

Our Generous Father

Luke 11:1-13

How to get something from someone

How do you get a bone from a dog?

How do we get God to answer our prayers?

Luke

Luke's big purpose

That we would live by the certainty that Jesus is the Son of God who lived a perfect life, died for us, and rose to life again to rule over all creation through His work in the church

The "Travel Narrative" in Luke (9:51-19:27)

An advanced class in being a disciple (follower) of Jesus

They had learned: Jesus is God's Messiah, the One who is God and will bring God's Kingdom to humanity

They hadn't yet learned: how to live it out

"sit at the feet of Jesus"=let Jesus set the agenda

Luke 11:1-13

Luke 11:1-4:

Teaching on prayer came when they asked

Shorter than what is recorded in Matthew

The specific words aren't the point

Amazing: we are to address God the Father the same way Jesus did!

A prayer for genuine children of God in Christ

First: focus on God

His glory, reign, and rule: incrementally and completely

Requests only make sense that fit this focus

Second: humble requests for help

Trust is needed every day!

Ongoing need to experience forgiveness, and give it

Recognizes our weakness toward sin: "Protect us from and in situations where sin is more likely"

Luke 11:5-8

Context of required village hospitality

"Suppose" is actually a question: "Can you imagine someone refusing this request?"

A possible modern parallel:

Imagine your house is on fire and the fire department can't come

You go to your neighbor asking to use their garden hose and water

Would they say: "We're all in bed, and if we let you use the hose, it will wake up our kids"??

Even a lazy neighbor, who is not your friend, at an inconvenient time, would do what you ask!

How much more will a good and generous God who is your Father!

Luke 11:9-10: The point: Ask God for what you need!!!

3 equivalent statements: emphasis, Repeated!

This is how God designed the world

We tend not to find things when we aren't looking

But that isn't an arbitrary part of the world...

It is because God is a God who gives to people who are seeking what they need in and from Him

Divine passives: God gives, reveals, and opens

Of course, God isn't a "vending machine" giving whatever we happen to ask for

The point of this teaching is God's eagerness to give to people who ask

Luke 11:11-13: Even sinful fathers give children good things, especially when they ask

"How much more" will God!

The best possible gift: the Holy Spirit

We often take the Holy Spirit for granted

They expected that only the greatest people can hope to have the Holy Spirit of the living God in them

Every one who trusts in Jesus as Savior receives the Spirit of God forever

Yet “being filled with the Spirit” (experiencing His fruit and power) is a special gift of God we are to ask for and expect to receive generously

“Father” raises different emotions & ideas

Every human father is **made in the image of God** and is **infected and affected by sin**

How we think about our fathers (absent, loving, harsh, gentle, oppressive, supportive, impossible to please, ...) can have a huge impact on how we think about God

Jesus said: God is our perfect heavenly Father

To know God the Father, Jesus needs to show us

Here: He is generous and is eager to give good gifts to His children who ask

The Big Idea

God is incredibly good and generous and eager to give the best gifts, especially the Holy Spirit, to every one of His children who simply, humbly, and boldly ask

Getting things from idols and other “gods”

Give them what they want so they give you what you want

They don’t care about you, just what you give them

They can get sleepy or distracted so you have to get their attention

They might resist, so you have to wear them down by repeated asking

If you ask poorly, they might ignore you or even attack you

Like getting something from a dog...

Jesus’ surprising response to this request

Disciples’ request: “Lord, teach us to pray”

Jesus’ response:

Pray simply, humbly, and boldly

Because...

God is good and generous and eager to give the best gifts to every one of His children who ask

Prayer expresses our theology

What do our prayers reveal about our beliefs about God?

Application

Pray. Simply. Humbly. Boldly

Foundation: trust in the generous goodness of God

No need for tricks or special techniques

No need for manipulation or promises

No need to keep asking until He gets tired of our asking

No special power in getting many people to pray for us

No need for long prayers or religious words

Ask / Seek / Knock: pursue what you need in and from God

For ordinary things (like daily bread)

For seemingly impossible things (like hope, new life, healing, ...)

Keep praying as long as the need is there

Not to wear Him down

But because we need to trust Him as long as the need is there

Be willing to accept an upgrade (that may not feel like one)

Joseph (in Genesis)

His good actions repeatedly got punished, and he lived as a prisoner for 13 years

Others harmed him, yet eventually he saw: "God meant it for good"

Paul (in 2 Corinthians 12)

Begged God to remove a "thorn" that brought suffering

God gave a better gift: God's strength in Paul's weakness

The best upgrade: God freely gives the Holy Spirit when we ask

The Holy Spirit

So easy to overlook or ignore this mind boggling gift!

He is THE source of power for life and ministry Luke 4:1; Acts 1:8

He helps us in our weakness Romans 8:26

He prays for us when we don't know how Romans 8:26

He gives powerful gifts for ministry 1 Corinthians 12:11

He is the source of the greatest gifts Galatians 5:22-25

love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control

The Fruit of the Spirit or the riches of this age

Proverbs 15:16-17; 17:1

So often we ask for external conditions rather than internal blessing

Without internal blessing (the Spirit), external conditions are empty

When we aren't getting or experiencing the thing we seek

Trust that God is giving a greater gift

This is not a simple thing

Yet it is a real part of life

Sitting at the feet of Jesus, we trust His plan over ours

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

We should "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" Romans 15:13

Live according to what we are asking God to do

Have a forgiving heart

We cannot simultaneously seek forgiveness and fail to give it

A repentant heart cannot at the same time hold claim against others

Literally "we are forgiving all the ones who owe us something"

Be generous to others

Be seeking in Christ the thing we are asking for in Christ

Like "daily bread"

Sitting at the feet of Jesus is not passivity

It is both submission and trust, in head, heart, and hands

Conclusion

What is something you need from God today?

What do you believe about God related to your request?

Seek what you need in and from Him, knowing that

He is eager to give the best gifts to His children who ask

And then watch for His work, and give Him praise!

Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. In what ways do you find yourself treating God like an idol?
2. "Prayer expresses our theology": What do our prayers reveal about our beliefs about God?
3. In what ways might the gift of the Holy Spirit sometimes seem like a disappointment to us? What is a better way to understand the gift of the Spirit?
4. What does it look like for you to simply, humbly, and boldly come to God in prayer?