

Luke 11:1-13 “How important is it to have God as our Father? Pentecost 10 July 24, 2016

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Grace and peace are ours from our heavenly Father through Christ so we have the privilege to pray! Amen. God's Word to assure us that He wants us to pray and has promised to hear us as written in Luke 11:1-13. These are Your words heavenly Father. Sanctify us to pray more faithfully by Your truth. Your Word truth!

Dear Christian Friends,

It's been said that it's not what you know but who you know. With the right friends, you can get the job you want. By knowing the right people, you can get tickets to a concert or game that was supposed to be sold out. Some people with unresolved problems have gone to the local TV news, and got quick results. So also, through the right Person, your prayers can make a world of difference for good results.

“How important is it to have God as our Father?”

First, the Father teaches us. He gave us His Word and Jesus to help us learn what to do as His disciples. Once after praying, Jesus was asked to teach people how to pray. About a year earlier Jesus had taught the full version of the Lord's Prayer, in Matthew 6. In this instance, He gave an abbreviated version which still teaches us what we should include in our prayers to be effective and to honor our God.

Jesus begins with the word “*Father.*” That was a very personal way to address God. Jesus had taught of God's love for all people. He had revealed God's love by His miracles of healing and by showing compassion for people. He embodied God's love in predicting that as the Savior He was going to Jerusalem to willingly suffer and to die to save people from their sins. One of the blessings of Jesus' work is that those who believe in Him can approach God as their compassionate, forgiving, and loving Father.

Having God as our Father, we want His name and His Word which reveals who He is to be honored by all. We pray: “*Hallowed be Your name.*” (v. 2) Hallowed means to honor. We honor veterans who have served their country. We honor law enforcement members who risk their lives to do their duty. All the more our God deserves our honor as the one who gives us eternal life instead of eternal judgment, who put the punishment for all our sins on His Son that we receive His blessing by faith! Honor His name & His Word!

“*Your kingdom come.*” (v.2) We pray that God the Father's rule will extend to our hearts and the hearts of all people through the Savior. Our sinful nature and the world try to control us. But we pray that God's Word would help us overcome and win the victory. “*Give us each day our daily bread.*” (v.3) In this short sentence we are praying for every physical need for us and all people. We pray for justice against the terrorists who have harmed innocent lives. We pray for safety and peace for our families. We pray with thanks for food, homes, for good weather and good health and for our country. Wherever there is a need, we can be sure that our heavenly Father has a way to provide.

“*Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.*” (v.4) Knowing how much we daily sin against God in thought, word, and action and against other people and even against ourselves, we daily seek God's forgiveness. Jesus used the word debt for sin. We've been forgiven a huge debt by God, in turn we forgive and do not hold a grudge against people who owe a small debt of sin against us. In the Father's forgiveness, we have power and love to forgive other people. We pray that we will do this.

“*And lead us not into temptation.*” (v.4) It states in James 1:13 that God will never tempt us to sin. But He teaches us to ask for help so we trust He will keep temptations away or that He will help us overcome them so that we do not lose our faith. These are the important things our heavenly Father teaches.

Second, we can pray to our Father with persistence. Jesus told the story of a neighbor who got unexpected company in the middle of the night and was out of food. No stores were open, so he went to his friend next door and woke him up asking to borrow three small loaves of bread for his guest to eat. The neighbor rightly answered that it was too late to give him bread. His family was asleep and they shouldn't be disturbed. But, the man kept calling out and knocking on the door until the friend got out of bed and gave the man all he needed just to get him to be quiet. (v.5-8)

Using this illustration of the man at the door, Jesus taught the lesson that we should keep coming to our heavenly Father and not give up. He said *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”* (v.9-10) There are so many things which we need and for which we can pray! Keep asking! Keep seeking! Keep knocking, just like the man in the story! Bring these things to God.

Third, we can be bold because God is our gracious Father! Jesus gave another illustration. *“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”* (v.11-13) Even sinful fathers give good gifts to the children they love. When we pray, Jesus assures us that God's answer will neither be useless or harmful like giving a snake or scorpion. God will answer in love. He proved that by sending His Son. The Bible states, *“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”* (Romans 8:31-32) Psalm 103 states, *“As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust... the wind blows over it and it is gone.... But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him and his righteousness with their children's children.”* (v. 13-17)

God gave us His Word to instill confidence so that we boldly pray to Him. Think of Jesus' story again. The man who needed food for a guest asked a human friend. We are calling on God who is our loving heavenly Father! The friend could only provide bread. God provides full forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Jesus, and He also promises to care for our daily needs. The neighbor selfishly made excuses and only grudgingly came to the door. God is pure love who always watches over us, never sleeps, accepts our prayers through Jesus, and has promised to answer them in the best way possible.

Jesus promised that Christians who pray to the Father will receive the Holy Spirit and His gifts. From Him we know the truth. As we hear His Word, He gives us patience, love, joy, peace, and boldness to speak to the Father in prayer. Sometimes God waits to give us something until we pray. He wants us to realize His goodness through His answer to us and to appreciate His blessings to us.

So, is it what you know or who you know? The answer is both! What we know about who God is as our loving Father reminds us: Don't forget to pray. There are so many problems in our country, so many concerns among family and friends, why carry those burdens alone when we could put them in God's caring hands? *“Ask, and it will be given to you (as a gift of God's grace); seek and you will find* (understanding through God's Word); *knock, and it will be opened to you* (because Jesus opened the door to God forever!) Our heavenly Father will always hear us. He gave His Son as proof of His commitment to us. Today is another day for us to pray! What a privilege it is to call on a loving God, ready and willing to answer! Amen.