

Luke 11

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Title: Understanding our relationship with God and why we're called to pray!

As I state way too often, there are no chapter breaks in the original text. With that said, Chapter 11 is focusing on Jesus as He gives the "Our Father" prayer. He also discusses some implications of prayer. Then it jumps to a discussion between Jesus and some local religious leaders. The point of all that is a reminder that we can't be saved by being good people! The biggest reason people won't accept Jesus is thinking they are good enough as-is to be saved! The main reason the Jewish religious leaders wanted Jesus dead is He correctly argued it is not possible to be good enough for God. I realize that's old news for Christians. A reason to grasp the "we're not good enough" message is when we share the Gospel, it is key to accepting the truth about our relationship with God. I know there's other reasons for rejecting Jesus, but the focus here's on people who think they're good enough as they are to be saved! That's why Jesus got rejected and killed! Chapter 11 also gets into a discussion of why prayer is necessary! Jesus wants us to understand why we are called to pray and that God responds when it's His will! God guides our life through the Holy Spirit to deal with what we're facing, as a witness for Him.

I realize most of us know this Chapter 11 prayer well. Most of us grasp that people reject Jesus because they're happy just as they are and don't want to think about the negative concepts of how we live. Why do we have to think about this stuff? For starters Jesus called us to be His witnesses to the world. That means we must understand how prayer works, and how prayer benefits our lives to deal with the world around us! I also realize each of us have problems we must deal with and most of us pray daily for His guidance and support. Another thing to realize is Jesus wanted us to use this prayer as model. It is not a memorize this prayer and say it exactly. A better idea is to consider each phrase and what that means to us as we pray. OK then, let's begin:

Chapter 11 begins a new section that doesn't tie to Chapter 10 at all. It is one of two places where Jesus gives the "Our Father" prayer. The other time was Matthew 6. Each was given on a different occasion. Notice the disciples were watching Jesus pray, waited for Him to finish, then they asked how to pray! I suspect they wanted to see if there's any variance from the Sermon on the Prayer version, so they asked again. A few thoughts if one is not familiar with these details. One thing "not Jewish" is Jesus refers to the Father first as "Abba". It's like referring to God as "Daddy". Next Jesus states the phrase "who is in heaven", a reminder that even though God desires an intimate relationship with us, we must respect the fact He is God! Then, "your kingdom come", a reminder that no matter who isn't saved, we want Jesus to return ASAP so we can live as God is desiring now! Next comes a request for substance (think food) and notice that's before we ask for forgiveness. It reminds us God doesn't just care about our salvation, but also our basic health to be a witness for Him!

Then we get the famous request for forgiveness of sin. No requirement to list sins as God knows what they are. The fact we're willing to ask for forgiveness is key. Then we ask God to give us the strength to forgive others. It's said the most Godly thing we can do is to forgive those who hurt us. I find that's true simply to let go of the pain and not let that person "take up space in our heads". Time's needed for that, but I know from experience it works. The final line of the prayer is asking God not to lead us into temptation. God does NOT tempt us, but we easily stray and praying that way gets He involved to help us go down the right path. One of my favorite lines about temptation, "Lead me not into temptation, as

I can find it all by myself!" It remind us how easily we can wander from what God desires and why He asks us to pray for strength to avoid well, what's the wrong path in life!

All this leads into a discussion by Jesus about prayer. He uses an illustration of a man asleep in his bed with someone at the door begging for bread as they have company coming! The sleeper gave the guy at door bread to get him off his back! Jesus' point is compared to the guy who gave away his bread to get him off is back, does God the Father care for those who are committed their lives to Him! Given all of that, does it mean we can get a fancy car if we pray hard enough? No, it's a reminder if we ask God for provisions (food), sin forgiveness and helping us dealing with temptation, He will answer those prayers because He cares for us and wants us to be a good witness for Him! A great line in the Psalms is David wrote, "He (David) has never seen the righteous begging for bread". I keep that in mind when life isn't going well. (Psalm 37:25). The other reminder is if we're to ask for good things (e.g., food to survive) God makes that possible. A good question is what about a believer who say, dies of cancer? We must accept He's in charge and not us!

In effect the rest of the chapter switches topics to give examples of how Jesus deals with non-believers. The reason for the jump in effect is if we're to depend upon God, Jesus needs to show He is God and to show the consequences of not trusting in His full sin payment. It begins with a miracle of Jesus casting a demon out of a man who couldn't speak. That was significant as Jewish exorcists required to know a demon's name to pray for it to leave. The purpose of mentioning that miracle is the Jewish leaders were accusing Jesus of casting out the demon by Satan's power. Jesus rebuked that with the logical argument that if Satan is working against Satan, his kingdom would fall.

While the crowd was thinking about demons, He gave an illustration of a demon leaving a person after prayer was made for him. The point is if that healed man doesn't trust in God (accept Jesus) that demon will return with more demons and make it worse. This is an example of being a moral person, does not cut it as far as being saved!

The second illustration on the same point is someone cried out, blessed is your mom for giving birth to you. It's meant as a compliment. Jesus uses that moment to tell the crowd: the more important thing is to hear the word of God (the fact Jesus is God and Lord of our lives) and accept it! As far as Mary, she is honored by being the earthly mother of Jesus, but she is not a deity to pray to!

Jesus then uses a few Jewish historical figures to make the point that He being in the world was bigger than say when Jonah came out of the fish to be a witness and many converted or when a foreign queen visited King Solomon. The key point (Verses 29 to 32) is that Jesus coming in the world to pay for all our sins was more significant than any event in the Old Testament history!

That leads back to the question of if Jesus came in the world, so what? Jesus uses an illustration that a lamp is used to light a room and Jesus is the light leading to eternal life and we as Christians are called to point the way to Him. Keep in mind as you study these stories, Jesus is teaching of His importance and His relationship with God the Father through these simple illustrations.

That leads to the final 15 verses of the chapter. In effect, Jesus is condemning those who think they are good enough for God by being "religious". Jesus condemns the Jewish non-biblical rituals who washed their hands a specific way and tithed the smallest of their possessions but still missed the fact they were not perfect! Jesus was just warming up in condemnation of thinking all it takes is good behavior for us to be saved! It was why Jesus said demons will return with more demons if we think, "Cleaning up our lives is all that it takes!" The final condemnation is how those religious leaders loved self-praise. They

put burdens on others they don't do themselves. Jesus compared people who do moral things (and think that's good enough) to those who painted graves white (so people accidentally don't step on them)! His point in effect they do not act better than those who persecuted former prophets. One of the things I've come to realize is moral religious (non-believing) people are harder to convert than people who realize they are sinners as they think they're good enough. I want everyone to realize why the religious leaders wanted Jesus dead as they could not take the criticism. The point besides the necessity of believing the complete price is paid through Jesus, is the challenge of convincing people they're not good enough for God "just as they are". Most of us realize that, but it's necessary to state that point!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on the link for the detailed study. It's still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for everyone who reads this.