

**SERMON NOTES**  
**Luke 11:1-13**  
**“Ask and You Will Receive”**

**Intro:**

Darlene Lord: My six-year-old nephew, David, was recently the ringbearer at a wedding. Following the rehearsal the night before the wedding, the minister asked if anyone had any questions.

David raised his hand: *Yes, I have a question. Do you know the answer to ten times ten?*

- If you had the opportunity to spend three years with Jesus – *living with him // walking all over Galilee and Judah with him // listening to him teach // watching him perform miracles* – and if you could ask Jesus one question – make one request – learn from him one thing – *what would you want to know?*
- How to work miracles? How to study or teach the Bible? How to heal or counsel or preach?
- The Gospels record one time – and to my knowledge, only one time – when the disciples asked Jesus: *“Lord, teach us to \_\_\_\_\_”*
- Teach us to – what? What did they want to know?
- ***Lord, teach us to pray***
- *Why pray? Why “teach us to pray”?*
- Of all the things Jesus knew – and knew how to do – that he could teach them – why was their request: *Lord, teach us to pray ??*
- Apparently in observing Jesus’ life and ministry – they came to understand that the key to everything else Jesus did was his prayer connection with the Father
- Jesus himself explained his ministry this way:

**John 5:19 - 20 (NIV)** <sup>19</sup>Jesus gave them this answer: **“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.”**

- *The Son of God lived as a man of prayer – a man who depended upon his Father in heaven for guidance, direction, provision and power to carry out his ministry*

**Mark 1:35 (NIV)** <sup>35</sup>Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

**Luke 5:16 (NIV)** <sup>16</sup>But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

**Luke 6:12 (NIV)** <sup>12</sup>One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

- *This was the source of Jesus’ spiritual vitality and energy // this was the source of Jesus’ spiritual insight and understanding // this was the source of Jesus’ spiritual passion and power // this was the source of Jesus’ patience and kindness and compassion // this was the source of Jesus’ peace and calm and confidence in the midst of stress*
- As the disciples observed him and began to connect the dots between Jesus’ life and ministry and Jesus’ prayer life – one day after Jesus had finished praying, they asked him: *Lord, teach us to pray*
- What follows in Luke 11 is Jesus’ major teaching on prayer
- *How does Jesus teach us to pray?*

## I. ADDRESSING GOD AS FATHER

- Jesus said to them, “*When you pray, say ‘Father’*”
- Or in Matthew’s version of the Lord’s Prayer: *Our Father in heaven*
- **We pray to God as a child talks to his or her father**
- *This is the starting-point of prayer -- indeed – **this is the point of prayer – to develop the love relationship between a child of God and the heavenly Father***
- *Our prayer life is built on the foundation of living as a child of God and relating to God as our loving heavenly Father*
- The most important determining factor in the quality of your prayer life is not the words you use in prayer – **the most important determining factor in the quality of your prayer life is the quality of your love relationship with your heavenly Father**
- *If you have a healthy view of yourself as a child of God and a healthy view of God as your heavenly Father – and if you are abiding consistently in that Father-son or Father-daughter love relationship – then you will have a rich and satisfying prayer life*
- But this is precisely where many of us stumble – isn’t it?
- We have a distorted view of God as our heavenly Father – an unhealthy view that has been marred and corrupted by an unhealthy relationship with our earthly father
- *We bring into our relationship with God all of the unhealed father-wounds of our painful experiences with our earthly father*
- For many of us, our attitude toward God as our heavenly Father is tainted by fear or anger or resentment or mistrust or rebellion or disappointment or timidity or insecurity arising from our relationship with our earthly father
- Just as intimacy with our earthly father was either unavailable or inappropriate or undesirable or impossible – so also we do not know how to get close to God as

our heavenly Father – *and quite frankly – the very concept of intimacy with God in prayer is a little intimidating and uncomfortable for many of us*

- We are far more comfortable working and serving and giving and attending committee meetings than we are praying
- We respect God // we worship God // we seek to serve and obey God // we admire Him from a distance – *but we are hesitant and uncertain and timid and uncomfortable with the whole concept of drawing near to God in intimate prayer*
- **Prayer is relational -- your prayer life will only be as satisfying as the quality of your love relationship with God as your heavenly Father**
- ***Our Father ... -- in Christ you are bound to God by the closest and tenderest of all relationships – as beloved children of the heavenly Father***
- *That bond gives you claim to His love // His power // His blessing // His wisdom // His provision // His protection // His resources – not because you are worthy in your own merits – but simply because you are a child of God by virtue of your acceptance of Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord*
- God loves you not because you are clever or good or successful – *but because He is your Father and you are His child through faith in Jesus Christ*
- ***God doesn't love you because Jesus died for your sins – Jesus died for your sins because God loved you when you were still a sinner***
- **The Cross of Christ does not make God love you – the Cross of Christ is the outcome of God's love for you**
- **Your prayer life will be enriched greatly as you learn to live all of life in the Father's presence and love and care and tenderness and provision**

## II. **ALIGNING OURSELVES TO GOD'S PURPOSES**

- *There is a place for prayer simply as conversation and relationship-building and venting our feelings and concerns to God*
- But there is also a place for prayer as petition and intercession – as asking in order to receive an answer or a gift or a blessing from God
- **If you want your prayers to be effective in obtaining God's blessings – then the first step is to align yourself with God's purposes**
- That's what Jesus teaches in the beginning of the Lord's Prayer:
- *Our Father in heaven: hallowed be your name // your kingdom come // your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*
- We are by nature self-centered and preoccupied with our own selfish ambitions and interests and desires
- *Our minds and hearts are not naturally oriented toward God's purposes – they need to be trained*

**Colossians 3:1 - 2 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

- *In order to be effective in prayer – we need a mindset adjustment – we need to focus our mind and heart on God’s agenda // God’s interests // God’s purposes*
- For the purpose of prayer is NOT to promote a worldly or selfish agenda
- ***Rather, prayer is an instrument for advancing God’s Honor // God’s Kingdom // God’s Will // God’s Purposes***
- **This is the first function of prayer – to pray for ourselves and for one another that we would pursue the glory of God above all else – for that is where our greatest joy in life is found – in pursuing the glory of God**
- *So we pray that we would reverence and cherish the name and honor of God above all things*
- ***We pray that God’s saving, purifying, liberating rule would hold sway in our lives and families and church – we pray that the reign of Jesus Christ would spread throughout the nations of the earth – we pray for the final consummation of God’s Kingdom and Christ’s reign at His second coming***
- *We pray that we would do the will of God on earth the way the angels do the will of God in heaven – without hesitation – with joy and passion and zeal and single-minded devotion and whole-hearted commitment*
- ***We pray that our lives would be brought into glad surrender and submission under the Lordship of Jesus Christ***
- *We pray that God’s Kingdom purposes would be accomplished in and through us*
- This is why we read the Bible – so that we will understand what God’s Kingdom purposes are – so that we will understand how to do His will in our daily lives
- This is why Jesus teaches:

**John 15:7 - 8 (NIV)** <sup>7</sup>If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. <sup>8</sup>This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- *As we pursue the glory of God – and as we abide in Christ and His words abide in us – then our praying will be informed by and governed by our knowledge of God’s will and God’s kingdom purposes – and then we can ask whatever we wish, and it will be given to us -- because our praying will be aligned with God’s will*
- **If you want to experience answers to prayer – the first step is to seek first God’s Kingdom and His purposes**
- *There is no conflict between pursuing the glory of God and pursuing your own highest joy and satisfaction in life – in fact, it is by pursuing the glory of God*

*and seeking first the Kingdom of God and obeying the will of God that we experience fullness of joy*

### III. DEPENDING ON THE FATHER FOR ALL OUR NEEDS

- Once we have aligned ourselves with God's purposes and God's will and God's agenda – then we are encouraged to present to God all our needs:
- ***Give us each day our daily bread // forgive us our sins as we forgive everyone who sins against us // and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one***
- *Our Father in heaven wants us to look to Him to provide everything we need to live a life of joyful obedience to His will*
- Everything we need for our physical well-being // everything we need to provide for our families // everything we need for our spiritual well-being and for healthy relationships in life // everything we need to overcome sin and to be victorious in spiritual warfare – *we look to our Father in heaven for all of this*
- As a child depends on her parents to provide all her basic needs – *so we express in prayer our dependence on our heavenly Father for all our material & spiritual needs*
- This is where many of us stumble – especially men
- *We think that as husbands and fathers – we are the providers for our families – that we must be the strong and independent ones who provide everything needed by our own hard work and skill*
- **We get so consumed with our role as husbands and fathers that we forget to be sons – sons of our heavenly Father**

Whereas we are to be dependent upon our earthly parents for only 18-22 years or so – **we are to be dependent upon our heavenly Father our whole lives**

- *And not just in crisis or emergency or unusual hardship situations – but each and every day for that day's needs*
- ***Give us each day our daily bread***
- **And just as we need to eat every day – so also we need forgiveness every day**
- *And Jesus closely connects giving and receiving forgiveness*
- ***We cannot experience the deep cleansing of God's mercy and forgiveness through the blood of Christ while our hearts are hardened in bitterness against someone who has wronged or offended us***
- And although we are deeply grateful for such ready access to God's forgiving mercy in Jesus Christ – our longing is for holiness and victory over sin
- *Thus, having asked for forgiveness for our failures – we also ask for God's strength to resist temptation and stand firm against the Tempter and Deceiver*
- ***We look to our Father for spiritual protection as well as material provision – for cleansing for our souls as well as food for our bellies***

- And notice that each of these requests in the Lord's Prayer is made in the first person plural – *Our Father: give US our daily bread // forgive US our sins // lead US not into temptation // deliver US from evil*
- **None of us is an only child in the family of God**
- We need each other in the family of God – *we are not called to fight our own battles alone* – we are called to pray for one another and with one another and to exercise our gifts to help and serve and build up one another
- The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray as children of God – and the Lord's Prayer teaches us to prayer as members of a family rather than as isolated individuals

#### IV. PRAYING WITH BOLDNESS & PERSISTENCE

**Luke 11:5 - 8 (NIV)** <sup>5</sup>Then he said to them, “**Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ‘because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’** <sup>7</sup>“**Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’** <sup>8</sup>**I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.”**

- *This is a startling teaching of Jesus on prayer*
- Why would Jesus even think to compare prayer to badgering a crabby neighbor for bread in the middle of the night?
- *And is Jesus implying here that when we approach God in prayer that His characteristic response is: **Don’t bother me! ??***
- In addition to not understanding and trusting fully the heavenly Father’s love for us – what is one of the major hindrances to prayer that many of us face?
- *A fatalistic attitude toward life*
- As Christians, we spiritualize that fatalistic attitude with pious talk about the sovereignty of God and resignation to the will of God
- *But at the core, it is a fatalistic outlook on life*
- Many people believe that life’s events and circumstances are fixed in advance by fate – or God’s sovereign will -- in such a way that we are powerless to change things – *that God’s going to do what God’s going to do, and our prayers certainly aren’t going to change His mind or His will*
- And so we timidly approach this distant, unapproachable Sovereign Lord with our feeble requests – being careful to add to all our requests: *if it be Thy will* – and then if the request is not immediately granted, we assume: *it must not be God’s will* – **and then we give up**
- And we think in doing so that we are honoring God by resigning ourselves to accepting His will

- *It was to counter that kind of wrong thinking that Jesus told this story – and also the parable of the unjust judge in Luke 18*
- **Our heavenly Father wants to engage us in a real, authentic, give-and-take relationship – and prayer is a major part of that relationship – and so He is inviting us to be bold and persistent in our praying – especially when we are praying for others as this man was in begging for bread for his guest**
- If your furnace went out in the middle of the night during a winter storm – where would you turn for help?
- *You would turn to a friend who would have some knowledge or experience or tools that could help with the job*
- You likely wouldn't call someone in the middle of the night unless you knew them pretty well and had confidence in both their ability and willingness to help
- *A certain closeness and level of friendship would be required to bother someone in the middle of the night*
- Recently Beth and I needed to borrow a truck in order to transport a bed and mattress
- *Lots of people in Park View own trucks – but I wouldn't feel free asking just anyone*
- I ended up asking a church member who lives in Park View and has a truck – someone whom I know to be a generous and helpful person
- *He graciously assured me it was no bother*
- **Listen carefully: God wants to be bothered with our needs**
- *He desires the kind of real relationship with Him so that we will bother Him with our needs any time of the day or night*
- And He doesn't want us to be so timid that we ask only once and then give up
- **He wants us to be both bold and persistent**
- *What would you think about a son who was afraid to ask his own father for help when he needed it? Who didn't want to bother his own dad? Who turned to a distant cousin for help instead of his own dad?*
- You would assume that there must be a problem in the relationship – that father and son must not be very close – or that the son must not have much confidence in the father's willingness to help
- *If a father-son relationship is healthy and close and solid – the son will feel free to ask the father for help*
- **Our heavenly Father wants that kind of relationship with us**
- *He invites you to go ahead and bother Him – and to keep on bothering Him until you have obtained what you need*
- *Don't be a fatalist – don't be timid – don't give up*
- ***Be bold and persistent in your praying – as befits a real relationship with a real heavenly Father who loves you deeply***

## V. PRAYING WITH CONFIDENCE & FAITH

- What is the chief lesson about prayer that Jesus repeats over and over again to make sure we get the point?

**Luke 11:9 - 10 (NIV) <sup>9</sup>“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.**

**John 14:13 (NIV) <sup>13</sup>And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.**

**John 16:24 (NIV) <sup>24</sup>Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

**Matthew 21:22 (NIV) <sup>22</sup>If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”**

**Mark 11:24 (NIV) <sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.**

- *Ask – and you will receive*
- *Ask with confidence and faith – and you will receive*
- Everyone who prays knows the experience of unanswered prayer
- ***But the primary thrust of Jesus’ teaching on prayer is to encourage us to ask by assuring us that God will answer***
- *Ask and you will receive – that is the rule of the Kingdom – that is the norm to be expected*
- Yet note also that Jesus uses the present tense which indicates continuous or repeated action
- *Keep on asking and it will be given to you // keep on seeking and you will find // keep on knocking and the door will be opened*
- Prayer is not depositing a coin in a vending machine and pressing a button—**prayer is engaging our heavenly Father in dialogue about His purposes and our needs**
- *God wants us to keep coming back to Him with our requests*
- **He provides our daily needs so that we keep coming back to Him day by day to seek His provision**
- *We need financial help again and again // we need forgiveness again and again // we need spiritual strength and guidance and protection again and again*

- **So we keep on asking and we keep on receiving – and our trust in God as our heavenly Father grows**
- Often we start out asking for a particular gift or blessing or provision or help with a particular situation
- *We ask for the gift without seeking the Giver*
- **So Jesus teaches us not only to ask – but also to seek – seek after God until we find Him and get connected to Him**
- *And then knock – seeking admission into intimate fellowship with God until we feel that we are at home in our Father’s presence*
- *Jesus devotes the majority of his teaching on prayer to assuring us that if we ask in confidence and faith then we will receive what we ask for*
- **With this emphasis He counters one of the chief hindrances to prayer – namely, our doubts that our prayers will do any good**
- *How often do we pray without really expecting an answer?*
- **Jesus teaches us to pray in faith – and then anticipate a response – look for what God will do in answer to your prayer**
- *“Ask, and it shall be given to you” – that is the dominant emphasis of Jesus in his teaching on prayer*
- **If we ask properly – we expect an answer – and the answer is the evidence that we have asked properly**
- *Are we approaching God as a child to a loving Father?*
- *Are we aligning ourselves with God’s purposes?*
- *Are we praying with boldness & persistence?*
- *Are we praying with confidence & faith?*
- ***Then we should expect that God will give us what we have requested***
- If no answer comes, we are not to sit down in resignation and disappointment and resentment and suppose that it is not God’s will to give an answer
- *Maybe there is something in the prayer that needs to be changed*
- *Maybe we need the Spirit’s guidance to pray more in line with God’s purposes*
- *Maybe there is something that needs to be changed in us*
- *Maybe we need to ask God to search us and bring to light something that He wants to deal with for the sake of our growth in Christ-likeness*
- But let us not be content to just say: *“Oh well, it must not be God’s will”* and then give up and walk away
- *Let us keep on asking // keep on seeking // keep on knocking – until we receive what we have requested -- or until God works in us to shape the desires of our heart and change what we are asking*
- Nothing is learned by asking once or twice and then giving up
- *When we keep on asking and keep on seeking – God has the opportunity to teach us or correct us or change us or test us or purify us or produce mature faith in us*

**The dominant teaching of Scripture on prayer is that God's way of accomplishing His will on earth is largely through our asking in prayer and through His granting the requests of His children**

- *Ask and you will receive* is at the heart of Jesus' teaching on prayer – therefore, when you pray – pray with confidence and faith – expecting to receive what you have asked for

## **VI. ASKING FOR GOD'S HIGHEST GIFTS**

**Matthew 7:11 (NIV) <sup>11</sup>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 good gifts to those who ask him!**

**Luke 11:13 (NIV) <sup>13</sup>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!"**

- *Of all of the good gifts that our Father longs to give His children – according to Jesus, what is the best and highest gift that our heavenly Father longs to give us?*
- **The Holy Spirit**
- Much of our praying is dictated by circumstances
- *Our prayers are dominated by the need of the moment in the present circumstances – and we should pray for those things*
- **But let us not neglect to ask our Father for His best and highest gifts for ourselves, for our families and for our church**
- *Let our prayer life be dominated not by our circumstances but by seeking the best that God has to offer – namely, the gift of His Own Spirit working within us*
- **What is included in the gift of the Holy Spirit?**
- *It is the indwelling Holy Spirit who manifests the life of Jesus Christ in us // who produces the character qualities of Jesus Christ in us // who pours out into our hearts the love of the Father // who assures us that we are God's beloved children // who convicts us of our sins so that we can walk in the light in close fellowship with God // who gives us the desire and power to obey the will of God // who gives us spiritual understanding of spiritual truths and who enlightens our minds and hearts to understand the Word of God // who strengthens us with divine power in our inner beings // who gives us victory over the works of our flesh*
- It is the Holy Spirit who is our Counselor, Comforter, Encourager, Guide, our Help and our Strength
- *It is the Holy Spirit who leads us into truth and into a deeper experience of the living Christ*
- It is the Holy Spirit who empowers our life and witness and service for Jesus Christ

- *It is the Holy Spirit who gives us spiritual gifts to enable us to help others in the body of Christ to grow into spiritual maturity*
- It is the Holy Spirit who brings together a diversity of people with a diversity of gifts to form one body functioning in harmony and unity
- *It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to lay hold of the riches of God's grace in Jesus Christ*
- **The Holy Spirit is the spiritual electricity that makes everything else work in the life and ministry of the church**
- This is how Paul prayed:

**Ephesians 3:16 - 17 (NIV)** <sup>16</sup>I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

**Colossians 1:9-11** <sup>9</sup>So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom.

<sup>10</sup>Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better.

<sup>11</sup>We also pray that you will be strengthened with his glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need. May you be filled with joy,

- *How does a prayer like that get answered?*
- **By the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives**
- In addition to praying for circumstantial needs of one another – we need to pray regularly together as a church body for the ministry and activity of the Holy Spirit to be released and strengthened among us so that our ministries will bear fruit for God's Kingdom
- ***One thing we can be sure of – the Father desires to have us filled with His Spirit – and He delights in giving Him to us whenever we ask***
- *The more we seek after God and all His fullness // the more we align ourselves with God's ways and God's purposes – the more our prayer requests for ourselves and others will be connected to the gift of the Holy Spirit – and the more we will experience the reality of Jesus' promise: Ask and you will receive*
- Prayer
- Hymn # 435 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"