

A • S • K (Part 2)

Introduction

The Text

¹ 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.” ² And 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 and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.” (Luke 11:1–4)

Quick Review

- A. This is now week three on Luke’s version of the Lord’s Prayer (vv. 2-4). As we begin to dive in yet once more, a few quick words of review are in order.
- B. The first thing to recall is that Jesus, in this prayer He lays out here, is providing not some formula for us to mindlessly recite but a sort of pattern after which we can model and build out our own prayer lives. We identified the pattern here as dividing into three parts:
 - 1. First, we see that prayer involves Adoring God for all that He is for all that He’s been doing on our behalf. This, I think, is wrapped up in that first word in v. 2a: “Father”.
 - 2. Secondly, with regard to this pattern, as we follow along in v. 2, we see that prayer involves Surrendering all that we are to God. This is what seems to be encapsulated in the words that come next: “[H]allowed be your name. Your kingdom come” (v. 2b).
 - 3. The third part of the pattern emerges in vv. 3-4, where we see that prayer involves this idea of knocking. I come to God as Father, I surrender all to Him, but I also bring my real, everyday, pressing needs: “I need bread; I need forgiveness; I need You to keep me strong in the face of temptation.”
 - a. It is from this pattern that I put forward that acronym that stands as the title of these messages: A • S • K. Adore, Surrender, Knock.
- C. You’ll recall as well that I think this pattern really seems to establish for us a sense of priority in our prayers. What I mean is that the first will naturally flow into the second which naturally flows into the third.
 - 1. In other words: When in my prayers I come to adore God as Father, when I really see how good He is, how good He has been for me, then I am more inclined to surrender to Him: “I want Your name hallowed, Your kingdom to come. I want others to see You. I trust You. I know You have me. Be glorified God in whatever You will for me.”

2. And then, when we come knocking with our personal requests, we are not demanding, we are giving God opportunity to glorify Himself by providing for our needs. “Show the world what kind of Father You are by the way you take care of me.”
 - a. That’s why I said last time: “Your personal requests in prayer are not contrary to a concern for God's glory. In fact, they erect one of the main stages upon which His glory can be displayed! God loves to glorify Himself by providing for the needs His people.”
 - i. If you doubt me on this, Jesus says as much in [John 14:13](#): “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

Knock

- A. So having looked at Adore and Surrender last week, now we turn to this idea of Knocking ([vv. 3-4](#)).
- B. The image of a person knocking comes from the parable that immediately follows Jesus’ prayer here in [vv. 5-10](#) which we shall look at next time. But it might help to direct your attention to [v. 9](#) there where Jesus sums it up this way: “[And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.](#)”
 1. Jesus is inviting us to bring our real selves to the real God and find real help for our real needs. Don’t hide your need. Don’t hide your mess. Don’t hide your fears. Be a kid and run to your dad for help. “Knock son, daughter. I’m going to open.”
- C. When we look closer at [vv. 3-4](#) we find three different types of request. We see the request for: (1) Provision ([v. 3](#)); (2) Pardon ([v. 4a](#)); and (3) Protection ([v. 4b](#)). These really form the outline for our time together this morning. Let’s go!

(1) Provision (v. 3)

- A. The first request is for Provision: “[Give us each day our daily bread](#)” ([v. 3](#)). Let’s take this idea of “daily bread” one word at a time.

“Daily”

- A. Though the word translated here “daily” is a bit difficult in the Greek, and commentators have differed over what precisely to make of it, it seems, in any case, the basic sense is this: God provides just enough.
- B. If you really hear that, you should feel the tension in it. As human beings, but especially as Americans, we don’t want “just enough”. We don’t want just today’s bread, we want it for the next week, the next month, the next year. We want to know we have everything lined up; that we will be provided for for the rest of our days; that we are secure.
 1. We wouldn’t say it this way, but what we come to realize when we stop and think about it, is that we spend most of our time laboring and working to get to the place where we no

longer need God. We want to get to a spot in life where, whether God shows up or not, either way we know we will be okay. We want to work God out of a job.

- C. But here is where this prayer for “daily” bread comes in to help. God is not willing to give us all of this if it means we will forfeit on the thing He cares most about, relationship. Instead He encourages us to pray in a way that keeps us relying daily upon Him. And His commitment is to provide for us just enough.
- D. The picture behind this idea of daily bread, of course, seems to be that of manna from the story of Israel in the wilderness. You probably remember it. God gave them just enough bread from heaven for the day. If they tried to save it up, it would rot in their pantries. It’s not that God couldn’t give them more—as if they just haven’t invented preservatives yet or something. In fact, on the day before the Sabbath, he would let them gather for two days and it would stay just fine.
 - 1. The issue was never one of shelf-life, or expiration dates, or whatever. Again, it was one of relationship, dependence, trust. He was teaching them to daily rely on Him for Fatherly care and provision. He was teaching them just how inclined His heart is towards them in grace. That is what they needed desperately to know.
 - a. [Deut 8:3](#) gives us window into this very purpose: “[H]e humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” The daily bread was intended to lead them to the eternal God!
- E. We see this idea reflected in the prayer of [Prov 30:8-9](#): “⁸ [G]ive me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, ⁹ 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.”
 - 1. We get the idea here, right? If I have too much, I’m prone to forget Him. But if I have too little, then He looks like a bad dad! His name is on the line. “Give me just enough.”
- F. No doubt, many of us have struggled with the idea of God providing just enough. We wonder why it seems He is stringing us along, why we are just barely getting by, day by day. We keep asking for our bread for the year, and we always get just enough for today.
- G. Some of you know, since our arrival here three years ago, my family has dealt with what’s seemed like a relentless barrage of physical struggles and health scares. Some of the bigger ticket items have been:
 - 1. The asthma attack that landed me in the hospital for a day.
 - 2. Our miscarriage at 13 weeks when most would consider you in the clear as far as pregnancies go.
 - 3. The tumor on Megan’s liver that all the doctor’s looking in were thinking odds were pointing towards cancer.
 - 4. Levi’s not hitting some developmental milestones so the doctor is having Early Start check him out for autism and things.

5. And then this last week something went down my little Bella. On Monday, she goes for a routine physical and, as the doctor's checking things with his stethoscope, suddenly Megan notices his demeanor starts to change. He's listening to this and that side again and again and then he tells us she has a heart murmur and we need to see a pediatric cardiologist as quickly as possible. It's scary, but we've known people who have heart murmurs, it can be somewhat common, and even normal for kids and things. But then we read that doctors nowadays are trained to identify the innocent murmurs so they can avoid referrals to expensive specialists. If your pediatrician refers you to a specialist, you already know, he thinks it's serious. He thinks there could be a serious problem with my daughter's heart.
- H. So what do you do? What do you make of this? Why do we have to keep dealing with these sorts of things? We get past one thing just to get hit by another. Is God a bad dad? No! He is wanting us to grow deeper in dependence and intimacy with Him.
1. There are always two ways you can go in the face of trial: You can raise a fist or you can raise a hand. You can throw blows at God or you can throw yourself into His loving arms.
 - a. So that's what we did. We prayed. We pleaded. We begged. And God heard. We go in and the cardiologist, listening in to her heart, looks confused. "Her pediatrician wrote that the murmur was 'dominant'. What I'm hearing is so faint I'm surprised he even caught it at all. I was expecting something much more serious. Your daughter's perfectly fine."
 - I. Our Father doesn't always answer prayer in this way. Some of you know that all too well. But He is always answering in some way, always there, always ready to help. ["Give us each day our daily bread."](#)

"Bread"

- A. With the idea of ["bread"](#) Jesus is referring to one of the most basic aspects of our earthly existence. We need food. If we don't have food, we don't live.
1. By highlighting our need to pray for something as basic as bread here, Jesus is essentially saying we need to be praying for everything. There is nothing we can take for granted, nothing we can handle on our own. We need God at every point, for everything, every day.
- B. But there is another side to this discussion of our dependency and that is the implicit desire of our God to provide for us. If we can talk to Him about our need for bread, if He wants us to talk to Him, invites us to talk to Him, about such basic, mundane things, then the clear implication is that He wants to be talked to about everything. There is nothing too low or insignificant for Him. He cares about your every detail.

George Muller

- A. If you should ever doubt such a thing, I commend George Muller's autobiography to you. He prays for the most basic human needs and finds God happy to help. Indeed, in many ways, he determines to live his whole life as a test of this very point in the Lord's prayer.

- B. George Muller was a German Christian called to minister in England. He was a pastor of a church there and also started homes for the care and education of orphans. He sold all that he had and relied solely upon God in prayer for his needs and the needs of his orphanages. His autobiography is a collection of journal entries in which he recounts God’s faithfulness to him in all of this.
- C. I’ll read just one entry from his journal so you can get the flavor of it: “Nothing has come in. At six o’clock this evening, our need was very great in the Orphan Houses and the day schools. I prayed with two of the laborers. We needed some money to come in before eight o’clock tomorrow morning, so that we could buy milk for breakfast. Our hearts were at peace, and we felt assured that our Father would supply our need.
- We had scarcely risen from our knees when I received a letter containing a sovereign [what used to be a British gold coin] for the orphans. About five minutes later, a brother promised to give me fifty pounds next week. A quarter of an hour after that, a brother gave me a sovereign, which a sister in the Lord had left for the orphans. How sweet and precious it is to see the willingness of the Lord to answer the prayers of His needy children!” (p. 163).
1. “We need milk. We need bare essentials for life. Let’s pray.” And the Father provides! And in the ongoing provision, the sweetest relationship develops.
- D. Indeed, elsewhere Muller writes: “Truly, it is worth being poor and greatly tried in faith for the sake of having such precious, daily proof of the loving interest with our kind Father takes in everything that concerns us. How could our Father do otherwise?” (p. 151).
1. The relationship that has developed between my Father and I is worth more than a pantry full of food or a bank full of money. Moths can corrupt the food in that pantry. Thieves can get at the money in that bank. But nothing can get between me and my God.
 - a. We are not less secure because we are daily dependent, we are more so, because we are with God, our Father, who is daily faithful.

(2) Pardon (v. 4a)

“Forgive Us Our Sins”

- A. Now Jesus moves us towards this idea of Pardon: “⁴ and forgive us our sins . . .” (v. 4a).
- B. The transition from daily bread to forgiveness of sin is a pointer towards the reality that just as we need bread every day, so also do we need forgiveness.
1. Add to this the fact that Jesus is laying down this prayer as something His disciples should pray not just once but often (“When you pray say . . .” [v. 2a]) and I think the point is made certain.
- C. Let me just throw out a question for you to ponder: When’s the last time you got down on your face and said: “God, I’m sorry!” Or when’s the last time, like that tax collector in [Luke 18](#), you’ve stood in the back of a church service beating your breast, saying: “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” (v. 13). Because if I’m reading Jesus rightly, He thinks we should be praying that every day.

1. But, as it is, we often don't take our sin seriously, we beat our breasts for the big red-letter sins, but not for the little "innocent" ones, as if there ever were such a thing. Jesus shed His blood as payment for all sin—"big" or "small"—and we ought to be shaken by our grave and daily need for forgiveness.
- D. But, of course, as with the provision, so too now with the pardon. The fact that Jesus is telling us we must pray such a thing daily not only speaks of our great need of it. It also speaks of the Father's great readiness to provide it.
1. He is inviting us to come to the very One we have offended and assuring us we will find grace there. For such is our Father's heart.

"For We Ourselves Forgive"

- A. Now, if you noticed, I pulled up short on this second request there in v. 4. For Jesus goes on to connect our request for forgiveness with our willingness to forgive others: "[F]orgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us."
- B. This touches on the reality put forward plenty of other places in the NT: namely, that you cannot be right with God if you are wrong with your fellow man. You cannot come and bless God while, at the same time, cursing your neighbor.
- C. Peter relates the idea specifically to prayer when he writes: "[H]usbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Pet 3:7).
1. What a sobering that word is for us, men. It just unmasks this idea that I can be at odds with my wife and at the same time have thriving relationship with God. I just can't. A thriving relationship with God manifests itself in love, in grace, in an understanding and forgiving spirit, even for those who've hurt us, even if we may be in the right.
 - a. God was in the right, and He would've been perfectly just to remain in heaven and let the world go to hell (literally). But He sent His Son. He came down. And we cannot truly receive His movement toward us if we are not ready to let it carry us in that same movement towards others.
 - i. The vertical must spill out into the horizontal. And if we are not willing for that to be the case, then we can have no confidence God will hear us in this prayer.

Breaking the Cycle

- A. Let me just say one more word on this, because I think it's so beautiful. So often when people sin against us we get stuck in a sort of vortex, a vicious spiral, a feedback loop develops. Your sin leads to my sin. You hurt me so I hurt you. Hurt people hurt others. Wounded people wound others. And on it goes.

1. Perhaps your stuck in one of these right now. You keep waiting for the other to make a move towards reconciliation, then you will come in turn. But they are waiting for you. Both have their guard up, both are self-concerned and self-protecting. No one is willing to make the first move of grace, so on with the sin and hurt and wounds.
- B. How do you break free? Secular psychology really has no adequate answers. But we have Jesus.
1. Here is One who finally breaks the cycle. Here is One who is severely wounded and yet He reaches out towards His offender to heal. And a world of new possibility opens up. This changes everything.
 - a. Because Jesus reaches towards me, His enemy, the one who wounded Him, and heals, I can move towards you and do the same. I don't need you to repay me, to say sorry, to make the first move, to restore what you broke in me. He does that. We can give to our enemies, love them, forgive them.

(3) Protection (v. 4b)

Forgiven and Free

- A. We come now to that third and final request Jesus puts forward here, a request for Protection: “[L]ead us not into temptation” (v. 4b).
- B. While we don't have time for much on this, let me at least say that that the basic sense here is: “God give us strength to walk away from sin, even in the most trying of circumstances. Don't let us give way under pressure. Help us resist. Keep us. Protect us. We don't just want forgiveness with regard to the penalty of sin, we want freedom from its power.”
- C. I recently heard these lines from that classic hymn Rock of Ages, and I thought they had much to offer on this point: “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, / Let me hide myself in Thee; / Let the water and the blood, / From Thy wounded side which flowed, / Be of sin the double cure; / Save from wrath and make me pure.”
1. It's those last two lines that sparkle with relevance here. The cross of Christ is a “double cure”. It not only forgives me with regard to sin's penalty (“save from wrath”), it also frees me from sin's power (“make me pure”).
 - a. I am not only counted righteous in Christ, I am made to be more and more righteous through Him in my own life. I am not only justified by grace I am increasingly sanctified by it.
 - i. As Peter writes in one my most favorite verses in all the Bible: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet 2:24). Not just forgiven, but set free!

- D. Some, to put it bluntly, only want to be forgiven of the penalty. They are perfectly satisfied living in sin, operating under the sway of its power. They like sin, they just don't want to get in trouble for it. Such a person will start to choke on their words at this point in Jesus' prayer. They can't say it.
1. Judas could pray for provision and even pardon, but He wouldn't dare pray for protection from temptation. He had already made plans to indulge it.
- E. So this point in the prayer brings us to another place for examination. Do I want more than forgiveness of sin, but freedom from it? Do I want more than release from the penalty of sin, but release from its power? Am I trying to make friends with God and the world? Jesus says it cannot be done.
1. Such people will be the most miserable of all. They certainly can't enjoy God, because their heart is after the stuff of this world. But neither can they fully enjoy this world, because they always feel a bit convicted and concerned about this God looking over their shoulder.
- F. Instead, Jesus is calling us to pray towards being a whole-hearted and happy Christian. Not just forgiven in Him, but free!

Conclusion

Praying with the Plurals

- A. If I could say one last thing about this prayer in general as we close. As Americans we are so individualistic. Everything is taken on our own, seen merely with reference to ourselves.
- B. But Jesus here is teaching us to pray together. Did you catch that? It's not "Give me each day my daily bread . . . forgive me my sins . . . lead me not into temptation." It's "Give us . . . forgive us . . . lead us . . ." And this is a most critical observation. We need one another in this thing called prayer.
- C. When we got the news about Bella this last week, what did we do? Well, I already said that we prayed. But do you want to know what else we did? We emailed our Home Group and asked them to be praying with us.
1. Do you have this sort of community? Are you a part of a Home Group here? Are there people in this church who know how to meaningfully pray for you? Are there people in this church that you know how to meaningfully pray for?
- D. Jesus says His Father's house is to be a house of prayer. It's a home filled with children, family, under one good Father, who together knock on the door of heaven in the name of Christ.