

A LESSON ON PRAYER

Luke 11:2-4

Introduction: After observing the Lord in prayer many times, finally one of the disciples asked the Lord to teach them how to pray. Jesus responded with what is popularly known today as "The Lord's Prayer." The prayer that Jesus taught them is a model or pattern for us today as well. So here are some thoughts Jesus gave on prayer.

1. Two things the Lord's Prayer is not:

- Jesus never intended for this prayer to become a ritual prayer or to be recited in a formal manner.
- It was never intended by Jesus to be used as an amulet or special words to be repeated when one was in danger.

2. The Lord's Prayer is divided into two sections: YOUR and US.

- It starts first with God, putting the prayer into the right perspective, the right viewpoint about life.
 - As tears magnify sorrow and laughter magnifies joy, so prayer must first magnify the Lord.
- It teaches that prayer is a means of entering into the joy and confidence of all that God is and can do.
- It shows that putting God first glorifies Him and demonstrates obedience on "our" part.
- Most tend to rush into God's presence with "us, our, my, me" things, beginning with US rather than with God.
- We seem to be problem oriented and frantic about our needs rather than to be God oriented and relaxed in His presence.

3. The Time that one prays.

- There is no commandment given to us as to when or how often to pray. Why?
- Prayer should always be the response of the heart which in turn desires communication with God.
 - *Psalm 42:1: "...As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God."*

4. The Nature of one's prayer.

- "Prayer" is an avenue of drawing near to God in worship and dependence because we see God as the all sufficient One and ourselves as totally insufficient.
- "Prayer" is picking and choosing specific words, NOT repeating religious words without any careful thought.
- This prayer that Jesus gave the disciples is an example, NOT to be repeated over and over again and again in some ritualistic way.
- "Prayer" is the thoughtful exercise of the heart and the mind through which we seek to draw near to God in worship and dependence upon Him.

5. One is to pray as a child.

- Only the children of God can call God, "Father." Therefore prayer, other than for salvation, is really only for believers in Jesus Christ, who are the legitimate children of God.
- Prayer is to be addressed to God, using the term "Father," and not only to Jesus, God's Son.
 - Jesus is the One through whom we receive things from the Father.

- Jesus is the One through whom we go in order to have access to the Father.
- The Holy Spirit is the One through whom we have the power to communicate with the Father.
- "Father" is a term of honor, reverence and relationship.
 - Addressing God as "Father" demonstrates our attitude toward God as one of honor, respect and trust and our understanding of the relationship we have with God as one of His children.
- When we talk with God as our Father, it is to come to God as His child and talk with Him as such.
- To pray to God as our Father is recognizing that He is intimately concerned about us and we can be frank as a child, resting in God as a Father who has the heart of a father.
- Calling God our Father means that we believe Him to be just that. We never consider calling Him something else.
- The word "Father" draws our attention to the nature of our relationship with God as a result of what Jesus did for us.

6. We are to pray to honor God's Name.

- Names represent who people are and what they represent, also their reputation.
 - "Hallowed" means to set apart, make holy, venerate, or treat as holy.
 - As God's children we bear His name and represent Him before the world. HOW we act affects His name and reputation before others.
- We are saying, "let the whole of my life honor, venerate, and be a source of delight to you and all that you are."
- To "Hallow" God's name or sanctify it means to turn our lives over to Him for sanctification and opening up our lives for Him to make us like Jesus, His Son.
- To pray as Jesus taught is to pray in surrender and commitment for God's name but it will never be "hallowed" as long as we walk in rebellion, disobedience and self-dependence.
- *Ephesians 3:16-21*

CONCLUSION:

1. What Jesus taught the disciples was a model, an example, not some magical formula which forces God to do our bidding.
2. Prayer, other than for salvation, is heard and answered by God ONLY of His own family, His Children.
3. Prayer is to be made thoughtfully with carefully chosen words coming from the heart.
4. Prayer is address God as a child would his/her own earthly father with the same understanding that a child has of his/her father.
5. Prayer is to be made in such a way that God is honored, not only by the words spoken but by the life that has been lived by the one praying.