

Luke 11:1-13; 33-36

The Lord's Prayer gives us a pattern and a posture for life following Jesus.

This week I was thinking about stories from WWII and even Pearl Harbor. The stories of incoming aircraft and the need to warn others. Enemies seen on a screen on heard from a machine. Much of it was new technology, to some unreliable, so when technicians were uncertain or not sure enough, they would fail to radio it in - to warn or call for help.

In our self-centric lives, we live like this. Trouble comes or appears over the horizon, and we say to ourselves, "I've got this!" We may eventually ask for help when things aren't going so well, but we would have taken on the hits, alone.

For followers of Jesus, honestly, this is how we relate to prayer.

Everyone wants to pray more. I have never met or heard of someone who thought they should pray less than they do! But we are not here this morning to guilt you into more time in prayer - but rather to invite each other into the gift of prayer. And see how it is supposed to shape our lives.

This is what is going on in our text. Jesus is modeling life in the Kingdom, so the disciples want to be taught to follow suit, and in doing so he gives us both a pattern to follow and a posture for a life of seeking God.

Pattern

This is among the things that Christians casually know by heart, the Lord's Prayer given here and in Matthew's gospel.

It's a formula for prayer that Jesus tells his disciples to use "whenever you pray." So we want to pay attention to it.

Now, do we really need a formula when we pray? Nah, but some of us could benefit from it greatly! And when the pattern teaches is used to shape us making all our prayers meaningful.

These guys knew how to “pray.” Prayer was not a foreign concept to them - it is not that Jesus was the first rabbi to pray - it is not new technology to Jews. But the desire to see how it is uniquely part of the way leads them to ask.

Here is the pattern Jesus gives.

- a) Begins with recognizing God as Holy. “your name be honored as holy” He really is separate, above, bigger than us. It is right to see him this way, to need his enormity. That would have been normal. But the what’s different is calling this Holy creator and sustainer of all things Father. Abba.

We recognize God as Holy, but we do so through the lens of familial relationships. The accessible Abba, we come like children for we are his children.

“Jesus transformed the relationship with God from a distant, corporate experience into an intimate, one-to-one bond, and he taught his disciples to pray with the same intimacy. He wants us to do the same.” Hughes

- b) Next, the pattern reveals the goal as his Kingdom. That the way of Jesus, what God made us for, would break forth incarnationally, coming among us, where we are.

Matthew would include “your will be done” but Luke is not lacking the sense here. His Kingdom is his will. And what we ache for, all of life being set right, restored, it is coming and we ask for it with the confidence it is on its way and I can live accordingly.

“The coming advent of the kingdom of God is no impossibility. It is as sure as any established fact of history. In it our dreams will come true!”...“although my will wants to go its own way, being in the kingdom means my will is redirected to God’s will. This is what repentance means. Jesus was continually saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17; cf. Mark 1:14, 15). To pray “Your kingdom come” is to repent and live a life characterized by obedience.” H

We could spend the age unpacking those two things but there is more in this pattern of prayer.

- c) Recognizes reliance as the way. “Give us each day our daily bread” Provision, daily need. This is the needed fuel for daily taking up our cross and following Jesus! Day by day, this keeps us in need (which in the Kingdom is a good thing), tethered to our source.

Like manna in the wilderness - he gives us what we need - and if we try to keep it for tomorrow it will get moldy! Each day, looking to the Father for help, for substance.

- d) Recognizes forgiveness. One that we need to be forgiven before a holy God. For living toward a false self, living apart from the word of God and his way. This verbalizes our need for mercy.

“Sins” act of wrongdoing, guilt, missing the mark, pursuing evil rather than good. This is still a weighty matter. Paul will see this as the our existence apart from Christ...

“For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. 19 For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is the sin that lives in me. 21 So I discover this law: When I want to do what is good, evil is present with me. 22 For in my inner self I delight in God’s law, 23 but I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” -- **Romans 7:18-24** (CSB)

Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ! This forgiveness is found, rescue from the body of death, mercy. Long for and find it in the Father.

The pattern also highlights our mandated readiness to extend forgiveness, “for we ourselves also forgive everyone.”

e) The last thing the pattern gives us is a regular recognition of real Spiritual battles. “Do not bring us into temptation.” Deliverance from evil. Don’t leave us in the body of death but keep us, transform us, protect us. We see the very real temptations of our cosmic enemy the devil in the temptation of Jesus. From temptation he uses accusation to stunt us, to rob us of thriving and standing before the Lord. But we, in reliance for provision, forgiveness and guidance, lean on the Spirit of God to help us.

“What Christ is saying here is immensely freeing. We do not have to achieve some lofty spiritual plane, above the material and mundane, before we can offer requests to God.” H

Jesus follows the pattern with a promise.

“For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?” -- **Luke 11:10-13** (CSB)

Getting what you ask for - why wouldn't we ask?

Prayer is a gift, it is the link, the radio to base.

But more than a tool I think prayer following this pattern is meant to shape us.

Posture

Praying like this shapes us. Makes us ready for what is ahead. Gives us light in the darkness.

The intermingled stories that follow in Luke 11 are those of posture. There is knocking (making requests known expectantly), Divided soul (Jesus accused of doing works by the power of the devil, but he highlights that there can only be one master of the soul, Sign of Jonah (the turning of Nineveh), Clear eyes (being full of light), and the hypocrisy of religious curmudgeons.

Here then is what is formed in us as we live from this pattern found in the Lord's prayer.

- a) Contentment. Ask and it will be given... now, we love to abuse this for our own sake. These words of Jesus are twisted by some to suggest you need to ask for bigger things, shinier things!

Some of you know I am fond of Porsche Cayennes. Just enough luxury, just enough sport. The perfect unity of both! But my fondness does not match my proximity to one! The old Rogue has legs still, and the boss has said the Porsche is a bad idea for the humble pastor. In this desire, though I could labor in prayer for that Cayenne and become disgruntled when it is not delivered, paid for, and waxed.

Remember though the pattern of prayer is shaping our posture - Jesus has us asking for daily bread - provision not spoil. He may see fit for that to be my provision, or more likely yours! But there is a contentment that comes in seeking and receiving, rightly seeing, the provision he gives us.

He may give you extra but what you are knocking for is daily needs, forgiveness, spiritual help, and the expansion of his kingdom. Lord, give us contentment.

- b) Confidence. (Kept) This pattern leads to confidence in being his, forever. The religious make accusations against Jesus and he describes the soul as a home not to be left swept and vacant but to be dwelled in, by his Spirit.

Prayer is the lease agreement that Jesus has taken up residence in our hearts as we have found our home in his heart. And he doesn't make us take our shoes off!

Prayer is a recognition of deliverance, of belonging. We take this into life, it forms our identity as his, gives us purpose, place, and a people.

This week as the school year ends we had the opportunity to attend an award ceremony. One of the honors being given was to those students who started their education speaking one language but had become fluent in English changing their classification. (If they don't do so by 8th grade they are unlikely to). Kids from Mexico, Guatemala, and Vietnam were honored.

Being kept by Jesus is like this in that when we come to him we are reclassified. Welcomed in, we don't lose our personalities or history, but those things don't define us, we now speak the language of grace, protected, home.

“If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure. 22 But when one stronger than he attacks and overpowers him, he takes from him all his weapons he trusted in, and divides up his plunder”. --

Luke 11:20-22 (CSB)

Our souls occupied by our King, each acre of our hearts increasingly his. “Your kingdom come...”

- c) Repentant. This is the sign of Jonah. The reluctant prophet warned Nineveh and they turned to God. Prayer postures us this way - seeking forgiveness - no longer wanting to live in defined by the system of the world - seeing his kingdom as better.

Luther tells us that all of life is repentance. He is right, we live rightly when our posture is one of continual turning and returning. Away from what is false and coming again to Christ. Refusing the salt water and instead imbibing on the clear fresh water of his grace for us.

- d) Seeing. Prayer following this pattern keeps us healthy, clearly seeing light and dark, the kingdom and the world. And choosing that which is of Christ.

“When your eye is healthy, your whole body is also full of light.” Avoiding temptation by the grace of God, by the leading of the Spirit. Not just consuming what is around us but discerning what is for us.

“He said, “Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” --

Luke 11:28 (CSB)

- e) Gracious. Opposite of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Experts in the law worried that ceremony wasn't kept are corrected by Jesus and he pronounces “woe” them for the way they abuse others, expecting things they are unwilling to do. Living with a false sense of accomplishment and self-sufficiency.

“The importance of being forgiving cannot be overstressed. We do this for the health of our own souls. Bitterness causes innumerable ailments—emotional, physical, spiritual—within us. We do it for the health of the church. The church is weak and defeated because of refused forgiveness among its children. We do it for the sake of the world. The world has not yet discovered what Christ is like. But it can, if we will truly forgive.

Do you need to forgive your spouse? Covenant to do it right now. Have you been unwilling to forgive your parents? Promise God right now that you will do it. Have you forgiven your employer who wronged you? You need to do it now—and you can, with Christ’s help. Do you have a grudge against your last church? Its pastor, its elders? Forgive today!” H

Prayer shapes us toward others not above them. We give what we have been given - forgiveness, grace, mercy, provision - for the glory of the Holy One.

And that’s the point of this posture derived from the pattern, isn’t it? It is a gift.

That we can pray this way, not only because Jesus told us to, but because he took on the role as mediator giving us the standing to make such requests. He took on a life of obedience that we have never been able to live up to. He took on our guilty verdict and the punishment of the cross. The spotless lamb that was slain for the forgiveness of sin. And the reigning King, risen, and ascended to the throne with the Father.

He invites us to believe in him and live in his way, for the Kingdom, to be children of God. He makes us sons and daughters.

“When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba', Father! ” 7 So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.” -- **Galatians 4:4-7** (CSB)

“For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, “Abba', Father! ” 16 The

Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children," --
Romans 8:15-16 (CSB)

This is not for some elites somewhere, for those that have it all together, for the refined. This is for you. Believe in Jesus, be free, be a child, and live seeking Abba!

Following the pattern of prayer we know our source, we cherish his Kingdom, we surrender our need to him, we find our provision and forgiveness, we are kept from evil, and as Kingdom people this prayer orients us outward, extending forgiveness to our debtors.

We don't hold debts against others because we had debt that Jesus took on for us. To provide, forgive, keep us and send us.

The Lord's Prayer gives us a pattern and a posture for life following Jesus.

Prayer like this is not just for the crisis - we can radio in our need for daily bread - we are invited to, "whenever you pray."

Pray like this. Determine to try this pattern for a set amount of time and see how the Lord shapes you. How he meets you. Maybe it will be at first a prayer of belief, of experiencing forgiveness for the first time. And maybe it will be a prayer of continued surrender and reliance on the Father.

Live like this. In Jesus find contentment, confidence, repentance, sight, and graciousness. Give it away for others to be welcomed into the Kingdom. Like shining in the darkness. Illuminating the brokenness, beauty, and belonging around us. It is for our good and his glory.

"He said to them, "Whenever you pray, say,

Father, your name be honored as holy.

Your kingdom come.

3 Give us each day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves also forgive everyone

in debt to us.

And do not bring us into temptation.” -- **Luke 11:2-4** (CSB)

Jesus, shape us as we seek you. Your Kingdom come.