

## Sunday, January 7, 2024 | The Road to Redemption

### Week 7 | Luke 11:1-4 | “The Perfect Prayer, Pt. 1”

Before we hit the holiday season, we were in a series called *The Road to Redemption*. And if you'll recall, this study is part of a larger deep dive into the Gospel of Luke. In fact, we've been walking through this book, chapter-by-chapter, and verse-by-verse, since Christmas 2022. And so far, we've covered the Christmas story as told by Luke in the series *Go Tell it on the Mountain*; we started off 2023 with *Onward*, where we explored the *start* of Jesus' earthly ministry, and we then moved into *Everyday Disciple* as we studied the twelve apostles and what it means to follow Jesus consistently, every day, week-in and week-out, 365 days a year.

But today, we won't be starting a new series. Instead, we'll pick back up right where we left off in *The Road to Redemption*. Bear in mind that this study is intended to focus our attention on one thing: *calvary*. In Luke 9:51, our author tells us, “When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.” In other words, the Lord hit the road and was headed to the capital of Israel, where he would eventually die for the sins of humanity. And though it will take him a while to get there (the Triumphal Entry will not occur until 19:28), and though it will seem like he is directionless, the Son of God was constantly traveling the road to redemption. And even if he should detour, Jesus Christ steadily moved closer to the cross.

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Today, we'll be talking about *prayer*, and honestly, I cannot think of a better way to start 2024. Who doesn't need more prayer in their life? What Christians can say they've perfected the art of praying? However, since the topic of prayer is like a vast sea, sadly, we'll only be able to touch its shoreline. And even though this is a two-part message, make no mistake, you will need to take matters into your own hands to fully grasp what it means to pray.

In light of that, I'd like to recommend two books:

*Psalms in 30 Days* by Trevin Wax

*Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* by Tim Keller

**READ:** Luke 11:1-4 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now Jesus was **praying** in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, **teach** us to **pray**, as John **taught** his disciples.” <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, “When you **pray**, say: “Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

<sup>3</sup>Give us each day our daily bread, <sup>4</sup>and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.”

For those familiar with what is often referred to as 'the Lord's prayer,' you will have noticed that the prayer Luke gives us here seems incomplete. And, compared to the version preserved for us in Matthew 6:9-13, it is as if Luke has gutted the prayer altogether. However, it is more likely that our author wished to emphasize the principles at the heart of the Lord's prayer rather than the specific verbiage. Hence, he wanted to stress the themes that make the “Perfect Prayer” *perfect* rather than give us a script.<sup>1</sup> Luke wants us to focus on the elements that ought to make up our prayers rather than for us to be overly concerned with some strict formality.

The perfect prayer is made up of seven principles:

1. **The Benevolence Principle:** “Father.” Your *perception* of God impacts how you *talk* to God. If you think of him *only* as an all-present being, you will think of God as an omnipresent *observer*—i.e., he exists *only* to *watch* you. If you think of him *only* as an all-knowing being, you will think of God as an omniscient *guru*—i.e., he exists *only* to *inform* you. If you think of him *only* as an all-powerful being, you will think of God as an omnipotent *genie*—i.e., he exists *only* to *please* you. But think of him as a benevolent Father, who also happens to be omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, and you will think of God as he truly is—i.e., a being who is *everywhere*, knows *everything*, and can *do anything* and who wants to have a loving parental relationship with you. Or, as the Beloved Apostle puts it in 1 Jn. 3:1, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”
2. **The Reverence Principle:** “Hallowed be your name.” The God we speak to is not only our Father, he is also holy. When we pray, we’re not only on home turf, but we’re also on holy grounds. If we are commanded to honor our earthly father (cf. Ex. 20:12), how much more so our heavenly one? This is why we ought not take the Lord’s name in vain—i.e., “oh my god.” We ought to give God’s name and, by extension, his entire being, the respect he deserves. We ought to revere him. King David found great comfort in the name of the Lord: “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God” (Ps. 20:7).

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<sup>1</sup> Bock, Darrell L., *Luke 9:51-24:53*, The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), p. 1051.

3. **The Acceptance Principle:** “Your kingdom come.” Knowing that our heavenly Father is who he is, why would we not want his will for our lives? Why would we not want the wholesale takeover of this world? Why would we want anything more than to see God's heavenly kingdom set up on earth? And we know that, eventually, that will take place. However, in the meantime, though the world around us has rebelled, we can **accept his rule daily**. Matthew 6:33 says, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”
4. **The Sustenance Principle:** “Give us each day our daily bread.” A father would not be considered a good father if he did not provide for his children. Neglecting one's children is reprehensible. God is no such father. He seeks to provide for our daily necessities. And though he already knows what we'll need, our Father still wants us to talk him about our needs. Notice I said “needs” not “greed.” The writer of Proverbs put this way, “give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God” (Pro. 30:8b-9). No matter how much or how little we have, we ought to see that God alone **sustains us**; it is from him that we get our **sustenance**. Our heavenly Father wants us to see who is actually the one who puts food on the table.
5. **The Repentance Principle:** “Forgive us our sins.” Disobedience mars the relationship between a father and his child. When there is rebellion, the home dynamic is broken. Only when a son/daughter humbles themselves and asks for forgiveness is the peace in the home restored. Our heavenly Father knows when we sin; we can hide nothing from him. And, as with an earthly father, we must **repent** of our sins if we want a healthy relationship with God. Proverbs 28:13 says, “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”
6. **The Lenience Principle:** “for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” Make no mistake, with the mercy that God has shown us, we must show the same towards those who trespass against us. If God has forgiven us, we cannot withhold forgiveness from others. If we are the recipients of grace, we ought to be the conduits for grace. Jesus says in Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” In other words, if you want mercy from God, our heavenly Father will expect you to be **lenient** with others.

7. **The Guidance Principle:** “Lead us not into temptation.” As a good father, God wants us to succeed, but we are prone to failure. Why? Because we often think we're better off on our own. Pridefully, we try to blaze our own path only to fall into the ditch, not knowing how we got there. As with the third petition, God wants to be invited into our situation; he will not force his way in. And should we, as the writer of Proverbs puts it, “**acknowledge him**” every step of the way, the Scriptures promise that “**he will make straight your paths**” (Pro. 3:6). The Lord wishes to **guide** us; we need only invite his **guidance** into our life.

### So, what's the takeaway?

The **perfect** prayer is guided by objective **principles**, not subjective **preferences**.

Whichever disciple came to Jesus asking for a lesson in prayer, he knew something that many Christians don't: there is **better** way. And, as he heard his master praying, he realized that the way he had always prayed was somehow defective. He wanted to pray like Jesus. He didn't want subjective preferences to influence his prayer life. He wanted objective principles that would guide his prayers.

In fact, the perfect prayer is a lot like the perfect cookie.

**EXAMPLE:** Though they can be as complex as you want, the *perfect* chocolate chip cookie is, at the very least, comprised of **seven ingredients**: flour, baking powder, salt, vanilla extract, butter, sugar, and, of course, chocolate chips. That's the base. Every chocolate chip cookie has these ingredients. Change any one of them, the cookie. Likewise, prayers can be complex. But at its core, every *perfect* prayer is guided by **seven principles**: benevolence, reverence, acceptance, sustenance, repentance, lenience, and, of course, guidance.

As with the perfect cookie, **The perfect prayer is guided by objective principles, not subjective preferences.** Don't follow the recipe; you'll have less than the ideal cookie. Don't follow the principles; you'll have less than the perfect prayer.

## Video Description

### **The Road to Redemption | Week 7 | “The Perfect Prayer, Pt. 1” (Luke 11:1-4)**

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

Today, we'll be talking about *prayer*, and honestly, I cannot think of a better way to start 2024! Who doesn't need more prayer in their life? What Christians can say they've *perfected* the art of praying? But where to begin? There's no better passage to turn to when it comes to this topic than to unpack what is called 'the Lord's prayer'.

Now, those familiar with 'the Lord's prayer,' will have noticed that Luke's version is different from Matthew's (cf. Mat. 6:9-13). In fact, it is as if the good doctor has gutted the prayer altogether. However, it is more likely that our author wished to emphasize the *principles* at the heart of the Lord's prayer rather than the specific verbiage.

So, as we work through this passage, we'll stress the *themes* that make the “Perfect Prayer” perfect rather than memorize a *script*. We'll focus on the *elements* that ought to make up our prayers rather than be overly concerned with some *strict formality*.

**Pastor's manuscript can be found here:**

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