who is willing, available, and able to do so when we are His very own child? He never sleeps or slumbers. He is always available and alert to our needs.
- C. "Why don't we take the time to pray?" Too self-reliant. View God as a reluctant neighbor-friend. This is not very motivating toward communication! God wants us to come to Him (11:9-13). He is waiting. He is much more than a neighbor. Ultimately prayer is an admittance of our need for God. When we pray, we are not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness. We have a heavenly Father who loves giving good gifts to His children. So...

MAIN TRUTH: We should pray shamelessly, persistently, and expectantly.

CONC: Prayerfulness may be our greatest need and privilege and yet our greatest neglect. J.R. Mott said, "Prayer is the greatest force we can wield. He has given it to every Christian. What right have we to leave unappropriated and unapplied the greatest force ordained of God for the changing of lives?" So, how do you see prayer: oxygen mask or oxygen? Too many Christians are spiritual asthmatics, wheezing their way through life; gasping for air all due to our own prayerlessness. All the time, our heavenly Father is waiting.