

From the Honest Prayer Series

MOTIVATION FOR  
HONEST PRAYER:  
PART I—ITS OPPORTUNITIES

PREFACE

Asking, seeking, and knocking in prayer! My, what encouraging words from our Lord Jesus are these. Every one that asks will receive; and every one that seeks will find; and to every one that knocks it shall be opened. Every Christian has gained much motivation to pray because of this most delightful promise. Motivation is defined as “to provide inner drive and to give impulse to do something or act in a certain way.” Jesus in these words, and in those that immediately preceded and followed them, means to give stimulus to His disciples to pray regularly and continuously to His Father, because He is now our heavenly Father.

Our purpose in writing and publishing this exposition is to place before His disciples this teaching of Christ that will serve to do what these words were indeed meant to do. God has His program to carry out to completion, and fortunately He has included us Christians in the effecting of this agenda. Prayer is a very major part in His campaign on earth. Its value to God’s glory

will be more evident as we consider together this teaching as recorded by Luke. May God bless Jesus' teaching to us all, so that Christ's reason for teaching this and God's reason for including it in His Word will be fulfilled in each of us. This completion will become a reality in us when we ask, seek, and knock continuously in prayer. God grant to each of us the motivation to do just that. Amen!

We must from the very nature of our appreciation and respect, take notice of the help from Mrs. Norma Calvert in finalizing this published study. Some years ago she proofread our initial publishing draft. Her dedication and time spent have gone unused until this present publishing, when now we are using her proficient corrections and suggestions to our exposition. We thank her and her Savior for that long ago work "just" now used.

## DEDICATION

To the glorious Triunity\* of Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—Whose love surpasses anything of rational or human comprehension, is this brief study on honest prayer dedicated.

To realize that this glorious Person in the Triunity\* of His Divine Self hears us insignificant specks in His now-blighted universe marks His unsurpassed love for His rational but unholy creatures.

To realize that this Triunity\* of Persons sacrificed the Son to such sufferings and humiliations in order to hear, heal, and harbor any of this fallen race is the grandest reality of eternity, even into infinity.

To that God Who hears our prayers as an outstanding reality of His love, we all must dedicate ourselves to worship and to serve.

\* Emphasizing the Unity of the Trinity

## SCRIPTURE TEXT

<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.

<sup>2</sup>And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

<sup>3</sup>Give us day by day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup>And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.

<sup>5</sup>And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

<sup>6</sup>For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

<sup>7</sup>And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

<sup>8</sup>I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

<sup>9</sup>And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

<sup>10</sup>For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

<sup>11</sup>If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

<sup>12</sup>Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

<sup>13</sup>If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Luke 11:1-13 KJV

From the Honest Prayer Series

## MOTIVATION FOR HONEST PRAYER

### PART 1—PRAYER'S OPPORTUNITIES

Men seem to have built into them some instinctive desire for prayer. They seem to sense that prayer is the source of power with God, that it actually brings manifestations of God into the lives of us humans. Consequently, even though the image of God in us sons of Adam is marred somewhat, most of mankind does have this inner craving to worship and to communicate with God, though for mostly base and selfish reasons. Yet the aspiration is there for divine connection to one degree or for one corrupt reason or another. If this be true, then we all have opportunity to choose a better, or honest, outcome for prayer in our lives; but we seem sometimes to lack the proper motivation for the real prayers, the honest prayers. Therefore, God sometimes sends difficulties into our experience in order to bring us to our knees. However, Jesus, through the teachings of our text verses, desires us voluntarily to learn the value of prayer. May we comprehend from Jesus something of honest prayer that will stir us up to make steady honest prayers a part of our daily activity.

### The Occasion for Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

The preceding incident in *Luke 10:38-42* has significant bearing on our understanding Jesus' teaching here. *Chapter 10* closed with Luke's

account of how Mary worshipped Jesus while Martha prepared a meal. *Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word (v. 39)*. When questioned by Martha why Mary communed with Him instead of helping with the meal, Jesus said that, *Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her (v. 42)*. It was a case of Mary seeking communion with Jesus while *Martha was cumbered about much serving (v. 40)*. Fittingly, beginning *Chapter 11*, Luke recorded the incident of our text, that of Jesus' praying—partaking of His spiritual portion at the feet of His heavenly Father—together with the disciples' inquiry concerning prayer and their similar desire for real communion with God. Luke placed this incident touching prayer just here because of the similarity between Mary and Jesus' seeking spiritual communion with God. In a sense Mary was praying to Jesus. Mary was seeking a closer relationship with and a greater spiritual portion from God through Christ, so also Jesus was seeking a closer relationship with and a greater spiritual portion from His heavenly Father through prayer.

We may learn from this: First, as Christ sought strength and spiritual awareness from the Father through prayer, just as did Mary, even so, we are to seek the Holy Spirit in our lives through the act and practice of honest prayer at Jesus' feet. Second, if Christ needed strength through prayer so as to be seeking that good portion at His Father's feet, how much more do we need the good portion available to us for our asking and seeking at His feet. Third, as Mary sought spiritualities at the physical feet of Jesus

before the Holy Spirit came to indwell the church, so are we today to ask for and to seek the Holy Spirit's presence and power through prayer to God now that Jesus has left and given His Holy Spirit. These truths ought to motivate us to honest prayers; and indeed, through His response to the disciples' inquiry about prayer, Christ means to do that very thing.

### The Request

*Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*  
*Luke 11:1b*

The disciples saw in Jesus the perfect example of honest prayer, and desired to be enabled to pray as He prayed. The Greek has a present infinitive in their request, making it *Lord, begin to teach us to be praying*. This is an infinitive of result, that is, of "conceived result."<sup>1</sup> This question asked and answered resulted in more honest and real prayer in the lives of the questioners. Therefore, we would render this request in the following rather amplified way, *Lord, begin to teach us to be praying, which teaching will result in our habitual prayer as we see in You*. This request was not seeking the "how," or even the "way" of prayer, but in effect was,

*Lord, begin to teach us, inspire us, incite us, prompt us, stimulate and arouse us, to be praying. Provoke us, animate us, and motivate us so that we shall be praying as you pray. Lord, please help our weakness, and give us reasons to pray, even as John taught and in that way gave reasons for his disciples to be praying.*

<sup>1</sup> Dana-Mantey, Greek Grammar, p. 215.

## As John Also Taught His Disciples

Notice that this request referred to John the Baptist, *as John also taught his disciples*. Nearly every firsthand disciple of Jesus had previously been a disciple of, or most certainly was familiar with, John and his teaching ministry concerning prayer, *And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers. (Luke 5:33)*. Obviously, it was common knowledge that John emphasized fasting and prayer. But John stressed the need of prayer, and it was that kind of teaching which was being sought from Jesus. It was, *Teach us the need for prayer as John also taught his disciples; and by that teaching we will be inspired to prayer more like we see in You*.

John had verbally taught his disciples to be praying, but his influence upon his disciples was also largely due to his example—his life-style and his demeanor. His very appearance brought men to consider that John really believed his own message, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,*

*And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey.*  
*Mark 1:6 KJV*

His appearance said to all who saw and heard him: *I believe the kingdom is near; I do not live for this world, but for the King's coming and for His kingdom's coming glories*. Also since John's basic message was *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, there was a



motivation and inspiration for prayer in that message for believing Jews. To hear from a man who looked like he lived only for another kingdom, for another philosophy, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight* brought men to their knees. They were moved to seek God in order to be ready for the coming King and His kingdom. John taught his disciples to be praying by his life-style and demeanor, as well as by his message. These all worked together to bring his disciples to seek God in prayer, because his whole life testified to the validity of his message.

Thus it was John's ministry as a whole, and then his person in particular, by which he motivated his disciples to honest prayer. John had encouraged his disciples to pray for the kingdom and for its coming King. All spiritually minded Hebrews would have been receptive to John's encouragement to pray in light of their Messiah's soon coming. John had taught in a particular way that drove multitudes to their knees, especially those Jews who were later to become His personal disciples. It was that kind of fervent prayer that the disciples of Jesus were now seeking from the ministry of Jesus as well. They had just witnessed Jesus praying, and desired not just to be taught how to pray, but taught to do it. "They did not want a philosophy of prayer, or the interpretation of a method. They wanted somehow to be able to pray like he prayed."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Campbell Morgan, *Studies in the Four Gospels* (Fincastle, Virginia: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d.), p.142.

Furthermore, the disciples of Jesus were desirous to elevate or advance to the higher level of prayer that they now saw in Jesus' life. John's ministry had taught his disciples by example—by his message to the multitude and by his manner of living—as though he did indeed believe the King was *at the doors*. Now they desire the King Himself, concerning Whom they had experienced a certain level of spiritual prayer under John's ministry, to begin to teach them personally to be praying on a higher level—on His level—the ultimate in honest prayer. As John taught prayer at the level of his own capacity, so now they sought from Jesus prayer in accord with Jesus' higher spirituality. The request says in effect, *Begin teaching us to be praying as you pray. Lift our prayer life to Thy level of prayer. Teach us the opportunity of the ultimate prayer as you pray. Motivate us to pray honest prayer as You pray.*

### A Comparison

Some have confused this teaching of Jesus with His teaching on prayer in His Kingdom Manifesto as recorded in *Matthew 6:9-15*. However, while being similar, they are two entirely different occasions with similar teachings. Our text in Luke is a response to a question by a disciple, while Matthew's recorded prayer is in the middle of Christ's uninterrupted discourse on His kingdom's ways. The prayer in Matthew seems to be a model

of the magnum opus—the greatest possible—and so the manner, of honest prayer. It was the manner of the Pharisees' prayers, as full of superficial and vain repetition, which He used as diametric or opposite to His model of honest prayer (*Mt. 6:6-8*). Matthew emphasized honest prayer as frank confession of human weakness and of divine strength in private communion. Luke recorded His nearly identical words of prayer, not concerning manner, but concerning motivation for prayer. The emphasis in the prayer of Matthew is the procedure of prayer, while our text emphasizes the form or content of God-pleasing or honest prayer, thus giving to Christians reasons to pray. The one shows us how to pray, while our text shows us why we should pray.

### **Analysis of the Text**

The text for dealing with Opportunity in Prayer, *Luke 11:1-4*, is closely connected to the immediately following teaching on prayer in *Luke 11:5-13*, covered in our second heading, The Importance of Honest Prayer. The entire section, *Luke 11:1-13*, is one lesson on honest prayer with those two fundamental reasons for prayer, opportunity and importance; therefore we place here an analysis of the entire passage.

The central thought or main theme of the entire passage of Jesus' teaching on prayer, *Luke 11:1-13*, is *verses 9 and 10*,

*And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

*For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*  
*Luke 11:9-10*

This promise concerning *asking, seeking, and knocking* is the paragon of arousal to prayer. None other teaching in the Bible so prompts men to pray as do these words from Jesus. They have a quality which suggests to every man, *Pray, pray, pray, because God said to be asking, be seeking, and be knocking; and he that asks receives, he that seeks finds, and he that knocks will have it opened unto him.* These words are inspirational for all men. Remembering that these words are central to real motivation to prayer, and in keeping with these words—*asking, seeking, knocking*—we would analyze our text thusly:

**First**, Jesus teaches what we are to be asking in *verses 2-4*. We receive always when we *ask* for those things that He has promised. This list in verses two through four is a motivation for prayer, because these requests are always answered in the affirmative. When petitioned by His children, God normally says yes to every one of these requests. *Ask and ye shall receive* what Jesus has listed in verses two through four.

**Second**, Jesus teaches what we are to be seeking in *verses 5-10*. He does this using a contrastive parabolic illustration of the importunate seeker.

In that story, there are contrasts both to God's ways and to man's ways concerning prayer. Basically, it teaches that we are to be seeking from God those things that are within the limits of propriety. By that we mean, what is proper, fitting, or suitable. True prayer seeks what is in conformity with reverence toward God. God will most likely answer in the affirmative those prayers brought to Him which have in their request consideration for His own purposes and His ways of dealing in the affairs of mankind.

**Third**, Jesus teaches at what prayer door we are to be knocking in *verses 11-13*. God customarily opens the door that is spiritually profitable for us; *Knock and it will be opened unto you*. God is predisposed to open the door of prayer which can best be used by the Holy Spirit, and which will most bless us with the presence and influence of His Personal Presence in the Holy Spirit.

## MOTIVATION FOR HONEST PRAYER: PART I—ITS OPPORTUNITIES

<sup>1</sup> *And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.*

<sup>2</sup> *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.*

<sup>3</sup> *Give us day by day our daily bread.*

<sup>4</sup> *And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.* *Luke 11:1-4 ASV*<sup>3</sup>

Presently in this first part, The Opportunities of Prayer, we are concerned only with the first of these analyses as given above, dealing with *verses 2-4*. Therefore, we shall take note only of the numerous opportunities which prayer affords each disciple. These together will be an inspiration to us to be more in prayer.

This teaching from Jesus consists of certain promises, when taken back to God in prayer, will

<sup>3</sup> Because of the spurious additions to the Greek text in *Luke 11:1-4* as exhibited in the Authorized Version, the Scripture quotations of our text verses throughout this first section are from the American Standard Version, which more accurately represents the original Greek manuscripts. These additions as found in the King James Version were caused no doubt by some copyist who inserted portions of the Model Prayer as found in Matthew, which differed from Luke's prayer. See this important difference explained under the head, A Comparison, p. 6.

most certainly be *received* from God, because Jesus assures, *He that asks [for what I have listed here] receives*. Jesus' list suggests that prayer provides opportunity for our daily communion with our heavenly Father, our daily worship to God, our daily physical needs to be met, our daily spiritual requirements to be provided, and our being able to avoid daily dangers in our spiritual welfare. Jesus promises all these things to us as we daily pray. Knowing these and believing these as promised will be a great incentive to be more in prayer.

Notice He said, *When ye pray, say*. In his similar model prayer, Matthew records Jesus as saying, *After this manner therefore pray ye*. In Matthew's parallel passage the manner of prayer as being humble, concise, brief, and to the point is emphasized. But here in Luke the emphasis is upon the form of proper prayer. This is Jesus telling us what to ask for. Our assurance of affirmatively answered prayer could not be greater than for Jesus Himself to show us for what we are to ask, and then promise us that we shall indeed receive it! Here are specific requests that always without exception meet with God's approval. Jesus means for us to understand these as opportunities in prayer, which will in turn inspire us to ask. He that asks for these things will receive these things, provided he meets the other requirements for prayer as also given by Jesus. These are the supplications for which the Son of God—the Perfect

Man—has told us to ask; and in so doing, He is guarantying that these will be God's will to grant repeatedly, because His Son has instructed us thus to pray. He particularizes these opportunities in order that we would be stimulated to more honest prayer.

### Requirements for Asking and Receiving

Before beginning to look at these specific requests, we must point out what at first glance would seem to be obvious. That is, what Jesus named in verse two are in one sense His requirements for honest prayer which, when met, will indeed experience the *Ask and receive* mandate. Notice first there is confirmed relationship in the address to God as *Father*. Truly, one must know Him to be one's *Father* in order to *Ask and receive* from Him anything good. This presupposes a personal faith in Jesus Christ's substitutionary death, and an active life of obedience to Him as Lord.<sup>4</sup> Second, there must be true sensitivity about the hallowness of God's Person, and even for His name, *Hallowed be thy name*. Approach to God in any other demeanor may *ask* but will not *receive*. Third, there must be present a yearning for His kingdom and for its ideals to be literally present here on earth, such yearning being voiced to God in the prayer, *Thy kingdom come*. This necessitates earnest desire for an end to the present world system that is so opposed to God and His

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<sup>4</sup> *Galatians 3:24*



Son's ways. No request that *asks* from a heart in love with the kingdoms of satanic opposition to God will ever *receive* from the heart of the One Whose Son was hated and crucified by those kingdoms (*John 15:18*). Included in Jesus' promises in this model prayer are these three incontrovertible requirements for all who *ask* and then expect to *receive*.

## I. DAILY COMMUNION

### *Father*

This is of primary consideration in prayer, when God can be addressed as our *Father*. If through faith in Jesus Christ He is our *Father*, then our daily communion with Him is a chief reason to be praying. The privilege of holy and intimate converse with the Living God is incentive enough! That we can share our thoughts and emotions with God, and in common participation mutually exchange our desires with one another on a daily, hourly, even minute by minute, basis is ground for excitement about prayer.

*Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knoweth not.*  
*Jeremiah 33:3*

The greatest benefit of prayer is this communion where we not only communicate to God our thoughts and emotions, but He communicates to us His thoughts and emotions.

The word *mighty* in *Jeremiah 33:3* means hidden things, things that are fenced in. This interchange with God, our Father, through honest prayer is a mutual exchange to God and from God. That ought to motivate us to be praying. God will actually speak to us what was previously hidden to us, but only through prayer. This communion with our heavenly Father will be ours as we are praying daily.

## II. DAILY WORSHIP

### *Hallowed be thy name.*

This prayerful admission to God tends to alter what is mediocre prayer into honest favorable prayer at His throne of grace, having considerable involvement with The Third Commandment of God's Holy Law, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain (Exodus 20:7)*. Kenneth Wuest translated it, *Father, cause your Name to be set apart as sacred and the object of veneration*. This kind of reverence for God's name, which seeks in honest prayer for more reverence for God's name, will be affirmatively answered. This reverence for His name will be granted to the petitioner who *asks* for it to be revered in him more and more; he will receive.

When we pray that His name would be looked upon with feelings of deepest respect, then God grants to us personally this request; and in the process we will find the ear of God opened to any

accompanying honest prayer. While others may disregard His holy name, we ourselves who pray for His name's veneration will be transformed by that very prayer to hold His name as very sacred in ourselves. As with this prayer, every prayer that is in such accord and harmony with the Spirit of God so as to seek the very best of God's will, will find God somewhat pleased to grant a hearing ear toward our every petition (*I John 5:14-15*). The Spirit of God will Himself be able to draw familiarly intimate, so much so that we will be influenced by His close Presence to grow in our own veneration of His matchless name.

This is the real value of this opportunity in prayer. God will honor His name as reverent, and He will grant to us through this honest prayer more veneration and esteem for His reputation and character. Oh! To be among such spiritual men as Moses, David, Daniel, the Apostle Paul, John the Beloved, and other of the Bible's personalities, who each in his own special way hallowed the name of God. And this they did in spite of their faults because they experienced this kind of honest prayer. This prayer will be answered affirmatively because God desires His glory to be preserved among all the inhabitants of the earth. This promise to be enabled to revere His name properly, and increasingly, is a great inducement to *ask and receive*.

### III. DAILY SERVICE

#### *Thy kingdom come*

Jesus teaches that to pray for His kingdom to come to earth is always an accepted prayer. When prayed in earnest and in sincerity, it will be answered with a "Yes." God's whole purpose is to produce His will on earth, and in so doing, to reveal His glory and grace among men. *Thy kingdom come* is an invitation for Him to take the life of the one so praying and to use it actually to accomplish the very thing being prayed for. This prayer will be answered as the one praying it does the work that will further His kingdom on earth now. To pray *Thy kingdom come* is to ask, *God, make me an agent of Your kingdom. Lead me to do what I can do daily in serving You in order to promote your kingdom down here on earth today. Thy kingdom come* will be answered eventually when King Jesus comes again, but that is not all that is involved in this request; this request is much more than just to ask for Jesus' soon return to set up His kingdom. It is to pray that every opportunity for the kingdom's manifestation on earth be realized. It is to pray for His kingdom's progress and success in order that its actual fulfillment might be known here on earth. This is not to suggest that is how the kingdom will be literally and physically established on earth, but this is to suggest that our daily driving desire and motivation in this life ought to be to further Christ's kingdom on earth.

That kind of prayer will result in a life that has had imparted into it a vital disposition for its realization. To *ask* for this realization in honesty will be to *receive* it in one's own daily life.

#### IV. DAILY PHYSICAL NEEDS

*Give us day by day our daily bread.*

Jesus here, in telling us to pray for our daily food, makes these ordinary physical needs to be spiritual opportunities to gain much more than mere temporal nourishment. When the disciples asked of Jesus to teach them in such a way that would result in increased prayer lives (*v.1*), they would never have guessed that mere food for humans' animal bodies could become somehow a motivation to more prayer and to spiritual prayer. Yet that is precisely what Jesus is teaching here. He instructs us as God's children to *ask and receive* what is necessary for our physical lives. Many of us take for granted our food. Food is much like our health; we assume it until good health is taken away. It is, therefore, only when we suffer loss of health or food that we find spiritual increase and spiritual edification connected with our physical necessities, because usually those are the only times when we make our physical needs a matter of earnest prayer. This ought not so to be! Jesus would have us daily to turn our physical needs into opportunities for spiritual advancement and experience. That is what He has promised as possible in this instruction.

This is prayer which is sure to be explicitly answered, and that is precisely why there are such spiritual possibilities in this kind of common, honest prayer. What opportunities to gain real answers to real prayer, to see with spiritual eyes, to hear with spiritual ears, to feel with spiritual sensibilities, the hearing ear of God while He turns it toward us during prayer! Of all the spiritual experiences we could have with the living God, this is the most likely to be experienced, consequently likely for two important reasons. First, because Jesus has promised it. We have His Word on it. God will without exception or evasion accompany this prayer with His blessed Holy Spirit, to the experiential blessing of the one who so prays, both in the experience of praying and in the experience of *receiving* when *asking*. And secondly, all this is ours daily, because ordinarily, with only infrequent exception, we daily ingest food in order to sustain our lives. This means that under almost all circumstances this unique “at a bargain” prayer exists as an *asked and receive* opportunity. We can always *ask and receive* our daily bread. No one can exclude himself from this opportunity for honest prayer.

Several years ago, I was as many of us Christians. I took for granted these physical necessities, especially since I always had adequate resources. They were not the point of my daily praying. However, when seeking preparation for ministry, I was diagnosed with cancer and received

x-rays and chemotherapy treatments. I was left with no money, having no insurance of any kind, and no means of support. I had no food in the house; and I was physically unable to work. Much to the displeasure of God, I had sought welfare from the government for our daily needs, but had been refused. God seemed to close every door for our help. That last night, when we had nothing in the house to eat for the next (to me my last) day, nor did we have any resources or device left for our help, finally and as a last resort, I prayed according to Jesus' teaching in our text. How sad that I had tried every other known vehicle of the world before simply *asking and receiving* from my heavenly Father. How sad that this kind of honest prayer had not been the habit of my life. If honest, real, and habitually genuine prayer for daily needs had been prioritized in my life, then without any fleshly seeking from this world God would have given with ease that which He is pleased and glorified in providing for His children. But late as it was, and desperate as I was, and forced as I was, still, God had a hearing ear. I left it in His hands and went to bed, still not knowing what we would do the next day.

At about 9:30 a.m. the next day, the President and the Registrar of the seminary I attended came to our house with a check for \$50.00 that had come unsolicited from an anonymous donor "for some worthy student in need." God provided us with our daily bread, but only when I asked Him in desperation, and had taken Jesus' promise back to

Him. That became a special occasion to me, but the whole point of this promise from Jesus is that this affirmative answer to honest prayer is to be our daily experience from the gracious hand of God. It can be and should be our habitual spiritual experience to *ask* from God our daily bread and to *receive* it daily from our caring heavenly Father. This is what He does daily, though we really fail honestly to appraise it that way. That is what Jesus promises in our text, and it is a source of encouragement and motivation for us to be praying always to God for *our daily bread*.

## V. DAILY SPIRITUAL NEEDS

*And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also  
forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

This without doubt is the greatest incentive to honest prayer compared to all the others listed here by Jesus. He is granting every learner of Him an open door to forgiveness of sin as we forgive others. Sin with its accompanying guilt is man's biggest problem. Of all requests placed before God, none other is so universally needed and felt to be needed. Every honest soul knows that everything is not right between man and his God. *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*<sup>5</sup> Sin is the difficulty facing every man. Jesus grants a carte blanche, unlimited authority, for every asker for forgiveness, with only one certain qualification: That the seeker of forgiveness from God similarly forgives others who sin against him.

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<sup>5</sup> *Romans 3:23*



But why is such a qualifying requirement placed on forgiveness by Jesus just here? Other Scripture has no such requirement mentioned. Notice the following references:

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*  
*I John 1:9*

*I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess by transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*  
*Psalms 32:5*

*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*  
*Proverbs 28:13*

In each of the above quoted Scriptures the only qualifying requirement for Christians' forgiveness is honest and complete confession of sin to God. Nothing else is required for Christians' forgiveness. Then why does Jesus qualify forgiveness in this proper form of prayer as being only possible for those who also forgive others? The answer to that question lies in the two real qualifications for forgiveness of sin with God. They are: one, confessing one's sin; and two, making one's approach only through Jesus Christ and His work of the cross<sup>6</sup> as the basis for forgiveness. Confession is easily enough understood;

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<sup>6</sup> The work "of the cross" is more than "the work on the cross." Thought the latter is included in the former, the former suggests resurrection, ascension, exaltation, reigning, intercession, returning, i.e. all His resultant works emanating from His work "on the cross."

that is the very subject matter in this motivation for prayer in our text. And the approach through Jesus is a “given.” That is, Scripture always qualifies forgiveness as possible through Jesus only,

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

*Romans 3:24*

*And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

*Ephesians 4:32*

But this still leaves Jesus' unique qualifying requirement that we must forgive others as God's condition for forgiveness of our own sin. This begins to be clearer when one remembers that Jesus makes no qualification concerning forgiveness being only through Himself in our text. He substitutes the qualification of forgiving others instead. The confession remains untouched, that is, it remains just as valid and necessary as before, but any allusion to His work of the cross is replaced with a reference to forgiving others. That is also the key to understanding His requirement for forgiveness of others before obtaining forgiveness from God. It is only as one knows the cost of forgiveness, knows the blood required in Jesus' sacrifice, that one will instinctively be disposed to forgive others for infractions against oneself.

When one knows and fully perceives Jesus' sufferings for his own sin, then the dwarfishness of the harm brought to oneself from others' sins against oneself becomes evident. Forgiving others becomes

an insight of one's new nature. Those who know Christ in His free pardon of sin through the redemption in the cross can forgive others with that same kind of forgiveness granted to them. A failure to grasp the great truth of the cross will exhibit itself in an unwillingness to forgive others. To fail to possess a forgiving nature is to fail to have perceived the method of God's forgiveness granted to all repentant men. That failure of perception marks that person as unable to obtain forgiveness from God, because he has never apprehended Christ's work of the cross in mind or in reality. God cannot forgive the most impassioned confessor of his own sin if he has never appreciated his own forgiveness in Christ. To fail to forgive others is a certain sign that Christ's work on the cross has never been fully appreciated.<sup>7</sup> That perceptiveness about forgiveness, or lack of it, is the reason for Christ's qualification of one's own forgiveness being dependent upon one's own capacity to forgive others. If one cannot forgive others, then that one will not be forgiven, because Christ's work of sacrifice has not been his method of approach to God.

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<sup>7</sup> At the foundation of Christ's and Scripture's overriding qualification concerning forgiving others there is His absolute doctrine of: "Lack of forgiveness equals lack of salvation." In the end of Christ's personal reference here concerning forgiving others there exists His absolute doctrine of: "Lack of forgiveness toward others equals lack of salvation." Q.v. *Matthew 18:23-35*, esp. *v.34*, *til he should pay all equals eternal judgment*.

This promise of forgiveness through Jesus is a motivation to prayer; it is the most significant opportunity afforded to men simply to *ask and receive* from God, being as it is the pure, concentrated essence of honest prayer. To have one's sins entirely removed from before God, from His presence and memory, just by confessing them together with an acknowledgement of the cross, is the blessed power of the gospel. The honest consideration of Christ's work on the cross is the gospel's power for obtaining removal of personal guilt for sin. Forgiveness is keyed upon both confession of sin and confession of Christ. The confession of Christ can be evidenced through a humble forgiving spirit in one's heart and life toward others. When men forgive others for their wrongdoing against them, that is evidence that Christ's forgiveness has truly been experienced by them. One may be of a forgiving nature that may not be evidence of anything spiritual. One may forgive others without forgiveness from God, but one cannot be forgiven by God and refuse forgiveness toward others. Additionally, the absence of forgiveness toward others is the evidence of only a theoretical knowledge of Christ's work of grace on the cross. An unforgiving heart reveals an unforgiven heart, unaware of true obligation for sin removed. The promise of the gospel arouses us to forgive others, and its continued provision of forgiveness for lingering sin

arouses us to more prayer to such a wonderful and gracious God. This opportunity for forgiveness kindles prayer to God. It kindles Christ's disciples to be always *asking* forgiveness, to be always *receiving* forgiveness, and to be always granting forgiveness.

## VI. AVOIDING DAILY DANGERS

*And bring us not into temptation.*

Jesus' final special motivation to pray is the opportunity which prayer furnishes men to circumvent or avert evil. Honest prayer is an honest preventive. This kind of prayer is made prior to possible difficulties that threaten us because of our presence in an evil world. Jesus promises this kind of honest prayer stops the possible evil in its course and thereby makes temptations ineffective as sources of sin in our lives. Prayer, as Jesus instructs us here in these words, *And bring us not into temptation*, is the best anticipatory measure for defeating any foreseen or unforeseen temptation that might come our way. Jesus promises an affirmative answer from God when we ask Him for release from the temptation to sin.

This request in prayer has to do with God's control of our lives so that we will not be placed in compromising positions. Because of the innate weakness of our flesh, we often find ourselves in a situation where our propensities toward sin are severely tested, then we shall possibly, and most likely, sin and fall from our steadfastness, bringing

reproach upon our heavenly Father. This fall God never desires for any of His children. As we pray for deliverance from this kind of difficulty, we reveal a heart not desiring or delighting in sin. If we can truly pray to God sincerely desirous of not sinning then God will grant *a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it* [victoriously].<sup>8</sup>

This prayer acknowledges God's Sovereign and Universal and Providential Government. All creatures are at the sovereign disposal of their Maker. He has the same absolute control over evil as over good, else why would this prayer be any motivation for us to pray? If it is a worthless and meaningless prayer to ask God to control the evil around us so that we will not be tempted by it, would Christ tell us to pray that we be spared it in any way? Would Jesus instruct His disciples to pray to God for that which He cannot or will not do? But God can and does often restrain evil or lead His children from evils and from circumstances by which, because of our depravity, we would be brought down from a spiritual walk with Christ. But this is assured us only as we pray daily, *And bring us not into temptation*. Only as we *ask* according to this specific opportunity will we *receive* this specific management of the evil around us. As long as we, as children of God, continue in the prayer-Presence of the Indwelling Christ, we

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<sup>8</sup> *I Corinthians 10:13*

will appropriate the power of the Holy Spirit in order to experience this authority over evil. As we pray, God will direct the evil away from us, or us from it, in order to spare us its temptation. This places the ordering of all temptations in the hands of our all wise and loving Father in heaven.

*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

*I Corinthians 10:12-13*

Our wickedness is such that God would be perfectly just to allow sin to swallow us up into oblivion and destruction with Satan. This prayer recognizes His mercy toward our suffering weakness and His provision of grace toward us in Christ Jesus. Knowing this, we have a motivation to pray, because in this prayer, *Bring us not into temptation*, our weakness is acknowledged and His strength is promised. We must not be faced with any opportunities for sin, because we know our own predisposition to sin when faced with its temptations; therefore we must *ask, Bring us not into temptation*, so that we will *receive deliverance from evil*.

When this disciple asked, *Lord, begin to teach us in order that we will be moved to more prayer like we see in You*, Jesus' answer becomes a great incentive

to prayer. These several opportunities in prayer given us by Jesus are meant to motivate us to more and more prayer. This “model of prayer” promises its supplicants: (1) communion with God, (2) true spiritual worship, (3) fruitful service, (4) daily physical needs met, daily forgiveness of sin, (5) leadership of the Holy Spirit to avoid temptations to sin, and finally, (6) victory over the evil around us. All of these precious riches are brought about through prayer. Jesus desires that through the study of His teaching on prayer, we would spend more time and effort to *ask*, as He has taught. Then, the prayer that thus accords with His model prayer *receives* what He promised. Jesus guarantees it! Amen!