

## **“The Ultimate Gift”** (Luke 11:1–13, Acts 2:1–4) (9.19.21)

Luke 11:1–13 (NIV84) *Jesus’ Teaching on Prayer*

**11** One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

<sup>2</sup> He said to them, “When you pray, say:

“‘Father,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come.

<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

And lead us not into temptation.’ ”

<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,<sup>6</sup> 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.

<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.

<sup>11</sup>“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?<sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?<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!”**

Acts 2:1–4 (NIV84) *The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost*

**2** When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.<sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.<sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.<sup>4</sup> All of

them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

## **The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“The Ultimate Gift”**

INTRODUCTION:

C.I. Scofield said, There is a tremendous contrast between praying and saying prayers.

He also pointed out a dramatically different perspective than what most commentators, preachers, and Christians assume about the first verse of this 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke. After being with Jesus for sometime, the disciples could not miss that praying was integral to who Jesus was. He often separated himself and prayed intently. They did not interrupt Him, but waited respectfully for Him to finish.

One of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” Most of us assume they are asking “how to pray;” but nearly all the English translations only say, “teach us **TO** pray.” Scofield argues that the real request might be paraphrased like this: **“Lord, teach us to be men of prayer like you.”**

Certainly, there are elements of “how” given here. But, Scofield’s argument makes sense because praying was fundamental to the Jewish faith. They would have been hearing prayers in their homes and at the synagogue on a regular basis. Yes, saying your rote prayers and earnest heart rendering prayer are quite different.

BODY:

Jesus does give them a model of prayer. The longer version is given in Matthew chapter 6 and taken with today’s verses, we have what is commonly called the Lord’s Prayer. We have examined it in previous sermons so we will not do it now. Although I will remind you of the trap we often fall into: automatically reciting the words, but not really thinking, feeling or praying the words.

Next, Jesus tells a parable to elaborate on the nature of true prayer. As you are going to your friend on behalf of another friend, you are interceding for them. Remember that Jesus taught that if we pray in His name, our prayers will be answered. And, in the Gospel of John, Jesus tells His disciples that He calls them friends. On behalf of others, we are to go to our Friend, Jesus, for help.

God the Father is not like the reluctant friend here, but this example gives light by contrast. Jesus is encouraging boldness in our prayers. Other translations say persistence, impudence, or importunity instead of boldness. A less noticed detail is that we can go to God anytime of the day or night with our prayers.

Jesus then expands the idea of boldness and persistence. Ask, seek, knock. He says the same thing two different ways to emphasize the idea. Ask, seek, knock; ask, seek, knock; and the door will be opened. Really, the door will be opened. There seems to be embedded in this explanation that this is a process. Can you see the earnestness in this process?

By way of another comparison, Jesus explains why we should be confident that our heavenly Father will answer our prayers. Human fathers, with all their faults and sins, still try to give good gifts to their children. Our heavenly Father, in all His goodness and power, will exceed your expectations. In fact, God the Father will give you the Ultimate Gift.

The ultimate gift is God Himself, God the Holy Spirit. This portion of scripture starts with Jesus teaching the disciples to pray. It ends with the ultimate goal of prayer, God. When I first saw this

concept, I had to pause in awe. I hadn't seen it coming and it cheered my heart.

The next day, I received further confirmation of my understanding that God desires to give Himself to us as the ultimate gift. That night was the first meeting of the semester for the Stockton Christian Fellowship. We are going through Galatians verse by verse. Pastor Jeff from Trinity Alliance Church was the one teaching.

In Galatians, after the greeting, Paul laments that believers are so quickly turning to a different gospel. There were false teachers who were distorting the gospel of Christ. Paul says emphatically that there is only one gospel and if anyone is teaching you another let them be condemned by God.

Pastor Jeff began to ask the students questions to explore the meaning of the word we use so frequently, the gospel. It literally means good news. It was suggested that the good news was forgiveness, but forgiveness is a benefit of the good news. Jesus is the good news. Jesus the Son of God is the gospel. Jesus, who is God the Son, is Immanuel, which means God with us, is the good news.

Then Pastor Jeff pointed them to Jeremiah 29:10-14 (NIV84)

<sup>10</sup>This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup>For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,

Here, Pastor Jeff stops and asks them what those plans are. Someone properly finished verse 11: "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Pastor Jeff acknowledges, but says there is a more specific answer. The next two verses should remind you of our Luke 11 text.

<sup>12</sup>Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Ask, seek, knock, and the door will be opened to you. Verse 14 is God's plan for the future to bless us:

**<sup>14</sup>I will be found by you," declares the Lord,**  
(repeat)

"and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

This is the Bible story. Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. In the afternoons God walked with them. They sinned and were banished from the Garden.

Genesis 3:21–24 (NIV84)

<sup>21</sup>The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.<sup>22</sup> And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”<sup>23</sup> So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.<sup>24</sup> After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Over 40 times, God explicitly states His desire for a relationship with his people, like this example from Hebrews 8:10 (NIV84)

<sup>10</sup> This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds

and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God,



and they will be my people.

In the closing book of our Bible we read in Revelation 21:1–4 (NIV84) *The New Jerusalem*

**21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.<sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.<sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

We have demonstrated the desire of God’s heart, to give the ultimate gift. What is the desire of your heart? Is it a life filled with God? Will you intercede for a friend by praying earnestly, boldly, persistently for them to receive the bread of life? Jesus is that bread. Ask, seek, knock, and the door will be opened to you.

My prayer is for this church – you, the body of Christ. My prayer is for the faithful church to be blessed. My prayer is for a mighty movement of God across our nation. As God the Holy Spirit

birthed the Church on Pentecost, may the Church of God be renewed and revived.

**FROM EMAIL (American Renewal Project)**  
**This is a political source, but this portion is faith based. This relates directly to dealing with a pandemic; the condition of our nation; and, the necessity of earnest prayer.**

"History records that the third Asiatic cholera pandemic was at its deadliest in 1854, as it spread through 1852-1859 and devastated Asia, Europe, North America, and Africa.<sup>1</sup>

Charles H. Spurgeon [1834-1892], England's 19th-century "*Prince of Preachers*," began his first year of ministry that same year, 1854. Psalm 91:7 would become his rhema: "*A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you.*" **A rhema is a verse or portion of Scripture that the Holy Spirit brings to our attention with application to a current situation or need for direction.**

He chronicled, "*I had scarcely been in London 12 months, the neighbourhood in which I laboured was visited by Asiatic cholera, and my congregation suffered from its inroads. Family after family summoned me to the bedside of the smitten, and almost every day I was called to visit the grave. I gave myself up with youthful ardour to*

*the visitation of the sick, and was sent for from all corners of the district by persons of all ranks and religions. I became weary in body and sick at heart. My friends seemed falling one by one, and I felt or fancied that I was sickening like those around me. A little more work and weeping would have laid me low among the rest; I felt that my burden was heavier than I could bear, and I was ready to sink under it.*

*"As God would have it, I was returning mournfully home from a funeral, when my curiosity led me to read a paper that was wafered up in a shoemaker's window in the Dover Road. It did not look like a trade announcement, nor was it, for it bore in a good bold handwriting these words: 'Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.'*

*"The effect upon my heart was immediate. Faith appropriated the passage as her own. I felt secure, refreshed, girt with immortality. I went on with my visitation of the dying in a calm and peaceful spirit; I felt no fear of evil, and I suffered no harm. The providence that moved the tradesman to place those verses in his window I gratefully acknowledge, and in the remembrance of its marvellous power I adore the Lord my God."*

Through the 17th to 19th centuries, American political leadership regularly issued Proclamations calling for **National Days of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer, "to implore God's merciful interposition."** America was established by Christians, who relied upon the Living God. Neither atheists nor agnostics or skeptics had anything to do with our nation's foundation. {this may be overstating the case}

Shortly after the beginning of the War of American Independence, the first National Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer was issued for July 20, 1775. The Second Continental Congress of March 16, 1776, issued a second National Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer for May 17, 1776, as *"to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely, in all their lawful enterprises, on His aid and direction."*

*"Many of us do not turn to God until we become overwhelmed with misfortune or tragedy, and that appears true collectively for our Nation. It took the 1861-1865 Civil War for the USA to emphasize God in public. President Abraham Lincoln declared two National Days of Prayer, on August 12, 1861, and March 30, 1863. He also had the Mint release the*

*first coins with the inscription In God We Trust in 1864.*

*"On April 17, 1952, President Harry Truman signed a bill proclaiming the National Day of Prayer into law in the United States. President Reagan amended the law on May 5, 1988, designating the first Thursday of May each year as the National Day of Prayer. The National Day of Prayer this coming year will be Thursday May 5, 2022."*<sup>2</sup>

Modern man, however, has come to a place where a "solemn sense of God's superintending providence" no longer exists, with culture, public square, and public education entirely devoid of reliance "on His aid and direction." We might attend church on Christmas or Easter, ask Him for the right parking spot, ask the pastor to bless our marriage or new home, but we really want divine help just to get our own way. We don't mind calling for help in getting things done, provided we can keep our own views and live our own lives. **His help we want, not His holiness."**

CONCLUSION:

Dwight L. Moody once said, "Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure." Will we be the one on our knees? Will each one of us individually? Will we collectively, as a church, pour out our hearts to God the Holy Spirit

to come? Transform my heart Lord. Transform this church. Transform the faithful church. Transform our nation.

### **Reflection Questions from Praying with Fire:**

1. How do you know for certain you are saved? What evidences or fruits of salvation show in your life?
2. How do you maintain the Holy Spirit's fullness in your life?
3. Do you live under repentance and surrender so that you can be filled with the Holy Spirit daily? How do you pray daily so you will be in a position of surrender to God?
4. We can forfeit the Holy Spirit's filling by not adjusting ourselves to the Word of God. What was the last thing God spoke to you about in His Word? When was that?
5. Are you thirsty for more of God the Holy Spirit? How do you satisfy that thirst?

Acts 4:31 (ESV) And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.

## **Scriptural Prayer for Revival**

God of Grace, I need Your presence and fullness in my life. Fill me afresh with Your Holy Spirit. Let revival begin in me. Father, the church needs an outpouring of Your presence, too. Teach us to come together in one accord as on the Day of Pentecost. Show me my sin. Show me any area where I am not walking in unity with the church. Teach me to guard the unity of the church (Acts 2:1).

Show me where I am disobeying Your Word. Am I a faithful steward of my time? My talents and gifts? My treasures? Am I faithful with Your truth? Do I share it with others? Am I faithful to the church?

Show me, oh, Lord. Lord, I need Your Holy Spirit to come into my life like a mighty rushing wind, just as You did at Pentecost. I cannot live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit living through me (vv. 2, 4). Pour out Your Spirit, and give me a great awareness of spiritual things. Open my spiritual eyes to see, my spiritual ears to hear, and my mind to understand. Let the fullness of the Holy Spirit be evidenced in my life (vv. 3–4). Father, send Your cleansing fire upon me. Consume me, fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and transform me (v. 4).

Let me speak forth Your Word to whatever group of people I am with. Fill me and use me for Your glory (v. 6). Thank You. You are glorious and holy, and I praise You. Continue to stir in me a passion to pray, witness, and worship You. Oh, Lord, send revival among Your people.

In Jesus' name, amen.