

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 11- Luke 11:1-13

215- Lord, Teach Us to Pray- Part 8

August 18, 2013

Luke 11:1-13

1 It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.

3 'Give us each day our daily bread.

4 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

5 Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

7 and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you *anything*.'

8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

11 Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?

12 Or *if* he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

To the Glory of God

Now most of us have been in a situation where it seems as though the Heavens are "brass" and our prayers are not rising above the ceiling. In those times- we cry out to God and it seems as though God is not listening and that we are left to ourselves. Why is that? Where did God go? Why does it seem so very lonely during those times and what can we do about it?

Some people teach that if we would simply raise the volume of our voices and pray *louder* that God will draw close. These people suggest that the problem is our passion or the intensity at which we pray. Still others would point to a lack of faith on our part or some hidden sin- perhaps originating back several generations. But is that true or is waiting on God and persevering in our prayer when we feel nothing and it seems as though God is not listening a very important part of our walk with God?

I knew a man who wrote this prayer back in the Fall of 1987:

"Oh God where are You? What have I done to make You so distant towards me? What sin is in me that you despise so much that you make Yourself so scarce? I don't know where to go. I don't know what to do. I don't know what to say. My one child is dying and the other one is injured. I didn't cause the disease in the one but I am the one who ran over my other child and cut her leg off. My wife is destroyed and helpless and I have no answers; no solutions; no words. Clever phrases will not lift my head now; cute slogans won't help me. Where are You? I love You and I have tried to serve You and it looks like things get increasingly worse. What am I supposed to do? What do You want from me? How can I possibly survive this? Oh God; Oh God; Oh God; Oh God; Oh God help me; help me- I am so weak right now; so fragile; so scared. I have bound the devil as hard as I know how to and I have fasted until my wife despairs for my life and still no answer and no voice. I beg You to forgive me for whatever I have done and help me. You know I have no insurance- no way to pay for all these medical bills; no way to even go to the doctor- what will happen to me? Will I be destroyed? Will I be overcome in this flood? How can I tell other people

that You will meet all their needs when all this is happening to me? What possible “Good” could ever come from this? How is me going bankrupt and losing two of my own children supposed to glorify You? What do You want me to do? How can I possibly survive this? Oh God- I am so scared.”

That prayer was written 26 years ago when it looked like certain destruction and the odds were not only that God had indeed abandoned this man but that his marriage and his very life was in jeopardy. Surely this was going to be the thing that would destroy him; surely this was going to be the issue that would bring him down and surely this man would lose heart and turn to drugs or alcohol or divorce or would leave the Church and would never darken the door of another Church the longest day he lived.

Why would God allow His Own child to suffer like that? What kind of God would allow His Own son to go through this? Why does God not answer a prayer like this?

But the man who wrote this prayer stands before you this morning. And that amazes me. The fact that I was not destroyed by those events and the fact that I still love God and that I am still saved and that I my heart still pants after God and that I still hunger and thirst after Righteousness and the fact that I am not just *attending* a Church somewhere- but that I am in the Ministry and the fact that I believe that I know God and love God and am enjoying God more now than I was 26 years ago is simply staggering to me.

Now I have not shared this with you this morning to brag or to boast- because I have nothing to boast about. I am not particularly brave and I am not better suited to go through things like that than anybody else is. I am not smarter or better than anyone else. I possess no internal goodness about myself that would allow me to remain faithful to Jesus in spite of these kinds of overwhelming odds.

I am nothing but a wicked sinner- who has been saved by God’s amazing Grace through the gift of Faith that God mercifully gifted to me. I didn’t earn God’s Favor and have done nothing to deserve anything from God but damnation.

So how is it that all of that could work out to God’s Glory and my Good? How is it that everybody in that kind of situation 26 years ago won and nobody lost? My sick daughter has now lived in Heaven with a new body in the very Presence of Jesus for a quarter of a century now

and the cloud that was over her mind because of the Downe's Syndrome she was born with has been removed and she has seen things unlawful for Man to utter; the child that I made a cripple is now saved and running hard after God and she is now married to a godly man and she believes the Gospel so much- she is raising her child to love and fear God. My wife is more lovely and more godly and more trusting than ever before and we are closer and more in love today than we were then. And I am the Pastor of a growing Church- preaching on three radio stations and impacting untold numbers of people for the Glory of God through the ongoing line upon line and precept upon precept preaching and teaching of the Word of God. How did that happen?

Now when I wrote that prayer 26 years ago- I hope you can tell that my theology wasn't completely biblical and yet I was completely saved. And even though I was wrong about some very important eternal issues- I belonged to Jesus and was already in the process of being systematically and progressively sanctified- even though I didn't understand it very well back then.

So I will tell you that I am here today- not *in spite of* what has happened to me but *because* of what has happened to me and those times of pain and agony and tragedy and suffering and unbelievable bewilderment was not just something that God did- but they were something that God did precisely because- He is Good and I can tell you now- that what God did for me and to me and in me in allowing me to hurt and to place within me the drive to persevere in prayer was the very *best thing* that God could have done to me at that time.

So why did God seem so distant to me during those years? Why did God seem to tarry and not answer my prayers? Why does God desire that we persevere in prayer and not simply ask and receive immediately? Why does it seem like God lingers a long time before He answers sometimes? These are very good and very important questions that I think a lot of people have and they deserve a very good and important answer which is given to us in the Passage here before us.

Now this Passage in **Luke 11** starts out with a very simple kind of normal look at a little village and a very common incident with a man who needed some bread to feed a friend who came at midnight. But this Passage ends up with a very deep and profound theological Truth in the final verse. But the statement that Jesus gives in verse 13 seems at first to be totally out of place and it *appears* on the surface to have

absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the story that Jesus told. What does God giving us the Holy Spirit have to do with persevering in prayer? And what does Jesus mean to say when he told us in verse 8:

I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

Are we to assume from this that God is not going to answer our prayers because He loves us and we are His friends but that the only reason God will answer our prayers is because we trouble Him to the point of exhaustion? Is that what Jesus is teaching here?

You know - I could really spend a long time with this because I honestly think that the issue that this Passage deals with is so common to us and that it impacts our prayer life so powerfully that I was actually thinking about doing an entire series on just verse 13 alone.

But allow me to give you the broad picture of this Passage and then we'll get back into it a little bit. And like every other subject- when we begin to talk about prayer and us persevering in prayer- we need to start- not with prayer and not with us- but we need to start with God.

We need to know that the one true living God- the only God,- the God of the Bible- the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ- is very different from the false deities and the man-made gods of the world's religions and philosophies that came from men and demons. And the main difference- beside the fact that none of these other deities actually exist- is in God's essential Nature.

You see, God is Love. And it isn't just that God loves- but that He *is* Love. Love is part of Who God is. And God is also Merciful and Gracious and Forgiving and Kind. And the one true God is very approachable by Man. We can and we should and we are told repeatedly to approach unto God because the God of the Bible- unlike Allah or Krishna or Buddha is very available and He is very, very generous. And while it is true that God demonstrates Wrath against sin and pride and against those who refuse to repent and humble themselves that is unimaginably terrible and that is frightening and that is beyond anyone's ability to withstand- we need to know that God is not Wrath by Nature. God is Love but He is not Wrath by Nature.

So while God *demonstrates* Wrath- God *is* Love. And that is very important to remember.

Because that is in direct contrast to all the false “gods” of human religions throughout human history- whose “gods” are not loving; nor are they merciful; nor are they gracious, or forgiving, or approachable, or available, or generous.

The false man-made gods of Islam and Buddhism and Hinduism and modern Judaism are all vindictive demanding angry “deities” along the line of typical kings and monarchs and rulers. And if you know anything about ancient history and the history of monarchs, you know that they are basically typically unavailable and unapproachable. In fact, over in **Esther 4:11**, you have a description of a typical monarch- this one just happened to be in the Persian Empire that says:

All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.

So if this king doesn't summon you- and you dare to go into his presence- he'll kill you unless he holds out a golden scepter so that you may live. So you nonchalantly walk into the presence of a king like this for no reason and no purpose with nothing to say or do for the king- and you die.

And that is a typical way that monarchs functioned in the earth for almost 6,000 years. You approached him only when you were invited. And you approached very delicately. You may have even approached going in backwards or going in bowed down. In some cases you went in crawling on the floor and typically the king was elevated so that it was clear to you that he was way above you and you were under his feet.

Now one of the biggest curses of Democracy and Freedom and Liberty like we have it here in America is that we lose some very important concepts that would help us in the Lord. It is very hard for 21st Century Americans to understand Biblical Sovereignty- especially in Salvation- because we have this overused and overblown sense of human “fairness” that we try to impose on God. And so we rebel

against the clear teachings of Scripture as God reveals to us Who He is and what He does and why He does it with the remark, “*But that’s not fair!*” as though God was as interested in being fair as we are.

We must understand, dear friends that the only thing God is interested in- is being God- and of being the single most valuable and important and beautiful and glorious and majestic Being in the universe. God is passionate that His Will be fulfilled and that He alone is feared and honored and obeyed and worshipped and glorified and known and loved and enjoyed. So while we are diddling about whether God meets up with our human standard of fairness- God is busy being Holy and Perfectly Righteous and magnified.

So back then- you approached a monarch with a certain hesitancy, with a certain delicacy and you certainly didn't approach with an attitude that demanding *anything* of the king. Throughout human history- many, many people wanted to see a king to ask him to do something for them and yet they were never given an audience. History reveals that some waited days and even weeks to see the king for just five minutes- only to be told that the king simply didn't wish to see them or hear anything from them- and they would go away empty handed.

But the Bible says that our God is absolutely available and absolutely approachable and that He is Gracious, Merciful, Compassionate and Kind and we can go into God's Presence boldly at any time of the day or night- while you're riding down the road; or while you're sitting in an emergency room; or while you're at work or while you're at church and ask for whatever you want. Because of Jesus Christ and His sinless Life and His Death and Resurrection- we can go into Almighty God's Presence any time and not interrupt Him. In fact- God desires and loves for you to do that. And we have the only God about Whom that is true. Please turn with me quickly to **Hebrews 4:16** and read that verse with me:

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Now the very fact that this verse says that we find Mercy and Grace as we draw near and enter boldly or confidently to the throne of Grace shows that the “boldness” or the “confidence” with which we enter

in- is not the self- righteous kind of boldness; it is not the self-serving or the arrogant kind of confidence- but it is the boldness that we get by knowing and believing that the only reason why we can enter into God's Presence in the first place is not based on anything that we have done or said- but is solely because of Jesus and His finished Work.

So this is not an *arrogant* kind of boldness or a *self-righteous* kind of confidence- so this is not taking about disrespect- but it is a boldness or a confidence that comes from trusting in Who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. And yet we are told to "draw near".

So **Hebrews 4:16** pulls together the Divine Principle that we learn in this passage in **Luke 11**. We are drawing near to God. We are drawing near to our great High Priest- the Son of God in Heaven. And what are we drawing near to? A throne. But not just any throne- not a human throne of an unapproachable and unconcerned monarch- but a Throne of Grace

... a throne that dispenses grace. So this particular throne is not a throne of law- it's not a throne of justice; it's not even a throne of judgment. This throne- the throne that we are told to approach with a holy boldness that is not human arrogance- is a throne of grace. So we draw near with boldness to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Now the word that was translated here into English as "boldness" or "confidence" is the Greek word, *parrhesia* which literally means: *a boldness flowing from freedom*. So this means that we may talk to God about whatever we want to say. It means to be bold in your speech. It means to be open and frank. In other words- to be "up front" and to say it like it is.

So the writer of **Hebrews** is telling us to go to God with openness and frankness and boldness and confidence and ask for whatever you want from the One Who is dispensing Grace and Mercy to help in our time of need. And this is a Divine Promise from a God Who cannot lie that is often overlooked. We are told to come to God with boldness for what is on our hearts.

Now it also needs to be said here that even though we are told to ask for whatever we want- we shouldn't ever want what is not God's Will. And so this statement by our Lord that appears to be so open ended with no stipulations actually has a powerful stipulation. We can

ask whatever we want but God will only answer that which is His Will. And so prayer is all about God changing us so that we will only desire and we will only ask for that which is God's Will. And the old statement by Augustine speaks volumes here. About 1700 years ago- Augustine said,

"Love God and do what you please."

... which has been twisted to mean all kinds of terrible self- centered things. But all that Augustine was saying is that if you love God- what pleases you is doing God's Will and so if you really love God- you will only do that which honors and glorifies God because that is what pleases a truly born again believer.

And the same is true with that seemingly open ended statement by Jesus that God will give you whatever you want- if you ask believing. Because if you are truly asking for something with a broken and contrite heart and one that trembles at God's Word- your faith in Jesus; your belief in Jesus- will not permit you to ask for something so that you can simply consume it on your own lusts. But you will ask for that which will accomplish God's Will.

So this holy boldness will pray something like this:

"God, please listen to me; hear me; please give me Your attention; don't hide from me. I have this very important issue on my heart and I'm bringing it to You for You to understand because I need You to act, O God, and to hear and to answer my prayer."

And so while there is certainly a measure of deep and profound humility here- there is also a very strong desperate element of confidence and boldness that is based on the freedom that Christ has given to you that allows you to bring this need to God.

Recently in our school of prayer on Wednesday Evenings- I taught on about "How to Argue with God". And people came to me and asked me if that was really okay to do that. And so to prove that I am not the one who made this up- I quoted from a very good source. Many decades ago- the great Reformed preacher Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said.

"This holy boldness, this argumentation, this reasoning, this putting the case before God, this pleading His Own Promises, this is the whole secret of prayer."

So what I meant by that is that when we come to God in desperation- we should present to God our petitions in such a way that shows that we have thought them through and that they are Biblical and that they are in accord with God's Will and not opposed to God's Will and that they are to God's Glory and not our own- rather than just the knee jerk kind of prayers that require little thought and really don't matter whether God answers them or not.

Over 300 years ago- Thomas Goodwin, the English Puritan went even further and he said this:

"When you pray, you literally can go to God and say what's on your heart and claim His Promise. In fact, you can demand that He be faithful to His Promise."

So don't leave God alone. Talk to God about what He has already said He's going to do. Quote the Scripture to God in prayer. And do that over and over and over again because God delights to hear us doing that in the same way as a father likes to see this element in his own child who has obviously been listening intently to what his father has been saying and hasn't forgotten. It pleases him.

Lloyd-Jones went on to say,

"... At this point the child may be slightly impertinent. It doesn't matter, the father likes it in spite of that and God is our Father and He loves us and He likes to hear us pleading His Own Promises, quoting His Own Words to Him and saying in the light of this, can You refrain from doing what You have promised to do? This delights the Heart of God... "

So even though this is pretty bold stuff- I wanted you to know that other people through the years have seen this same thing in the Scriptures.

So this is the attitude of bold prayer that goes to God and says,

"You made the Promise, You told me to come, You said to ask what's on our heart, You said to be bold, so here I am."

And that is the kind of boldness that Jesus is teaching here in this wonderfully rich Passage in **Luke 11**.

Now as I said last time, we know that God is holy and that God is all powerful and all wise, all knowing. We know that God is unchangeable. We know that God is absolutely sovereign, that God is in complete control of every circumstance, every detail. And He's working out His own plan perfectly. We know that and that always raises the question,

If God is absolutely Sovereign over everything all the time and is never defeated and always gets His Will accomplished- then why should I pray?

If God is going to do what He's going to do anyway- why should we pray? How in the world will our prayers have any effect on God? And so I'm just going to get in and get out as quickly as I can- since God is going to do whatever He's going to do anyway. So I don't want to bother Him or interrupt Him with my little trivial prayers. So how in the world am I to understand the role of my prayers?

And the Biblical answer to this puzzle is that although God has ordained the *ends*- He has also ordained the *means*. The end is fixed and God uses the means to reach His end. God's Will is already determined and it will happen just as God has desired it to. And God could have just stopped there and that would have been that. But He didn't. And in His Wisdom and Glory- God has determined that the "way" or the "means" by which His Will is going to be accomplished in the earth is by God's people praying that God will do what He has already revealed in His Word that He is determined to do.

The same thing is true about Salvation. God has already determined before He ever made the universe that He is going to save *some* of the unworthy sinners who would be born after the fall of Adam by Grace through Faith in the finished Work of Jesus Christ. And God determined that the criteria by which he will save these people has absolutely nothing to do with anything that they did or did not do- but will be solely based on God's Own Free Prerogative.

That is the revealed Will of God in Scripture and therefore so 100% of all those that God has mercifully chosen for Salvation will be saved- regardless of how sinful they have been.

And God could have ended it all right there- but He didn't. God then established the *means* by which His Will to graciously save these unworthy wicked souls will be accomplished and that is through the faithful preaching of a very offensive and highly insulting Gospel by unworthy preachers.

And so even though it is God's Will to save all of His elect- *nobody* will be saved unless and until human beings surrender to the Call to preach and then study to show themselves approved and then go and preach the Gospel to as many people as they can every day.

And it doesn't matter how many personal testimonies are given or what people are teaching these days- *nobody*- but nobody ever is saved unless and until they first hear the Gospel; and until they believe the Gospel; and until they repent and trust in Jesus. Nobody is ever truly saved any other way.

And so even though it is God's Will to save all of His elect- *nobody* will ever be saved in ten thousand years unless other people surrender their will and set aside all their objections and submit to God's Authority and engage in the one single way or means that God has chosen to save all lost souls and go and preach the Gospel.

But because it is God's Will to save all of His elect- God will see to it that He Sovereignly calls men to preach and God will see to it that these men are empowered and equipped and anointed to faithfully preach the Gospel that He gave them.

The same thing is true about our Sanctification. It is God's Will to sanctify all who are saved. But the "means" whereby God actually does sanctify us is our obedience. So we will never be sanctified unless we obey and so because it is God's Will to sanctify every single genuine believer- God will see to it that He places within us the desire and the power to obey so that God may sanctify us.

And the very same thing is true about prayer. It is God's Will that certain things happen in the earth. But the "means" or the "way" that God has Sovereignly chosen by which these things will happen is by and through God's people faithfully praying to Him to cause them to happen.

And so even though it is God's Will to do these things in the earth- those things will not happen in ten thousand years unless God's people surrender their will and set aside all their objections and submit to

God's Authority and engage in the one single way or means that God has chosen to do those things and gather together to pray.

But because it is God's Will that these things happen- God will see to it that He equips and burdens His people to pray so that He will then answer their prayers by doing what He has already said He will do.

So when we pray- God's Will is being accomplished- which is why prayer is so important and why it is so very important that we gather together to pray.

And so even our simplest prayer is not insignificant to God. Here in **Luke 11**- all this man wanted was three little pieces of bread. And that seems like such a trivial thing- certainly not a necessity and not an emergency and not a great need. And that's exactly why Jesus used this as an illustration.

So what may seem a small thing to you considering the greatness of God and the vastness of His Kingdom and His eternal Purposes is not at all a small thing. So you never need to feel embarrassed when you go to God in prayer. You never need to feel like your trivialities don't matter to Him. You never need to consider that because God is Sovereign and He doesn't need your input or your information.

So all of God's "ends" are achieved through "means" that involve our will and our obedience and our desire and our faithfulness.

Now the key word here in **Luke 11** is the word "persistence." This is what Jesus is teaching in verse 8 where He says,

I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

So the English word, "persistence" is a very interesting word. In the Greek it is the word, *anaideion*- a very unusual word. And it means: *importunity*.

Now importunity is different from opportunity. Opportunity is simply a circumstance that's favorable to you. But importunity is something completely different. Importunity is another word for being brash or bold. It's a word for being shameless. It's a word for being overly aggressive. It's a word for having a lot of nerve or a lot of gall. It's a word to describe rushing in where angels fear to tread- that kind of attitude.

And Jesus is saying here this man got what he wanted because he was shameless. He got up in the middle of the night and he went right over there and he bothered his neighbor and it didn't seem to bother him that the man was asleep and was in bed with his family. It was in the middle of the night and this guy was determined to disrupt the whole family.

So this is a very bold thing to do. This is a brash thing to do. This is a thing that takes some nerve to do- to wake up this entire family in the middle of the night for something as simple as three biscuits. So the Lord is teaching us here something about how we should approach Him. And He's calling for prayer to be a bold, shameless desperate interruption. Jesus is describing prayer that is very aggressive and that goes to God when it may seem inopportune- unburdening your whole heart with great conviction.

So without any embarrassment- we're invited to come- invading and intruding and claiming we have the invitation and saying, *"God, You promised; You said to pray without ceasing; You said to ask; You said to come; so here I am."* Now look again at **Luke 11:9&10**:

Luke 11:9&10

9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

So Jesus is telling us to come and to come in the middle of the night and to come for what might seem very small and insignificant to you and to come and hold God to His Promises and ask and He will give. Seek and you will find; Knock and the door will be opened to you. That is what Jesus Christ Himself promises us.

So this Parable makes sense only because of God's Promise. And the Promise makes sense because of a Divine Principle. And the Principle is a very simple:

Fathers give good gifts to their children.

Look at **Luke 11:11&12** again:

Luke 11:11&12

11 Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?

12 Or *if* he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

So this is a basic Principle that is based on the very Character and Nature of God Himself. "Fathers give good gifts to their children." So generally speaking; humanly speaking- fathers care for their own children. And He's upping the ante here from basic friendship because the friend's response was, *"Don't bother me. The door's been shut, my children and I are in bed, I can't give up and give you anything. I'm your friend but don't this friendship too far. I like to be your friend in the daylight. I'm not interested in being your friend in the middle of the night."*

So friendship is one thing- but friendship only goes so far. Fatherhood is something much deeper. So this Parable is put forth in the typical Jewish pattern of reasoning from the lesser to the greater. If a friend will respond to your boldness- what will a father do?

So Jesus is saying this Divine Promise that we can ask and seek and knock and we will receive and we will find and the door will be opened- this Promise is based on the fact that we are coming to a Father. That is the analogy and that is the Principle here.

And it's very interesting how Jesus lays it out.

"One of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish. Your son's hungry, wants a fish. He wants fish."

So if your son wants to eat and he's hungry- you're not going to mock his hunger and you're certainly not going to give him a snake. You wouldn't give him an animal that could poison him or kill him because fathers give good gifts to their children.

And then Jesus gave another simple analogy.

... *if* he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

Why that comparison? Because scorpions were kind of a yellowy color and there are different breeds that are different kinds of scorpions, but historians tell us the kinds in those days were of a sort of a yellowy

color- not unlike the color of an egg and they would curl up and when they curled up in a little ball, they looked like a small egg. So there was some kind of a similarity there to make the analogy work.

So Jesus says if your son wants an egg because he's hungry, you're not going to give him a deadly scorpion, are you?

So that's the Principle. The Principle is that fathers take care of their children. And when children come and they have needs- the father meets those needs.

And so, we see the parable which illustrates that we are to come at any time, no matter how simple the need and to be overly bold in our asking. The promise that underlies our coming is that whatever it is that we seek, if it's within the framework of His will, we'll receive it. That is based upon the principle that God is a Father.

And that takes us to the fourth and the most important point- the foundation or the bottom line. Please read verse 13 again with me:

Luke 11:13

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Now we come to Biblical Doctrine.

"If you then, being evil...

... and we could stop there and teach on the depravity of Man for a week. So Jesus says here that even the good fathers who give good gifts to their children are evil; they are all fallen; they are depraved.

Notice that Jesus doesn't say, "Those who *do* evil"- but those who *are* evil- "**being evil**". So this kind of evil is not predicated on what we do- but on who we are. And the word "evil" here is *poneros*- which means: *bad, wicked, or worthless*, and is also used in **Matthew 5:37** and **6:13** and translated by many translations as a reference to Satan- the wicked one.

So the insulting and offensive Truth is that all fallen people share the very same essential evil nature that the devil possesses.

However we also have what the Reformers called, the "Imagio Dei", which is Latin for the residue of the Image of God that was defiled

in the Fall but it's still there because even though we are at evil and the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and we are all bad- all the time- yet Jesus says here that we

... know how to give good gifts to your children...

... that's the residual of the Image of God.

So whenever you see what we call “the milk of human kindness”, whenever you see people who don't know God- parent well or love their children or show kindness or give their children what they need or be generous- you're seeing the residual of the Image of God- that even though it is warped and scarred in the Fall- it is still there. Now that isn't enough to save them- but it does display God's Image to a degree.

And so when Jesus says,

"You being evil know how to give good gifts to your children," and here comes the key, **"how much more..."**

... this is an ancient rabbinical way to argue the "how much more" argument or the "how much more" approach. So what Jesus was saying here is:

"How much more than you who are evil shall your heavenly Father- Who is not evil- Who is perfectly Holy- give?"

So the whole thing sets a huge gulf in our understanding. You can go to God because He's a loving Father. But He's a loving Father far beyond the most loving father in this world- who are by nature evil and who does his best to give good gifts out of a corrupt and fallen heart.

So how much more will your heavenly Father love you with a perfect love? How much more with perfect wisdom and perfect compassion and perfect mercy and grace, and perfect understanding of your situation and perfect goodness give to you?

So when you go to God and you go with boldness and you go with persistence and you rush in and you unload what's on your heart, and first you ask and then you start pleading and then you start banging, know this, that God is delighted with that because He with His perfect

love and perfect wisdom and perfect power and perfect provision is able to give the best to His children. **Psalm 84:11** says:

... No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

But there's a very interesting point at the end. Jesus ended this teaching in verse 13 by saying,

How much more should our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Now that doesn't seem to make sense when you first read this. In fact, in the sister passage- **Matthew 7:11**- what the Apostle Levi wrote makes better sense. There Jesus says:

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Now that's a good parallel, isn't it? You being evil know how to give good gifts, how much more shall your heavenly Father give what is good to those who ask Him?

But Dr. Luke didn't write that here. He said:

How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit?"

So how did the Holy Spirit get in there? And I read some commentators not too long ago who said there is a narrowing here because over in Matthew it's that which is good- so it's broad and wide and limitless. But here it's narrow and specific- the Holy Spirit. So Luke narrows it down to this specific thing.

Now when I read things like this and it doesn't sound right- I sit back and take my time and begin to think and meditate on it and pray about it. I'll read what Augustine or Calvin or Spurgeon or Edwards said and then I will just sit on it for awhile to try to figure out what may really be being said here.

The whole point of this is not that God's going to narrowly give us some prescribed things if we happen to hit the target. The whole idea is,

come and ask for whatever's on your heart and rush into God's Presence whenever you want, of course with a measure of humility and reverence, but still unbare your heart, speak boldly, be persistent, go over the top, if you will, and you can expect that God who is generous will give you whatever's good. But how does the Holy Spirit fit in?

Let me just make it real simple, okay? It doesn't say you ask for the Holy Spirit necessarily. It says "He will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." So when you go to ask God for whatever you ask God for- whatever it is- Luke says here that God responds by giving you the Holy Spirit. Let me show you how this might work.

You ask for comfort and so God gives you the Comforter. You ask for help and God gives you the Helper. You ask for Truth and God gives you the Truth Teacher. You ask for Power or strength and God gives you the Spirit of Power. You ask for Wisdom- so God gives you the Spirit of Wisdom. You ask for Guidance- God gives you the eternal Guide. You ask for love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control and He gave you the Holy Spirit- Whose fruit was released in your life.

So this is the generosity of God. You ask for the gift and God gives the Giver. You ask for the effect and God gives the Cause. You ask for the product- God gives the Source. Is that not amazing generosity?

God gives you according to His riches- not "out of" His riches. You ask God, as it were, going to the bank, you ask for some money, He gives you the bank. That's the point. I'll just give you the Holy Spirit, and then you've got it all because out of the Holy Spirit comes everything we need for both life and godliness.

Out of the Holy Spirit comes the anointing which teaches you all things. Out of the Holy Spirit comes the giftedness, out of the Holy Spirit comes the fruit, out of the Holy Spirit comes the direction and the guidance. Out from the Work of the Holy Spirit comes everything. Out of the Holy Spirit comes intercession on your behalf so that all things work together for good. I'll just give you the Spirit. Talk about generosity!

So this really is not a narrowing here- this is an amazing expansion. God says, in effect, you have so many needs- you need so much power, so much wisdom, so much guidance, so much help, So I'll just put My Spirit in you and then you will have the Giver and the

Source and the Cause. So not only does God give us what is good⁰ but He actually gives us the Good One.

I mean, the generosity of this is absolutely staggering. Giving us the Holy Spirit specifically is not something less than good gifts, it is something more than good gifts. The Lord is taking it a step further. He said, "I'll give you that which is good." And now He says, "I'll just give you the good One, the third member of the Trinity, God of very Gods, the Spirit to come and live in your life.

Now those disciples in that day associated the Holy Spirit with the coming of Messiah and with the Messiah's personal Life and Ministry and with the Messiah's Kingdom. But there's more. The Jew of the first Century knew that the Holy Spirit was going to come in fullness to believers who were a part of that Kingdom. How did they know that? The OT Promise of the New Covenant. **Ezekiel 36:25-27** says:

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your ^cidols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

So they knew that the Holy Spirit was going to come and come in them and enable them to walk obediently to the Word of God. They knew this was in the Promise of the New Covenant.

So Jesus understands that they're waiting for the Holy Spirit. And they know that all fullness is going to come in the Spirit, that when the Spirit comes and takes up residence in them- they're going to obey the Law of God, they're going to walk in His Commandments. So Jesus knows this is in their heart and so He says to them,

"If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more is your heavenly Father who is perfect and perfectly good going to give you what you want most, and what you want most is the Holy Spirit because in having Him you have not just the supply, but you have the source,"

So in summary, when the Lord gave you the Holy Spirit, He gave you everything, absolutely everything. "By His Presence, by His Power, by His Grace we are permanently the possessors of everything we need and so much more that He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all we can ask or think." You have more resource in the Holy Spirit than you can even imagine.

So it's all over the top- this whole passage. God gives you more in giving you the Holy Spirit than you could ever possibly understand. That's why the prayer also of Paul was that God would give us the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge that we would understand what we have. And it's to those who ask. You ask and He doesn't give you what belongs to the Spirit's- God gives you the Spirit. So God is not like that neighbor who was bothered and said go away, but finally relented. God is so very generous. And He gives us more than we could even imagine because since we can't comprehend God, or His Power, or His Wisdom, or His Resources. And we can't comprehend the Spirit, even though He lives in us. That's why He's able to do exceeding, abundantly above all we can ask or think. So don't dishonor God by doubting His generosity, go to Him in the middle of your night and know you couldn't interrupt Him, He delights that you're there. And hold Him to His Promises and be persistent and demand that He listen and give you what is best- the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Let's pray.