

## LifeGroups 2.8—Compelled by Love Luke 11:1-13

### Introduction

- [Slide #1] This morning, before we celebrate communion, I want to take some time to talk about one of the most important parts of the mission Jesus launched—prayer. All of us pray. We believe in prayer. I would even wager that 75%, 80% of us here right now could recite the Lord's Prayer on demand. Here's the thing..[Slide #2]

### Proposition

- **Being on the mission Jesus launched means praying the right way**
- My 7th and 8th grade basketball coach, **Coach McDaniels**, would have us pray the Lord's Prayer in the locker room before each game. I'm not sure what he thought this would do? Maybe that if we prayed before the game somehow we'd get on God's good side and he'd help us beat the other team. I don't know.
- What I want to suggest to you this morning is that most of us have never prayed this prayer the right way. Most of us, when we've prayed this prayer, have prayed it in the wrong context. The context of this prayer is the mission. Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray as they are on the mission he launched. This is really the disciples prayer—not the Lord's prayer—for when they're on the mission.
- I was thinking about this difference this week, the connection between Jesus teaching the disciples how to pray and the mission and I came to this conclusion. I don't know if I've ever prayed this prayer the way Jesus intended. I've prayed the prayer at bedtime, before a game, whatever. But I don't think I've ever prayed this way because of the mission.
- Let me say it like this, the only way to pray what Jesus teaches here and honor and respect his intentions is to pray this prayer while you are actually on the mission he launched.
- It is incredibly significant that this is the only occasion in the Gospels that the disciples request Jesus teach them something. Think about all the things they could have asked him about. They never ask about evangelism, worship, how to study the bible, crowd control after a miracle, how to walk on water. I think as they are on the mission with Jesus they see him praying regularly. They recognize this connection between the success of the mission and prayer and so they ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. This is prayer training for the mission.

### Transition

Look at **Luke 11:1-13**. [Slide #3]

### Organizational Sentence

- **Jesus gives three instructions for how to pray when on the mission**

### Transition

[Slide #4] First instruction. Verses 1-4. Jesus instructs them to pray for the right stuff. Listen.

### Main Points

- *One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 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 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."*
- Jesus' instructions in verses 1-4 aren't to pray these words verbatim—which is what we do. We just repeat the words by rote and think we've done something good. This is a pattern. Jesus gives his disciples a model for how they are to pray when they're on the mission so that they pray for the right things.
- Look at what Jesus models for them. Remember, three instructions total. The first instruction, the prayer itself, contains five specific things. But first the address.
- Jesus tells his followers that when we pray we should address God as *Father*. You gotta realize this was revolutionary. No good, self-respecting Jew would have ever addressed God as Father. Jesus is modeling for us that God isn't some impersonal force, grandfather, bad cop in the sky. He is an approachable, loving Father who cares. He's the father of all fathers. The best Father—totally unlike our earthly Fathers who let us down, who are often times unapproachable and harsh. And we are to have a relationship with this Father like Jesus—we are to look to this Father when we need help on the mission just like Jesus did.
- Now to the first instruction, the stuff we are to pray for when on the mission. We are to pray for God to be honored. *Father, hallowed be your name*. Hallowed means to honor. To pray that God is honored is to ask that in all of life God is shown deference and respect. *Hallowed be your name*. And specifically it's God's name, his reputation that's to be honored above everything else.
- We are to pray for the kingdom to come. *Your kingdom come*. To pray this is to pray for the continual advance of God's kingdom on this earth. The kingdom grows. It expands. It blossoms as Jesus and his followers live out the mission and more and more people discover the love God has for us—the love that changes everything.
- We are to ask God to remember our basic, daily needs as we go about Jesus' mission. *Give us each day our daily bread*. Remember what we talked about last week? When we seek God's kingdom first God takes care of supplying our physical needs so that we can focus on the mission.
- We are to pray for forgiveness. *Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us*. We are to continually ask God to forgive us when we screw up and fail to honor God's name. And we are to pray that we might be able to forgive others when they wrong us. Here's the kicker. Asking God's forgiveness requires that we forgive others. In other words, the only reason we can come before God and ask for forgiveness is because we are extending forgiveness to those who have wronged us. The principle is this. What we ask God for we must be willing and ready to do

ourselves. And if we can't or won't forgive others God won't forgive us of our sins. It's what Jesus says in **Matthew 6:14-15** says, "*For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*"

- And we are to pray for spiritual protection. *And lead us not into temptation* Jesus says. Following Jesus is costly, right? The prayer here is that we might be spared from difficult circumstances while on the mission that might cause us to sin. This is a request for strength that we might not give in to the power of sin—that we might resist temptation so that we don't co-opt ourselves out of the mission, either by giving up or giving in.
- When you're on the mission Jesus says these are the things we should pray for. We could take tons more time to flesh out each of these phrases. For most of you what I've just said isn't new. So let me make a couple of observations.
- Did you notice that Jesus' followers had this nagging desire to learn to pray. *Lord, teach us to pray.* The obvious question is how much do we desire to pray?
- See, I believe one of the reasons you and I don't pray more, or want to pray more, is because we're not on the mission Jesus launched. But the more you climb out on that limb called the mission Jesus launched the more critical prayer becomes—the more your desire to pray grows. Let me turn it around this way. Do you want something more to your prayer life? Then be more about the mission Jesus launched.
- Now the other thing I want you to see is how all of these requests make little to no sense without the mission. For instance, to pray God, honored is your name, when you're aren't working to bring people into a relationship with the Father so that they might in fact honor his name, his reputation is to be disingenuous with your words.
- To pray for God's kingdom to come when you're more about your own life than seeking his kingdom first is to be disingenuous with your words.
- To pray for God to provide what you need for each day implies that you've put his mission first and you're trusting God to provide. But if you're running after the things God wants to provide for you instead of seeking his kingdom then it's disingenuous to pray for God to provide *daily bread*. Do you see how this works?
- To pray for forgiveness implies that people have wronged you. Jesus says in Matthew's gospel *blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*<sup>1</sup> That kind of direct insult happens when you're on the mission—that's part of the cost of the mission. So it's kind of disingenuous to pray this if you never put yourself on the mission and in a place that might cause you might to be wronged.
- Do you see the connection between the mission and what Jesus teaches here? One of my mentors told me that "*prayer is not a technique by which we accomplish our programmatic goals.*" What Jesus teaches here is prayer so that we might accomplish his mission—which is why I said in the beginning, I don't know if I've ever prayed this prayer the way Jesus intended.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:11

- One of the biggest challenges we face when on the mission Jesus launched is learning to pray for the right stuff. Flip back to **Luke 5:15-16**. *Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.* He's on the mission. What do you think Jesus prays here?
- Listen to **Mathew 14:23**. *After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.*
- One more. Listen to **Mark 1**. *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"<sup>2</sup>* I think in all of these instances Jesus is praying for the things he taught the disciples about in Luke 11.
- Being on the mission Jesus launched is great. Nothing better. The question you've got to ask yourself this morning is this. Do you have the kind of prayer life, are you praying for the kinds of things that make you being on the mission sustainable. If not, then the mission Jesus launched will be a flash in the pan thing.

### Transition

Jesus gives two more instructions starting in verse 5. The **second** has to do with attitude. Look at the second instruction in **verses 5-8**. [**Slide #5**] **Pray with the right attitude.**

- *"Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs."*
- When we pray the pattern Jesus taught we are to do it boldly. Mission critical prayer is bold prayer. It's aggressive. It's tenacious.
- Jesus tells a story to illustrate this, right? In this story a man is at home when a friend on a journey unexpectedly drops in. There's a problem. The host has no food. And so the host has a choice. Go to his neighbor who might have bread or do nothing and be a lousy host. So the host, not wanting to be a lousy host, gets up in the middle of the night, walks to his neighbor's house, beats on his neighbor's door and wakes him up to ask for some bread.
- Jesus is basically saying which of you has the nerve to wake up your neighbor-and his family-at midnight to ask for bread kind of boldness and persistence when you pray? The point Jesus is trying to make is this. Boldness in prayer is good. It's the reason the host got bread from his neighbor for his friend.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark 1:35-37

- In the same way Jesus wants us to pray bold persistent prayers. That's the attitude we are to have in prayer. All the stuff Jesus tells us to pray for in verses 1-4, we're to pray boldly for those things.

### Transition

But more than just boldness, Jesus also teaches to **pray with expectation**. That's the **third instruction**. [Slide #6]

- **Verse 9.** *"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*
- Mission success requires prayer with the expectation that God will in fact answer all these things Jesus wants us to pray for. Jesus says ask, seek, and knock. Notice the promise attached to each of these actions. *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.* In other words, expect God to do something.
- *Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*
- The son asks for a fish, he expects to get a fish. Or an egg, he expects an egg. Not a snake or a scorpion. It would be unexpected for a father to give something else than what's asked for. In the same way, expect God to respond graciously when we petition him for mission critical stuff.
- See, the problem is all too frequently we aren't asking God for mission critical stuff. So our experience of God is that he never answers prayer. If you feel like God never answers your prayers it's because the things you're asking him for have nothing to do with the mission or the success of the mission.

### Conclusion and Introduction to Communion

- This morning as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, as we remember Christ's love for us, the love that compels us to be on mission, we come to the table to recognize that we too need Jesus to teach us how to pray. As we partake of the elements, as we reflect on Christ crucified for sins, yours and mine, I want you to think about this. Jesus never gets the cross. The mission fails. You and I are still in our sins, I think, if Jesus doesn't depend upon God in prayer for the success of the mission.
- This morning your celebration of the Lord's Supper is as much about wanting Jesus to teach you how to pray as it is rejoicing in the fact that through Christ our sins are separated from us as far as the East is from the West.
- If you're a follower of Jesus I invite you to come to the table boldly, with gladness. If not, that's okay. You can either let the elements pass you by or by taking the elements you can acknowledge that Christ's death is your death to sin, the signal of your resolve to live a new life for God and be on mission with Jesus.