

**Sunday evening October 14<sup>th</sup> 2018 at CBC**

**Sermon outline: Luke 11:1-13**

**‘Communicating with the Saviour’**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Humanity has not always found communicating with God to be straightforward. The problem is not with God. It is with humanity, with us.

The problem is compounded by the fact that, because humanity has run away from God, we have lost the right kind of understanding of his character and nature. So we have two problems: we have to make up our own ways of communicating with God, but we are not sure that we know the One with whom we are trying to communicate, let alone how we should communicate. It is a mess.

Jesus Christ perfectly reveals the character and nature of God in his words and deeds. In Luke 11 we find him telling his followers how they may communicate with God, his Father. Prayer for Christians is generally addressed to God the Father through God the Son through the help of God the Holy Spirit.

### **[1] HOW TO PRAY TO GOD**

Under this heading, Jesus covers two areas:

#### **[a] how to address God**

The idea that God was ‘Father’ was not unknown to Jesus’s contemporaries. Most often in the OT, the word ‘father’ refers to a human father. But there are places where God is referred to as Father, though usually this is in a general sense. See Psalm 2.6, Isaiah 63 and 64.

In this 'model prayer' Jesus encourages his followers to address God not as father in a formal, distant sense (ie the father of the nation, the One who brought the nation into being as a whole) but as a personal father.

In [Romans 8.15](#) and [Galatians 4.6](#) we are told that the characteristic work of the Holy Spirit is to inspire Christian believers similarly to call God 'Abba, father'. And that sense of intimacy does not remove the sense that God's name and character are to be respected – hallowed (respected, honoured) be your name.

## **[b] what matters to raise with God**

### **[i] the present [3]**

It is striking that the first thing Jesus says his followers can ask for is their immediate daily needs. Bread was literally baked for each day – it did not keep overnight. So that is surely a metaphor for a person's daily needs.

### **[ii] the past [4a]**

We come with your failures and seek forgiveness. If we have understood the nature of that forgiveness we will not be slow to forgive others. We will not seek our own forgiveness while refusing to forgive someone who has sought our forgiveness.

### **[iii] the future [4b]**

The greatest threat to a Christian is temptation to behave in a manner unworthy of Jesus Christ, whether by something we do or do not do, say or do not say. So what is more natural than to pray to be led away from temptation. It is a way of emphasising the need of the believer to live a holy life with God's help.

## [2] WHAT TO EXPECT FROM GOD

Under this heading we can identify two things, arising from the two illustrations.

### [a] the certainty of God's response [5-10]

The story Jesus told [11:5-10] is of course set in his own culture.

Jesus's point to his hearers is that if a neighbour who really does not want to get up and offer help will nevertheless get up and offer help not as a friend but out of duty to the code of hospitality, **how much more** will the Lord readily respond to the prayers of his people. In this way, Jesus encourages his disciples to trust in the certainty of God's response to their prayers.

If God is very willing to respond to his people, they for their part should ask, should seek, should knock at the door. The form of the verbs used suggests a continued action. This is not as though God needs to be woken up, or as though he is reluctant to respond. After all, the previous illustration has suggested quite the opposite.

Perhaps we should think in terms of the enthusiasm and confidence with which we are to make our requests to God.

### [b] the kindness in God's response [11-13]

What sort of response can be expected? It is good to know that there will be a response, but what will it 'look like'?

How should we understand answers to prayer which do not bring what was requested? All believers have to face this issue at some point. There are two pointers here which together provide an answer.

### [\[i\] the priority of the kingdom](#)

The very first item by way of request in the model prayer is, 'your kingdom come'. Christian prayer involved aligning our wills with God's will, not trying to align his will with ours. There is a very big difference between those two things.

### [\[ii\] the assistance of the Holy Spirit](#)

The other factor to bear in mind is the final statement in verse 13 where, as it seems on first reading, the Holy Spirit is suddenly introduced. All God's answers to our prayers involve the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

That is the point here. And it is with, and only with, the assistance of the Holy Spirit that we can recognise the priority of the kingdom and accept God's kind answers to our prayers, even when those answers are not what we would have chosen. Which is better for us, which is kinder for us? Is it our idea of what we need or is it God's (sometimes mysterious) kindness in bringing about the development of his kingdom plans?

We surely know the answer!

## **CONCLUSION**

May the Lord enable us all to approach him with confidence, recognising the priority of his kingdom and gratefully accepting the ministry of the Holy Spirit as receive answers to our prayers.