**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Luke 11:1-13**

**Key Verse: 11:2**

**"He said to them, 'When you pray, say: "Father,**

**hallowed be your name, your kingdom come."'"**

**Study Questions:**

1. Read verse 1. Why was prayer important to Jesus? What request did one disciple make of Jesus? Why were they suddenly interested in prayer? What did Jesus teach them? (Memorize verses 2-4.)

2. What did it mean to Jesus to call God "Father"? What does it mean to us? What difference does it make to have an Everlasting Father? What does it mean to hallow God's name? (Jn 17:1; Ro 2:24) How do people dishonor God's name? How did Jesus glorify God?

3. What does it mean to pray, "your kingdom come"? (Lk 17:21) (See footnote.) Why pray for "daily" bread? (Ex 16:14-21; Pro 30:8b,9a) Why "our"? Why is for­give­ness so necessary? Why pray for forgiveness every day? How can we for­give others? (Mt 18:21-35) Why do we need to pray about temptation? (1Pe 5:8)

4. Read verses 5-8. What is the main point of this parable? Read verses 9-10. How do these verses reinforce the lesson of the parable? What must we learn from this, practically?

5. Read verses 11-13. In what respect are all fathers alike? How much more is our loving heavenly Father likely to give us the best gifts? What is the best gift?

**The pray­er in this passage is commonly called "The Lord's Praye­r." Ever since our Lord Jesus taught it to his disci­ples, the Lord's prayer has been repeated during the past 1900 years by mil­lions of believers in over a hundr­ed lang­uages and in an end­less variety of circum­stances. This pray­er has been a source of comfort to all pilgrims on earth travel­ing toward heaven. In verses 5-13, Jesus teaches the basic atti­tude of prayer.**

**First, "Father..." (2b). "One day Jesus was pray­ing in a certain place" (1a). Jesus' prayer manifests his personal love rela­tionship with God and his absolute dependence on him. When he fin­ish­ed pray­ing, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his dis­ciples." In the past, when­e­ver the disciples saw Jesus pray­ing, they shrugged their should­ers and said, "Here he is praying again!" To them, Jesus' prayers appeared to be unproductive, and the sign of a weakling. At that time the disciples were spiritually hare­brained. But ever since they saw Jesus praying on the Trans­fig­ura­tion Mount, en­no­bl­ed and glori­fied, they rea­lized the im­por­tance of pray­er. Also they realized that they were not su­per­ior to John's dis­ci­ples in regard to prayer. There are basically seven prayer topics; three are connected between God and mankind. The other four are related to our neighbor.**

**Jesus gave his disciples a model pray­er. Let's read verses 2-4. *"He said to them, 'When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also for­give everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into tempta­tion."'"***

**One of Jesus' dis­ci­ples asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." Jesus teaches his disciples to call God "Fa­ther." This open­ing word of the Lord's prayer, "Fa­ther," teaches us what our basic relationship with God should be. In the past, the Hebrew people had thought that God was so holy they should not speak God's name with their unclean lips. So, when­ever they had to speak God's name, they used substitute words such as El Shaddai or Adon­ai. In the Old Testament times, their rela­tionship with God was remote and legalistic. There­fore, Jesus' teaching his disciples to call God "Father" was quite revolu­tionary. Jesus, the Mediator between God and man (1Ti 2:5), taught us the most important spiritual secret that God is our Father. A man is happy when he has a good father. And man's happiness is determined by what kind of rela­tion­ship he has with God. No one is happy until he can call God "Fa­ther." No one is happy until he has a love relationship with God (Jn 15:5). St. Augustine, as an African boy, had re­ceived sufficient fi­nan­cial support from his father to com­plete his educa­tion in Rome. Despite all this, he was not hap­py. So, in search of the meaning of life, he devoted him­self first to a religion called Manichae­ism, which advo­cated an ex­treme­ly ascetic lifestyle based on dual­ism and Gnosti­cism. Next he de­voted himself to the highest scholarship of the time--rhetoric, oratory and Pla­tonism. But these things only made his soul rest­less like Cain. But through St. Ambrose' influence, Augustine studied the Bible. Finally he met God personal­ly and could call God "Father," and his soul could rest.**

**To call God "Father" teaches that man needs two fathers. When we are young we need a human father whom we trust and admire. One day, two boys were fighting, claiming that, "My father is number one in the world and your father is number two in the world." When we were young we desperately needed human fathers. But when we grow up, we need the Heaven­ly Father who can give us God's peace, eternal life and the kingdom of God.**

**Historically, all true human bein­gs have aspired toward the universal brotherhood of mankind; but human effort could not achieve this ideal. However, it is possible for us when we call God "Father." In our Father God, we are all bro­thers and sisters. When we call God "Father" in earnest faith and with holy reverence, we can accept others as our own bro­thers and sisters. We have the true con­cept of the uni­versal brotherhood of mankind. When we call God "Father" all people are not our enemies, but they are our dear brothers and sisters.**

**The Hebrew people had a habit of using the plural form. For example, they said, "the heavens," instead of "heav­en"; "our father" instead of "my father." One young man made an excuse, saying, "Our wife is sick with appendicitis." We don't know whether he used Shakespearean English or Konglish. But his universal broth­erhood of man­kind was well expressed. To call God "Father" is not easy because we cannot see him with our own eyes. But we must grow spir­itually until we can call God "Fa­ther," and until our spiritual eyes are opened and we are satisfied with the truth to the degree we can call God "Abba" Father (Ro 8:15).**

**Second, "...hallowed be your name." Hallowed be your name means God's name is adored from our hearts as the holy God. Our inmost desire should be that God's name may receive the right respect, honor and praise in our personal lives, as well as in socie­ty. In order for his name to be respected, we must re­cognize God as God in any circumstance. Whatever prob­lem we may face, we must consider it as a chance to win a spiri­tual vic­tory and glorify God's name. As the children of God, if we cause God's name to be dishonored, we should be most sor­ry (Ro 2:24). On the other hand, if we can honor God in some way or other, we must rejoice, even if we suffer loss to do so (1Pe 4:13). We re­mem­ber how much Je­sus wanted to glorify God. John 17:1b says, "Fa­ther, the time has come. Glori­fy your Son, that your Son may glori­fy you." Here, the word "glorify" means "reveal." In order to reveal God's saving grace for man, Jesus died on the cross like a criminal. May God help us have "Hallowed be your name" in our hearts.**

**Third, "Your kingdom come...." To the children of God, this world is like a motel room; our ultimate destination is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God does not refer to a geographical location; it is where the reign of God is (Lk 17:21). So "Your kingdom come" might be better rendered if we say, "Let your di­vine rule come." "Your kingdom come" is prayer that God's divine rule may more and more attain its rightful place in the hearts and lives of fallen mankind, who are otherwise bound under the rule of Satan. There are so many kinds of people, each with their own cul­ture and characteristics and more than 76 nations. But in reality, there are only two kingdoms: the first is the kingdom of God; the other is the kingdom of Satan. And we belong to one of them. When we deeply meditate on the words, "Your kingdom come," they have a deep spiritual mean­ing. This world is like a battle­ground between the king­dom of God and the kingdom of Satan. So we must fight the good fight to destroy the kingdom of Satan through one-to-one Bible study.**

**Fourth, "Give us each day our daily bread" (3). The second half of the Lord's prayer turns to our personal needs. In the early centuries, under the influence of Plato, many people thought that soul is good and that material things are all evil. They considered the physical body as part of the material realm, which is evil. This thought permeated into the Chris­tian world until the Gnostics arose. But Jesus honored man's phy­sical life. In this prayer, "Give us each day our daily bread," we learn two important things.** *First,* **Jesus taught us to ask for daily bread, not one or two years' por­tion of bread. It's because fallen man's greedi­ness is endless. For example, God led the Israelites into the wilder­ness to re­ceive daily bread training before going into the promised land. God told them to go out to gather enough bread for each day. But some gathered much more and kept part of it until morning. The next morning they found that it was full of maggots and beginning to smell (Ex 16:14-21). Daily bread training was training to depend on God daily. It was basic faith train­ing. God wanted to finish their daily bread train­ing within a week. But it took 40 years due to their greed­iness and slave men­tality. Proverbs 30:8b,9a says, "...give me neither pov­erty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Other­wise, I may have too much and dis­own you..."** *Second***, "our daily bread." Look at verse 3 again. "Give us each day our daily bread." Jesus did not teach us to pray for "my" daily bread, but for "our" daily bread. The children of God cannot be selfish individuals; instead, the children of God should be sensitive to universal brotherhood.**

**Fifth, "Forgive us our sins." Look at verse 4a. "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." We are all incorrigible sinners. We commit sin again and again. We need God's forgiveness every day. The phrase, "forgive us our sins," may well mean "clothe us with your grace of forgiveness of sins." Sin separ­ates man from God. Sin poiso­ns man's soul. Most of all, sin makes man the enemy of God. This is the reason Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of sins. We must always remember that the one and only Son of God was despised and re­jected in order to forgive our sins. Finally the one and only Son of God shed his blood as a ransom sacrifice for many. The forgiveness of sins is God's highest love for each of us.**

**The last part of verse 4, "...for we also forgive ev­eryone who sins against us," compels us to forgive those who sin against us. To fallen man, the most difficult thing to do is to forgive everyone who sins against us. In Matthew 18, there is the parable of the unmerciful servant. A king can­cel­ed his servant's debt of ten thousand talents. But the one whose huge debt was cancelled by the king went out and found one of his fellow ser­vants who owed him one hun­dred denarii. He grabbed him by the neck, choked him and said, "Pay my money back." This parable teaches that fal­len men cannot for­give others' sins. But when we remember God's un­fail­ing love and the im­measurable grace of Jesus, we can forgive others' sins.**

**How many times should we forgive others' sins? Once Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I for­give my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Mt 18:21,22). It meant that Peter should forgive others' sins endlessly. Most people think that one who sins against them must first come and repent, and then they can for­give him; otherwise, they cannot forgive him. Such rela­tivistic for­giveness is not right. We must forgive othe­rs' sins uncon­ditionally because we received God's grace of for­give­ness of sins unconditionally. Mark 11:25 says, "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, for­give him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."**

**Sixth, "And lead us not into temptation." No one can wi­thstand Satan's temp­tation, not even the best man, Adam, for the world is full of de­vils who prowl around like a lion, looking for someone to devour (1Pe 5:8). There­fore, we must pray moment by moment, "Lead us not into temptation."**

**Seventh, persistent prayer (5-13). We must pray persistently. Read verses 5-8. This para­ble teaches us persistent prayer. In this parable, a selfish person wanted to enjoy a good night's sleep with his kids. But a certain friend came in the middle of the night to beg him for some bread for his unexpected guests. The selfish man tried to turn him down by saying, "Don't bother me!" But finally he gave in to his persistence and arose at midnight and gave the friend what he needed, not because he was generous, but because he surrendered to the friend's boldness which came from a clear conscience when he determined to feed the unexpected guests. Here in verse 5, the word "boldness" is the same as "persist­ence." This teaches us that when we pray, we must pray persistently and to the end. Prayer is the expression of our faith. Let's read verses 9-13. The main point of these verses is to pray that God may give us the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we pray for many things. We pray because we need the help of our Heavenly Father. But it is very easy for anyone to pray for his success, easy life and wealth. These days there are many people who have obtained fame and wealth. They have no more hope. So they despair. Despair is the way to spiritual death. Those who have obtained fame and wealth want to buy happiness with money. But usually they buy with their precious money the fleeting pleasure of sin, or the poison of Satan. Especially those who are elders of the churches, or worldly Christians, want to buy eternal life with their money. But with their money they buy the fear of the devil instead of eternal life. So they despair. But our Lord Jesus taught us to pray for the Holy Spirit to be given. The Holy Spirit drives out the fear of the devil and gives us the love of God, the joy of God and the peace of God. Most importantly, the Holy Spirit gives us the assurance of eternal life and the kingdom of God as our inheritance.**

**In this passage we learn many things. But we must learn that we must grow spiritually until we can call God "Father," and until we can have the universal brotherhood of mankind in our hearts. Especially we must grow spiritually until we can forgive others' sins unconditionally.**