DESPERATE DEPENDENCE: A POSTURE OF ABIDING IN GOD’S PRESENCE, LONGING FOR HIS POWER, AND DEPENDING ON HIS PROMISES

PRAYING LIKE JESUS: LUKE 11:1-4; MATTHEW 6:5-15

MAIN POINT

Praying like Jesus includes three ingredients: upward prayer (awe); inward prayer (intimacy); and outward prayer (struggle).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before You Begin: Follow up from last week’s commitments and prayer requests.

Conversation Starter: Throughout your life, when have there been times you prayed the Lord’s Prayer without it coming from the heart or knowing what it meant?

Who do you know that you especially admire their prayer life? What are the things that lead you to feel this way about this individual?

Why is it especially important that we pay attention to the way Jesus taught us to pray? What are the dangers associated with familiarity with the model prayer given by Jesus?

Transition Point: Almost all of us have people we look up to in regard to their prayer lives. Often, this is connected to a recognition that this person experiences a real relationship and deep intimacy with the Father in prayer. There is no one who experienced this relationship more deeply than Jesus. We should give care to study the way Jesus gave us to pray. However, we must recognize the danger that comes with familiarity with the Lord’s Prayer. It is possible to memorize and repeat this prayer without connecting it to our hearts. It is also possible to miss the immense value and beauty because we have grown so familiar with this prayer.

REVIEW THE TEXT AND MESSAGE FROM SUNDAY: LUKE 11:1-4; MATTHEW 6:5-15

Is there anything from the passage or message that particularly stood out to you that you’d like to discuss? Is there anything from the ICC daily devotions that you found especially helpful in relation to the message this week?

What are the three key ingredients Barrett gave for prayer when observing the Lord’s Prayer in these passages?

Which of these aspects of prayer do you most often go to in times of prayer?

Leader Note: Barrett gave three key ingredients for prayer as we follow the way Jesus gave for prayer: upward prayer or awe, inward prayer or intimacy, and outward prayer or struggle. For many of us, we most often begin and even sometimes stay only in a posture of outward prayer, asking the Father for help with our daily needs. As Barrett reminded us, if we only ever present our needs before God without remembrance of who He is and what He has done for us, we will leave prayer feeling more anxious and burdened than when we began.

How does beginning prayer with a posture of awe or an upward focus serve to relieve the anxieties that you bring into prayer? How is a recognition of who God is and what He has done connect to our previous focus on praying in Jesus’ name?

How does inward prayer lead us to a greater awareness of our own sin and the significance of the cross? How does a sense of guilt and shame for sin point us to our need for this type of prayer? Do you have a personal testimony of this?

How is outward prayer connected to giving up control in our lives, seeking to trust the Father instead? Can you share a practical example of this?

Leader Note: Following Jesus’ example, we should begin our prayer with awe of God and what He has done for us. As Barrett reminded us, we enter upward prayer not just out of duty, but as a means of cultivating sincere love for God. Remembering that we are received by God based on His grace, we recall that it is only by the name and power of Jesus that we are able to enter the presence of God in prayer. Inward prayer reminds us of the cost of forgiveness as we reflect on the sin in our lives and the cost that Jesus paid to forgive us the debts we owe against Him. As He has forgiven us, so we are to forgive those who sin against us. We will never forgive to a greater degree than we
have been forgiven. Finally, we submit our needs before the Father in outward prayer. As we bring our needs before Him, we can have confidence that He cares for us as a loving Father. We submit our needs before Him as a means of releasing control over our own lives and trusting His will for us.

How do you see an understanding of these ingredients impacting or changing how you pray?

**FOR GROUP PRAYER**

**Leader Note:** We are going to practice praying by following the model prayer of Jesus. Leaders may choose to divide into smaller groups depending on group size. Take some time as a group to pray together. Consider designating a certain amount of time for each of the three key ingredients of prayer that we have considered this week. During each segment of time, only pray prayers connected to that aspect of prayer.

**Upward Prayer (Awe)**
- Give priority to praise and honor of God
- Consider praying through Scripture focused on praise such as Psalm 100
- Pray through some of the names of God we have discussed in previous series

**Inward Prayer (Intimacy)**
- Seeking a greater awareness of sin and the beauty of the cross
- Seeking satisfaction in God alone
- Pray for awareness of how greatly you've been forgiven and the need to forgive others

**Outward Prayer (Struggle)**
- Bringing needs before the Father in confidence of His care for you
- Seeking to let go of control and trust the Father - “God, I give up control”

**COMMENTARY ON LUKE 11:1-4; MATTHEW 6:5-15**

**Luke 11:1-4** This model prayer for Jesus’ disciples is similar to the one in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:9-13), but much shorter. Apparently, the disciples were motivated to learn to pray by both Jesus’ example and that of John the Baptist and his disciples. It was unusual for Jews to refer to God as Father. Such an address would seem too personal and familiar. Even though Luke emphasized the offer of the kingdom of God (4:43) and the nearness of the kingdom in Jesus’ ministry (10:9,11), some aspects of the kingdom are still future (Your kingdom come). All people are dependent on the Lord to meet their daily needs, as in give us... our daily bread. In debt refers to what is “owed” to us spiritually (i.e., having been sinned against). The phrase do not bring us into temptation is in contrast with Christ Himself, who was led by the Holy Spirit to be tested by Satan.

**Matthew 6:5** Standing in the synagogues (gathering places for Jewish worship) or on the street corners when praying ensures that many people saw the hypocrites praying, but Jesus taught that God has no regard for such actions.

**6:6** A private room (Gk tameion) was a room that did not have doors or windows to the building’s exterior. Closing the door granted total privacy. Since the true disciple prays for a heavenly rather than a human audience, privacy is ideal for genuine prayer. Jesus described the Father as the One who is in secret. God is ever-present. The disciple can encounter Him in the most obscure locations.

**6:7** The babbling of idolaters may refer to the meaningless gibberish that appears in Greek magical papyri. Like the familiar “abracadabra,” these formulas were nonsensical combinations of sounds that were believed to have special power. Ancient texts show that Jews sometimes embraced these practices.

**6:9** By commanding His disciples to pray like this rather than simply “pray this,” Jesus demonstrated that this prayer was offered as a model rather than a mantra to be recited. The first person plural pronoun Our implies that Jesus intended this prayer to be a model for corporate prayer, i.e., a prayer for when disciples gather as a group. This confirms that Mt 6:5 was not intended to prohibit disciples from praying together publicly in the synagogue or other gatherings but instead prohibited prayers that were motivated by religious showmanship. Your name be honored as holy suggests that Jesus expected His disciples to live righteous lives that honor rather than profane God’s name (5:16; Lv 22:31-32). This is an important precondition for successful prayer.

**6:10** In light of parallels with contemporary Jewish prayers and Jesus’ teaching that the kingdom of God is a present reality but also awaits a fuller future consummation, the petition Your kingdom come has a present and a future focus. The petition asks that disciples submit more fully to God’s will as subjects of His reign through Jesus. We should daily pray for the future consummation of God’s rule in which He will reign fully and completely over the world.

**6:11** Daily bread was the amount of bread necessary to survive for a day. The request is reminiscent of Pr 30:8-9. Jesus wanted His disciples to live in a state of constant dependence on God and His provision.

**6:12** The Greek grammar indicates that the disciple prays for forgiveness from God only after having first expressed forgiveness to others.

**6:14-15** God forgives those who are truly repentant. True repentance results in a willingness to forgive others.