

The Gospel According to Luke- Part 4

TEACH US TO PRAY

PART 4

The Model for Petition

READ LUKE 11:1-4

INTRODUCTION

When we pray, we often sit down with a list of things that we need from God and start sharing that list with Him so that He can get to work on our problems. We don't do it because we are rude or because we think that God is our "genie in a bottle" (though, many have certainly accused Christians of that in the past and there is some credence to it in various theological beliefs). We do it because God is relational and we have been taught, correctly, that God desires a close relationship with us and that He desires to take care of us. This is not wrong but, when we come to the Father with our prayers and supplications we need to remember that He desires more relationship with us than just "doing stuff" for us. He desires to be glorified.

When the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gives them a model to follow that brings us closer to the Father as well as trains us to glorify Him above all others. This prayer example is not one that is overtly spiritual. Neither is it one that we are to say word for word in a trance in hopes to unlock some sort of holy gift box. Jesus shows us that we are to place proper priorities in our dealings with God in order for prayer to do what it has always been intended to do: realign my heart with God's will. His will is not changed by my prayers. My heart is rerouted into correct positioning so that I can place every need in God's hands and be free to glorify Him in any and all situations.

Galatians 2:20 discusses the idea that we are to die to ourselves and live towards Christ. This is certainly not an easy concept but it is one that allows for us to give God the glory and not worry so much about our own desires. It is not to say that our desires are not important to God and that we should not make them known to Him but that we should not place the most emphasis on getting something out of our relationship with God and focus more on what we are to be doing which is living a sacrificial life for His glory. (Romans 12:1) Jesus is able to show us that God is our Father, He provides for our daily needs, we are to submit to His will and that He forgives us for the sins that we have committed against Him all in one short prayer. This shows us that we can have relationship with Him and not be so worried about what we want but what His desire for us is.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read through verses 2-4 again. What do you see that is easy to pass over when we don't slow down and think about this prayer example? How can we better model our prayers after this one that Jesus gives? Should we just repeat this prayer in our own lives instead of praying different prayers? Why or why not?
2. Do you find that in your own prayer life you tend to list needs instead of realign your heart to God's will? Why do you think it is easy to be more concerned with our needs than with God's glory?
3. Do you think there is a reason Jesus kept this example short? What purpose may He have had in doing so? What is the danger in using this prayer as a "key" to unlocking gifts from God?
4. Read Galatians 2:20. What does it mean to be crucified with Christ? Why is that important to remember in our prayer lives? What benefit does it have in the way we live our daily life?
5. Read Romans 12:1-2. How do these verses relate to Galatians 2:20 and Luke 11:2-4? What do they show us needs to be the primary concern in our life? Why is this sacrificial lifestyle so important to God?

WRAP UP

Prayer is something that many get intimidated by. We shy away because of speaking in public or, we don't feel connected to God or, whatever excuse we can think of. God is always waiting to spend more time with us. We can look to this example of prayer and grow in our understanding of what it means to have a deep relationship with the God of the universe by simply using it as a model to shape how we interact with Him. We express His glory and desire for Him to change us and in doing so we see that He is faithful to bless us with so many gifts that we then can praise Him more for. This is the design for us to grow closer to Him.