

# Prayer 101: Resting

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now, let's take our Bibles, if you've not already done so, turn to Luke chapter 11, verses 1-4.

That's our text. I've entitled my message this morning, Prayer 101. Really, the entire chapter, pretty much the entire chapter of Luke 11 is about prayer.

And even though we consider this much more than just, you know, an introductory to prayer or, you know, beginner's prayer, it really is that, these first four verses we call the Lord's Prayer.

It's much more than just beginner's prayer, but compared to what Jesus is going to go on to teach us about prayer in Luke chapter 11, we're going to see that this is kind of the beginning point, and then he's going to get into some very meaty, meaty stuff concerning our prayer life.

But let's consider, then, these first four verses. Actually, we're just going to consider a very small portion of it this morning, but I want to read the entire thing. So starting with verse 1.

[ 1 : 16 ] Now it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, that one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

So he said to them, When you pray, say, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name or your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts.

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Marvelous prayer, isn't it? Actually, I love the way this begins. Not the prayer itself, but the text. How it begins there in verse 1.

[ 2 : 20 ] He said, or the Bible says, As he was praying in a certain place. That's how it begins. And that's just very interesting to me. And I just can kind of sort of immerse myself in this.

And this is Jesus. He's praying. The disciples are there. And although Luke mentions a number of times that Jesus would get off by himself to pray, you know there were many, many, many, many times that Jesus prayed in the presence of the disciples.

He prayed with them, prayed for them. They prayed together. And so the disciples had a number of opportunities to actually hear Jesus pray. And so this was one of those occasions.

He was praying in a certain place. And when he stopped praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples did what I think was very natural. He said to him, Lord, teach us to pray.

I find that very interesting. And I'm excited about that part, which is kind of an introduction to this very, very popular, very well-known passage in the Bible.

[ 3 : 33 ] And so it's pretty obvious, isn't it? The disciples had been observing Jesus as he was praying. And they saw things in his prayer life and heard things about his prayer, in his prayers, that they did not have in their own prayer life.

And so they're observing, they're hearing Jesus pray. Now what would that even be like, by the way? You know, to be there, to hear Jesus pray.

Now we have some recorded prayers in the Bible, but we can't really get the whole sense of that like it would be if we were there, actually there, just hearing him pray.

His daily prayers, his basic prayers, the passion of his prayer, the substance of his prayer life. What would that be like? Can you begin to imagine? Have you ever found yourself just listening to someone pray?

You know, and I'm not just talking about anybody and everybody, you know, in public praying, but I mean someone that you respect, someone you really believe in your own heart is a very spiritual person.

[ 4 : 42 ] And they just kind of, from our perspective, seem to have a kind of gift of prayer. Have you ever just caught yourself, instead of praying yourself, listening to this particular person pray?

And you enjoy it, and you're blessed whenever they are called upon to pray publicly. Have you ever caught yourself in that kind of experience? Or even reading certain people write on the subject of prayer.

I have in my library a number of books by E.M. Bounds. I don't know if any of you have ever heard of him. I would highly recommend that you read some of his books. Now, they're old.

I mean, he wrote back in the late 1800s, lived on into the early 1900s. He was a Methodist preacher. Wrote in total 11 books during his lifetime, and nine of them were on the subject of prayer.

And I tell you, when you read E.M. Bounds on prayer, you immediately get a sense, man, I don't even know how to pray. I don't even know what prayer is.

[ 5 : 45 ] Now, I don't want to say that to scare you away from reading what E.M. Bounds has written, but I challenge you, read those prayers. So we have, you know, have these occasions, these experiences, whether it is someone praying that we highly respect, someone that is very mature in the faith, and we just have a desire to learn how to pray that way, or we read on the subject of prayer, and we find ourselves then, first of all, just understanding that we don't really know enough about prayer, and that we're not really very proficient in our own prayer life.

And so that's the occasion here, kind of the introduction to Jesus' very meaningful, very significant teaching on the subject of prayer. Because the disciples, they saw something, they heard something in the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ that they did not have in their own prayer life. Something that was missing, something that they wanted, something that they needed. And so nothing could be more natural than for the disciples to make this request of the Master, their Master, the Lord Jesus.

They said, Lord, teach us to pray. I would also ask you, have you ever prayed such a prayer in your own prayer life? Surely you have.

I have on a number of occasions. Lord, I don't really know how to pray. I am so weak in my prayer life. Not just in the frequency of prayer, but I mean even in the actual activity of praying.

[ 7 : 23 ] And you just admit to the Lord, Lord, I don't know how to pray. Lord, teach me. Teach me to pray. Well, I would say to you that that is a prayer that God will answer, by the way.

He will answer. In fact, He's already answered. And it's right here in the Bible. Right here in this passage that we're looking at and going to be looking at for a number of Sundays as we work our way through this very famous prayer.

It's here in Luke chapter 11. You can also find it recorded in Matthew chapter 6. As a matter of fact, if as I preach through this passage you hear something you've heard me say before, then there's a good reason for it because I have preached through this prayer before.

Not from Luke 11, but Matthew 6, interestingly enough. And I debated whether I would just skip this portion of it since I've already spoken on it. But I thought, no.

We've got to learn this. We've got to get this. That Jesus is teaching to His own disciples. Now, of course, you know, we typically call this the Lord's Prayer, don't we?

[ 8 : 36 ] It's known by that title. In fact, it's known by that more than it's known by any other thing. But it's not really the Lord's Prayer because the Lord is not praying here.

I want you to notice. He's not praying to the Father here. This is not an actual prayer that's taking place here in the presence of the disciples.

We could possibly more accurately, and some have called this, the Disciples Prayer. And that's getting closer to it. Although this is really not the Disciples Prayer in the sense that it was a prayer that they were to memorize and to pray.

Because it's not that. Because this is really a model prayer. You know that, don't you? This is a model prayer. This prayer, by the way, and I'm sorry to disappoint some of you and maybe even offend some of you, I don't know, but this prayer was never intended to be memorized and quoted, simply quoted, as prayer.

That this would be your prayer. That you would memorize this. And maybe every morning or maybe in the evening or other times, your prayer life consisted of quoting this particular prayer that is given to us in Luke chapter 11.

[ 9 : 58 ] It was never intended for that. I'm sorry. And yet, I would quickly add that there is nothing wrong with memorizing this prayer, okay, and quoting this prayer. And I'm not speaking out of both sides of my mouth.

It's all right to quote it. It's not wrong to do that any more than it would be wrong for you to memorize or quote any portion of Scripture. And just quoting Scripture does have a certain amount of power that God allows it to have in your life to encourage you and instruct you and to fulfill other purposes. Nothing wrong with praying this prayer, necessarily. Nothing wrong with singing it. I've heard a number of very fine, wonderful, choral arrangements of this particular prayer.

I'm not saying that that should never be done or there's something wrong with that. I'm just telling you that it was intended not as a prayer to be prayed, but it was intended as a model for praying. A model. Really, a pattern for praying. And maybe even more literally a kind of framework for prayer.

[ 11 : 12 ] You understand what I mean? Kind of like a skeleton that has to have flesh and muscle and tendons and everything added to it. It is kind of the skeleton for prayer that we must add substance to.

Now, it's not necessarily our own substance. It's substance that comes from the Word of God. So, it's a framework for prayer. And so, we're just going to spend, again, several Sundays on this marvelous text in Luke.

And I apologize again that we'll just get started with it this morning and then we'll have to take a little hiatus from it and then we'll get back to it. Let's get all we can get from this, the portion of it that we're going to focus on this morning.

We're going to spend a number of weeks on this and really with this two-fold objective. Number one, most obviously, and I think the primary intent of Jesus' teaching, number one, that we might all learn better how to pray.

I mean, the disciples asked, Lord, teach us to pray. And so, what they were requesting, we should be requesting. What they learned, we are going to learn. And so, we want to learn better how to pray so that we can have a greater freedom in prayer, by the way.

[ 12 : 28 ] I mean, the more you know about how to pray, the more freedom that gives you in your praying. But the second objective is that we might all experience a greater passion for prayer.

A passion for prayer. Alright, so, considering the first phrase of this prayer, I'm going to preach a sermon out of four words, okay? And that's the nature of expository preaching.

It doesn't take an entire verse or entire paragraph to be an expository sermon. You can actually, theoretically, in fact, not theoretically, I've even done it, you can preach an expository sermon on one word out of the Bible.

We're going to take four this morning and it is these four words. This first phrase, Our Father in Heaven.

That's how the prayer begins. And though it may seem insignificant, as insignificant, perhaps as you would address a letter, you know, dear so-and-so.

[ 13 : 43 ] It may seem insignificant, but this is rich with meaning, with instruction on how we are to pray. Jesus is giving us a lesson on prayer.

Our Father in Heaven, or if you prefer the King James, and I kind of do because it's so poetic and rich, our Father which art in Heaven.

First thing we need to learn, what we're going to learn this morning, and this will sound familiar, prayer is about resting.

It's about resting. I mean, you can just almost feel a sense of relief just with the word rest.

Prayer is about resting. Resting, not sleeping. Resting, not napping. Resting, not just letting your brain go and be disengaged.

[ 14 : 45 ] I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about resting in God, our Father. that's what Jesus said in verse 2. He said, When you pray, say, Our Father in Heaven.

Now folks, this is a fundamental element of prayer. Something fundamental, and yet it is something that we miss, really, quite often in our prayer life.

And I'm talking about prayer producing in us a spirit of rest. Of rest. To put it another way, a sense of security that can overwhelm us and be clothed in.

A sense of security, not in our self or not in our ability to pray and to pray the right words or to frame our questions and our requests. I'm not talking about a security in anything other than our security

that we have in our relationship with God.

A sense of security, an assurance would be another way to put it. Even a confidence, a confidence, not a wavering, not a doubt, but a confidence in God.

[16:09] Prayer is about a peace. I might put it another way. It's resting. A resting in God. Now, how so? How so?

Well, the short answer is because our Father God is in heaven. You say, okay, well, just how does that give us a restful security in prayer?

How does that work? Well, let this little short phrase, and again, in the New King James Version, just four words. In fact, in the Greek text, it's just three. Let these words just speak to you.

Speak to your heart. And that's what we want to do this morning, just to think carefully about each word in this phrase. First of all, it speaks of a special relationship, doesn't it?

Is that important in our prayer life? in this need to rest, to be secure, to have assurance, to experience peace in our prayer life?

[17:21] Isn't that necessary? To understand that there is a special relationship. We are resting in a special relationship. Our Father in heaven.

God is giving a framework for prayer. He says, here's what you need to say in your prayer life.

Our Father. That's significant. God is our Father. What a precious truth.

Seriously. But more than just a precious truth, a kind of warm, feely, kind of precious truth. Now, it is that, but it's much more than that doctrinally, theologically.

Because this is the only relationship upon which we may even approach God with our prayers. This relationship of child to father.

[18:25] father. That's the only relationship. That relationship is crucial. It is absolutely necessary for us to be able to approach him with any of our requests, with any of our prayers.

To approach him as chosen, saved, redeemed, blood-bought, however you want to describe it.

Adopted. That's a good way to describe it.

Adopted children. To approach God in our prayers understanding that we are his adopted children.

You see, when God created man, when he created man and he created him in his own image, God became the father of the human race.

But when Adam and Eve in the garden they fell in sin and with them all of mankind, we all, by the way, received a new father. Jesus said in John 8, 44, you are of your father the devil.

You know that passage. Now we don't like that, but because of our fall, our sinful heart and condition, as we were born, we are of our father the devil.

[19:34] And he said, you want to do the desires of your father. That's the proof who your father is. And the majority of this world is doing the desires of their father, and that's Satan himself.

himself. And so the only way then for you to experience the fatherhood of God again is through the new birth. You have to be born again.

You have to be born again by his spirit. You have to be saved by his grace. Paul said in Romans 8, 15, you receive the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father.

How do you cry out, Abba, Father? The only way you can cry out, Abba, Father, in all of that means, in that kind of relationship, is you must be born again. You must receive the spirit of adoption.

When you were saved, you were immediately adopted into the holy family, the family of God. I want you to listen to what Paul said in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 3.

[20:37] Just listen to these words. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ in Himself according to the good pleasure of His will.

To the praise of His glory, to the glory of His grace by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. That was marvelous, wonderful.

And it goes on from there, it just gets better and better. Do you understand? When you were saved, if you were saved, let's just assume that I'm talking to born again, children of God, when you were saved, you instantly became a child of God.

And we're talking about the significance of that in our prayer life. You are a child of God. John 1, 12 says it very clearly, but as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of

God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, spiritually born.

[ 22 : 08 ] This is a reference to regeneration, the born-again experience, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but what?

Of God. Born of God. Let me tell you something else. When you pray, you should think of God as your Father.

Do you? Next time you pray, be determined, remember, to say, you know, I'm praying to the Father, my Father.

Do you think of God as your Father? A Father who loves you infinitely more than any earthly father could, ever could? A Father who is intensely interested in your well-being, physically, yes, but more so spiritually and eternally.

He is intensely, eternally interested in your well-being. Do you think that way when you pray, that you are praying to God as your Father? So you see, prayer is about resting, resting in a special relationship, our Father Father, in heaven.

[ 23 : 36 ] Let me tell you something else. This phrase speaks of a sovereign reality, a sovereign reality that we must acknowledge, must understand, must have embraced, must have no doubts about when we come to him in prayer.

a sovereign reality, our Father in heaven, in heaven.

Actually, that speaks of at least a couple of important realities. First of all, and this may seem so simplistic, but I guarantee you that we need to think this way every time we pray.

In the first place, we pray to a God who is real. You say, well, I know that.

Do you? Do you really? Do you think this way? Not just intellectually, not just out of habit, but from your heart.

[ 24 : 58 ] That when I get on my knees, on my face, when I sit, when I stand, when I pray, lying in the bed, whatever posture, are you really thinking that the God I'm praying to is real?

He's real and He's there. I challenge you to think about that next time you pray. Make your prayer life more than just some kind of rote thing that you may do, you know, something akin to just quoting the Lord's prayer.

He's real. God is not a creation of our imagination, as some would have us believe. And though we may not believe that, sometimes our actions speak otherwise.

It's not like a childhood imaginary friend that you must kind of visualize, you know, kind of put some kind of flesh and blood to, some face on.

You've got to work to just kind of imagine that God is there. You're not creating any part of Him.

He's real. God is contrary to what some would have us believe over the years.

[ 26 : 17 ] God is not a product of evolution, the evolution of man and the evolution of civilization. You know, evolution is kind of crossed over into every area, not just science, but also religion and so forth.

God is not a product of evolution in a sense, you know, created by man's inherent need to explain his universe, you know. That somehow we've created a God, imagined a God because of some basic need that we may have to believe in someone or something greater than ourselves.

I mean, that's what the evolutionists say. What even some who are, God help us, pastors behind pulpits like this, really believe.

You know, God and God's just evolved in man's thinking as he himself evolved, you know, beginning with worshiping the celestial beings, the moon, the sun, the stars, comets, and whatever else, and then kind of moving toward worshiping of animals, and then worshiping man-like gods, and god-like men, like the Greeks, and Romans, and then spiritual, kind of spiritual beings that are unseen, kind of mystical.

By the way, you know, this is not necessarily a case for an evolution of the creation of gods. There are people on this planet who worship in all these different ways.

[ 28 : 06 ] Some who worship animals still, some who worship the celestial bodies, and some who still worship man-like gods, and Zeus, and people like that, and so forth.

This is existing in our world today. But God, the one true God, the God of the Bible, is real. He's never been imagined. He's not created by man, and his fascinations, and his own imagination.

He is real. Our God resides in a place, a real place, in heaven. Now, He resides there, so to speak, though God is omnipresent.

He's everywhere present and nowhere absent. God is not confined by space, but His throne is in heaven, and He is in heaven, and we pray to a God who is in heaven, in His heaven.

He is there. He is real. Now, I'm not saying He's flesh and blood, like you and me. He's more real than that.

[ 29 : 23 ] I mean, flesh and blood and material things are just simply passing away. what's left is what's real. God is real. Let's also just remember that when we pray, that God is right there with us.

He's real. You don't have to imagine Him or create some kind of visualization of Him. I'm not saying that. In fact, I would strongly recommend against that.

but do know that He is there. He's real. He listens. He cares. He is our Father in heaven. So, when you pray, do you have some sense that God is really there?

Hebrews 11, 6 is instructive here, I believe. The Bible says, but without faith it is impossible to please Him. For He who comes to God, now don't just pass over that too quick.

He who comes to God, not theory, not imagination, not some visualization, but really comes to God. Do you know you do that when you pray?

[ 30 : 42 ] You come to God. Now, God is always there. Let's not bandy about different concepts, different understandings of His omnipresence. God is everywhere present, nowhere absent, but He is some places in special ways.

And He is in your prayer, your time of prayer, in a very special way. And so, he who comes to God must believe that He is.

That's what Hebrews 11, 6 says. Must believe that He is. Do you believe that? I mean, He's real. He's real.

He's there. And believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. By the way, it's what we should be doing in prayer as well. Seeking God because He's real.

Let's not pass over the word heaven too quickly, though, because there's some instruction there for us as well. our Father to whom we pray occupies the place of highest honor.

[ 31 : 51 ] He occupies a place of unrivaled glory. The Bible describes a little bit about heaven, but it doesn't even come close to describing what it is really. I mean, John in the book of Revelation is describing heaven in the best way he can with the language that he has.

that's limited. Heaven is a place of unrivaled glory. That's where God is. That's the place He occupies. A place also of absolute sovereignty, authority, power.

Someone has put it this way, since God is in heaven, He is above all the evils and problems of our world. Since God is in heaven, He is in a position to move with power in response to our prayers, our needs.

Since God is in heaven, He is to be exalted and honored and worshipped by all who dwell upon this earth. So do you realize that when you pray, you're praying to the God who sits upon the supreme, sovereign throne of the universe?

Does that make any kind of difference? knowing that, does it make any kind of difference in the way you approach prayer? Our Father in heaven.

[ 33 : 17 ] Prayer is about resting, resting in God, our Father in heaven. This phrase speaks of a spiritual relationship, it speaks of a sovereign reality, and then there's one last thing.

This phrase speaks of a shared responsibility. responsibility. I just bet you you didn't see this here. This thing about a shared responsibility, but just as plain as can be, our, our Father in heaven.

Our Father. Jesus did not say pray this way, pray my Father. Now he is my Father. Father. And if you've trusted Christ, he's your Father too.

In that singular sense, in that personal sense. But Jesus said pray our Father. And so when we pray, the implication is we do so as part of a family.

[ 34 : 23 ] We're more than just one. We pray as a part of a family. And with that comes a great responsibility, a responsibility that we all share.

Specifically, we have a duty before God, to pray for one another. Because we're not by ourselves. We're not going it alone. It's not just our interests that we're concerned about.

It's not just me. It's we. He's not just my Father. He's our Father. We're part of a family, and we share that responsibility that comes with it.

Galatians chapter 6, verse 2, bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ, which is love. Bear one another's burdens. Philippians 2, 4, let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

You know, this just really isn't the American way lately, is it? we have become, over the last several decades, a me society, totally contrary to the Word of God, and that should be absolutely unheard of within the family of God.

[ 35 : 43 ] Romans 12, 15, rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. And I could cite a number of other passages in the Bible. the point is, sitting right beside you, on your left, on your right, in front of you, behind you, are brothers and sisters in Christ who need your prayers.

I mean, just look at them, on your right, on your left, behind you, in front of you. Don't turn around and look behind you, that's not polite. Seated all around you are God's people, your brothers and sisters in Christ who need your prayers.

For example, there are members of Christ's family present right here this morning who are struggling with sin. Right here.

Struggling with sin. some have even been deceived by the enemy and are making decisions, choices, going down a path that is literally destroying their lives.

Right here. And they need your prayers. right here. There are some sitting right beside you perhaps who are kind of at one of those crossroads of life.

[ 37 : 32 ] You know, decision time. Maybe they have some decision to be made, some big decision possibly and they're seeking God's will and they need your prayers.

right here in this place this morning. There are brothers and sisters in Christ who are young in their faith.

And I don't mean just the children, young people here who are saved, I'm talking about even adults. I'm not just talking about those who have just been recently saved.

there are adult believers who have been saved for a number of years but have not grown. Still babies.

Immature. They struggle. Struggle understanding God's word. Struggle with living the Christian life. life. And they need your prayers.

[ 38 : 36 ] We're a family. We're a family. God is our father. He's our father. And we have family members who are dealing with issues for which they need prayer.

Family members who are struggling with pressures, the pressures of life. And they need our prayers.

family members who are searching for guidance from God for which they need prayer. And those who are battling against temptation for which they need prayer.

I could not begin to list all the various possibilities. The fact is we're all needy people. And we can't go it alone.

God never intended for us to. We certainly have him and we have our prayers. But God has also designed the family in such a way that we need each other. We need to pray for one another.

[ 39 : 44 ] Now to be sure very quickly I should add that many need a lot more than just prayer from you. And we must do more than pray. Absolutely.

But we cannot do more than pray until we pray. we must pray for one another. We have that shared responsibility. Our Father in heaven.

So the disciples have been observing Jesus while he was praying. Wouldn't you love to do that? I would. fear for you. But their question coming out of what they observed what they heard is a question that we all have a request we all have a need we all have.

They said Lord teach us to pray. and the first part of the lesson is prayer is about resting in God resting in a special relationship our father in heaven resting in a sovereign reality our father in heaven he's real and he's there and he's intensely eternally interested in your well-being and resting in a shared responsibility he is our father our mutual father we're duty bound to pray for one another