

Jesus Loves to Answer Prayer

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Date: 04 January 2026

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- [0 : 00] Let's turn to Luke chapter 11 this morning. Luke chapter 11. In Luke 11, we have been looking the past couple weeks at the Lord's Prayer.
- In the first part of the prayer, we saw who we were addressing and the amazing situation that's there.
- We're able to address God as Father. Intimacy. Israel had known a little of this, but most of Israel never really was in a situation where they felt they could address God as Father.
- Jesus, as he comes and he's discipling his disciples through his ministry, they ask him to teach them to pray.
- And even as you go through this prayer, you can tell there's a delight in him to be able to convey some of the things about the relationship that he's providing for them.
- [1 : 13] To be able to convey the things about that relationship that are just beautiful. conveys this intimacy. We call God our Father.
- And then we saw about how he's holy. And we're to pray that that holiness be advanced. Part of that being in us, seeing the vast difference between us and God.
- And yet we're able to call him Father. And then we saw how we're to pray that his kingdom be put forward. And in Matthew, his will done in us as it is in heaven.
- And talking about having this mentality of being willing for God to do his will in our hearts. Even as we pray, we pray, Lord, your will be done.
- And all the time thinking God is building his kingdom and he's working his work. And we're part of that. We have this privilege. And Jesus is revealing that to them, that they were to pray that the Lord's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- [2 : 23] And then he goes on to talk about amazing privileges. He tells us that we can ask God for our needs.
- And he provides them. He goes on to show what God will do for us as we pray. Forgiving our sins. Guiding us.
- Strengthening us. Protecting us from temptation. So Jesus has delighted to show what we're to pray about. And now as we get to the next part of this chapter, we're going to see that he addresses issues that many of us struggle with.
- Can I go to God? Will God bother to listen to me? Am I a bother to God? And this whole idea of how boldly can we ask?
- What will he give? Will he give what I want? And so Jesus gives this loving instruction that I believe he is just delighted to give to these men, to all the disciples, men and women that were gathered around, that they might learn to pray as God would have them to pray.
- [3 : 54] We're going to be covering verses 5 through 13 today. But I want to reread starting from verse 1 because it is all one section.
- Luke chapter 11, starting in verse 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.

And he said to them, when you pray, say, Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread and forgive our sins as we forgive everyone who is indebted to us and lead us not into temptation.

And he said to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves.

[4 : 57] For a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him. And he will answer from within, do not bother me. The door is now shut and my children are with me in bed.

I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his imprudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

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.

For everyone who asks, receives. And the one who seeks, finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened. What father among you, if he, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish, give him a serpent?

Or if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

[6 : 13] Let's pray together. Father, I thank you for your word. And I thank you for how Jesus reveals you to us and reveals himself to us.

Thank you for this instruction on prayer. Thank you, Father, that as Jesus continued, he addresses some of our basic fears about prayer.

And I pray that you would be with us. Help us to see exactly what he's wanting us to see here. And Lord, may it encourage us in our prayer and seeking your face.

I pray that you would guide us through your word today and that you would bless and that your name would be exalted in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So he gives this prayer and after the prayer, he's relating then to them this idea of, can I really go to God this way?

How will God receive me? And so he begins with this small parable that they can relate to. He uses a situation that would have been common to all people in Israel.

[7 : 32] In verse 5, he starts out by saying, and I tell you, whoops, reading the wrong chapter. He starts by saying, and he said to them, which of you who has a friend?

Start, I'm going to stop there. We'll read the whole verse in just a minute. But he puts out this parable that relates to all of them. And the way he says it puts everyone in that parable.

A lot of times he'll speak a parable and it'll be about somebody like Lazarus. Maybe they've met him, maybe they haven't. Or it'll be a parable about some made-up person that they can relate to but does not involve them.

But as he's telling this parable, he's putting them in the center of the story, trying to get them to see the point as to how it applies to them.

So he starts the parable by saying, basically he says this phrase, can you imagine this kind of situation? Now, the implied answer is no.

[8 : 43] Now you've said, now you've talked, this is a situation that's common to them. Yes, the situation that we're going to look at is indeed common to them. But the way Jesus structured this parable, they would have said, no, no one will do what this guy, not the first guy, but the second guy will do.

There's no one who will reply the way this man who's sleeping in the house replies. They would have been shocked for someone to reply.

And I think that's very important to see as we're going through this parable. No, no one would ever dream of someone reacting like this.

So he puts them in the middle of the situation. Can you imagine if you go home tonight and in the middle of night, you have a visitor and you don't have bread.

And so going on, he says, and he said to them, which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him.

[9 : 55] I think the first thing that's important to do is to get American thinking out of the way. Just take it right out of your mind as you think about this parable. Nine o'clock in the evening is about the last you call anybody.

Really? A lot of people after nine o'clock? No, I can't call them. Stop by their house? Eight o'clock. Yeah, maybe nine o'clock.

We have this mentality that you don't bother people after a certain point. And of course, people in that day and age, they would probably hold to that just a little bit.

But as you think about this parable, it would be utterly ridiculous to us to think that we could go to our neighbor at midnight and borrow a cup of sugar or a loaf of bread.

We would be like, oh, I'd be so obnoxious to do this. The obnoxious person in this parable is not this man who goes to borrow.

[11 : 04] Because he doesn't have an American mentality. He has a Middle Eastern, ancient Middle Eastern mentality. And it's very important that we look at this with that mentality.

And so I'm going to bring you up to speed. Several commentaries brought out this idea of this cultural context. And so I'm going to bring you up to speed on a few things that will help this parable make sense.

First thing I want to point out is the travel of the day. They didn't have cell phones. Some of you kids are like, what? No cell phones.

I grew up without cell phones. It wasn't that long ago. But they didn't have cell phones. And the poor people had really no way of allowing others to know that they're coming their way.

Like when Jesus was traveling down with Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, he didn't send a first class letter to all his relatives saying, I'm on my way.

[12 : 09] No. Couldn't afford it. There was no way to do it. So they got up on whatever day they got up. And they said, we've got to go to Bethlehem.

And they got on their feet and on the donkey and away they went. No one knew they were coming. And that's the way travel was in that day and age.

It was totally unannounced. So you had no way of letting anyone know. And on the other side, if you like Joseph's relatives in Bethlehem, they had no way of knowing anyone would be coming.

And so travel on that day was totally unannounced. And this parable talks about arriving at midnight. And there could be all kinds of reasons. I know we and we have had family.

So I'm saying we've experienced this. Families experience this. You've probably experienced this. You've set out a certain time. And you said you would be there at 6 o'clock in the evening. And lo and behold, on the way, there's construction.

[13 : 15] And what was a 10-minute stretch of interstate turns into a two-hour parking lot. And you know all your plans. This could have certainly happened in that day and age. But it also was the case that the people, when they traveled, often traveled at night because it was so hot, especially during the summer at that time.

So they would travel at night just to avoid the heat. And when they traveled, McDonald's wasn't invented yet.

And so they ate what they carried. Now they could have stopped at a market at certain points and bought stuff, like Jesus did at different times. But basically, when you traveled, you ate what you carried.

And you got what you carried from your last night, whether it was at home or somebody's house that you stayed at. They would give you some bread for the travel or whatever.

And so there was no food along the way. And so you would travel. You'd set out. No one knew you were coming. And you didn't know to expect anyone. So people who would travel would do like we see so often in Scripture.

[14 : 29] We can go through the book of Judges. There's a gruesome example of this. You can go through Genesis and see a different gruesome example of this. But when you traveled in that day, you would travel along your way.

And if you weren't going to make it in one day, you would go into a city and into the center of the city. And you would simply stand and wait. And it was the expectation in the ancient Middle Eastern culture that if someone was traveling and waited in the center of the city, they needed someplace to stay at night.

And they were not like a majority of Americans nowadays. It was a shame to let someone stand in the center of the city. They had to be hosted.

They had to be shown hospitality. No one would dare leave someone in the middle of the center of the city waiting to stay or make them sleep in the center of the city.

It was a cultural shame. And so if they were traveling and went by, had to stop at a place where no one knew them, they would wait for hospitality that way.

[15 : 35] Or if they were traveling to someone's house, they would simply go and knock at the house. Hey, Uncle Joe, we're here. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. You know, we don't have plans. And we weren't ready for you. There was none of this. No one would ever think of not hosting someone.

So people would welcome people in. And it would be at any hour of the night. There was just no choice. You would always welcome people into your home for the night.

Even strangers. And the expectation was that you would certainly give them a place to sleep. You would tend their animals. You would feed and water their animals for them.

And that you would provide them a meal. Now, we're going to talk just a second about loaves of bread. And the loaves of bread are about the size of a fist. And typically, from what I understand, a loaf of bread was about, one loaf of bread was about what one person would eat.

[16 : 47] And it wasn't only what they would eat, but it was what they used for their fork and their spoon. because they would dip juices and scoot their, you know, scoot their potatoes onto one piece of bread with the other piece of bread and eat it.

And that's how they ate. And travelers would arrive hungry, and it was a tremendous insult not to feed your guests, no matter what time they showed up.

And so, in this situation, we have this guy who has a friend. This man who has a friend who shows up at midnight. I need a place to stay.

Oh, welcome, welcome. Here, start getting settled here, and we'll take care of your animals. And one guy says, yeah, look at my son's rock collection while the wife or the man slips out the back door to the neighbor.

And knocks at the door and said, friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come on a journey, and I have nothing set before them. Why would that be?

[17 : 58] Well, the process of bread making took place once a day, and it took place at a gathering of a small group of people on maybe a street or a small community, and they would all bake their bread together.

One hearth, one fire, one time of the day. And people would then take home what they had, and maybe someone was saying, oh, you know, I can't be here tomorrow. I'm going to bake two days' worth of bread.

And Betty Jo, who was sitting with Betty Jean, saw that Betty Jean baked two days' worth of bread, so she would know that so-and-so has bread. And that was common, because they shared this oven.

They would know that others would have bread. And so it was not uncommon, because of the absolute need of showing hospitality, it was not uncommon for a neighbor to go to another neighbor who knew this guy's got some bread, and asked bread at any time of the night.

And it was a shame to the whole village if the person was staying at someone's house, and that person didn't have bread.

[19 : 10] So the picture that Jesus is speaking here, this person, again, we can't think in the American way of thinking, this person who's knocking at his neighbor's door is doing everything culturally right.

The, I'm trying to think of, we'll just say the bad person. I was trying to think of other names. The bad person in this story is the person who's sleeping in the bed and won't get up.

Nothing to the point of knocking at the door has been unusual. Children at the first person's house didn't keep them from receiving their guests.

But Jesus goes on in this situation. Can you imagine being in this situation? He spells a situation, and this is the part that no one, would have imagined. And he answered from within, do not bother me.

The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give to you. Can't give you anything. That's the situation that no one could imagine.

[20 : 25] To borrow bread from a neighbor was totally normal. It was a normal thing that happened. And in that honor and shame culture, no one, absolutely no one, would have refused to rise and break bread or give bread for his friend, even if their children were awakened in the process.

And so we have this situation where this second man, scoundrel, that's a good word, is being a scoundrel.

Verse 8 goes on to say, I tell you, though he will not rise, will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his imprudence, he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

Now remember, Jesus is telling the story to instruct people in an understanding of what God is like.

This man is stingy, this second man. This man won't be bothered by the needs of others. This man won't let anything put him out of his comfortable situation.

[21 : 43] This man has no regard for his neighbor. And all these people know that that's not how their society would run. And we'll pause here for just a minute and think about this idea of prayer.

Do you ever go to God and think that he's stingy? That you have to pry your needs from his hands?

That is exactly what Jesus is trying to get these people to see. Not that God is stingy, but that he is absolutely not like. It's kind of the theme through these couple of things here.

God is not like men. And of course, normal men would have been like this, but God is not like men. God is not stingy. We don't have to be a shameless beggar to beg until he finally is willing to give.

I think sometimes people misunderstand this. Misunderstand this parable because they think, well, it's because the old King James word is importunity. It's because God, because we're importunity.

[23 : 08] We show importunity. That God finally meets our needs. And Jesus is saying it's not that way. And we do have to seek and continue to seek.

We'll see that more in just a second. But that is not the way God is. God is not a stingy scoundrel scoundrel waiting till we beg long enough for him to answer our prayers.

And as we think back, as Jesus is beginning to share with them, this is how you pray. You address God as Father. Oh, that's great. How would it be if he teaches us to address him as Father, and yet we get partway down through the teaching, and Jesus says, by the way, he's stingy.

And you have to beg him and hound him enough until he gives it to you. Jesus is explaining just the opposite. By putting them in that situation, they would have recognized, in that parable, they would have recognized, Jesus is pointing to the fact that God is not a stingy scoundrel.

And everything that goes on in this passage points to the fact that God is indeed not a stingy scoundrel. Jesus is describing an unheard of situation, and even the vilest of men in that situation would indeed have gotten up and given bread, no matter whether it woke his kids or not.

[24 : 40] Jesus is pointing to the fact that his father delights to answer prayer. And we have to always keep that in mind as we think about our coming to him.

Our father delights to answer the needs of his people. Jesus wanted them to see that God was not the kind of person who would refuse the emergency request for bread.

bread. But that indeed God was a God who answers. In fact, as he gets into this, that's the next thing he says in verse 9 and 10.

Verses 9 and 10, he says, and I tell you, ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened unto you.

for everyone who asks receives and the one who seeks finds and to the one who knocks it will be opened. So how should we come to this father?

[25 : 50] Hebrews 4.16 says, let us come with confidence. Let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We come to God as one we can go to confidently that we may receive. God is not like this neighbor.

But as he goes on here, he is saying, but we should certainly be like the man knocking at his friend's door at midnight and expecting to receive what he needs.

So, Jesus is clarifying, God is not a stingy scoundrel. He is one who delights to give. And we should be people who do give because God says those who ask receive and those who seek find and those who knock, it shall be open to them.

Will we get an answer? Yes. Yes. He starts out this, the verses I just read, 9 and 10, by saying, and I tell you, listen to this.

[27 : 03] I want to make sure that you understand this. Ask and it will be given. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be open to you.

For everyone who asks receive and the one who seeks finds and the one who knocks will be opened. Is this the only place scripture points to this kind of thing?

No. John records for us words of Christ. First in chapter 14 verses 13 and 14, whatever you ask in my name, this I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

if you ask anything in my name, I will do it. And then 15 verse 7, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.

John 16 23, in that day you will ask me nothing. Truly, truly, I say unto you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

[28 : 05] We don't have to badger. God is willing to give. He is not unwilling like the sleepy neighbor or the unjust judge of Luke 18.

And even Luke 18 is not pointing to the fact that God is a scoundrel of this unjust judge that the widow has to go to. He very much points to the idea that God is one who hears.

Well, then why does he say keep asking and keep seeking and keep knocking? It's the timing of the answer. It is the trust that we are to have in God.

We are to continue to bring our request assured that God will hear an answer. We're to be asking, seeking, and knocking. It's told of I didn't write it down.

I'm thinking off the top of my head. The man who had the orphanage in England. Yes. That he prayed for a man for 60 years to be saved.

[29 : 22] He died. The orphanage owner. A couple years later, the man was saved. Now, are all our prayer requests answered?

No. Thankfully. Will God give me what I'm asking for? Well, Jesus answers that.

What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent? Or if he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

Even an earthly father knows to give good things to their children. Now, there's two aspects to this. There's the aspect that an earthly father, a good earthly father, is not going to trick his child.

You want an egg? Oh, here's a scorpion. They just never do that. Even what would be evil men in this day and age love their children and give them what they need.

[30 : 41] They don't trick them. They're also careful as even earthly fathers, evil fathers, to be careful to give them what is good.

You can have a two-year-old standing beside you while you're peeling potatoes, and they want the knife. Do you give them the knife because they ask? No, you're a loving enough parent to say, no, you can't have that knife.

And so God, at times, in our prayers, gives us only what is good for us, what is best for us. And Jesus points out that God the Father is better than any earthly fathers.

I may have the best intentions in providing the needs of my kids, but may still inadvertently, because I am a sinner, give what I think is good, but instead give the worst thing I could give to my children.

Our God doesn't ever do that. He gives what is good, what is best. In fact, God never gives anything but what is the best.

[31 : 53] I remember, I won't say it, it's embarrassing, but I remember asking for something very specifically in college, we'll just say it involved a girlfriend.

I am so glad God said no. He's very good. He gave to me what I needed and what was good for me, and not what I thought I wanted.

so sometimes as the best father, his answer is no. Sometimes it's wait. Many of us have prayed for the salvation of children and relatives, and like George Mueller, have waited and waited, sometimes seeing the answer to that, sometimes it taking place after we're gone, but God knows the time.

Sometimes I prayed for things, or we have prayed for things, and God allows suffering. God, that isn't the answer I wanted. But based on all that Jesus is teaching here, and through all the Bible, he's doing what the best father would do.

He only gives us good things, and sometimes that good thing is suffering. He's making us like Christ. And sometimes his answer is something entirely different from what I ask.

[33 : 34] It's always what brings him glory, but what is best for us. the last thing that's mentioned here is that he gives us the Holy Spirit.

It seems sort of out of place. We want it to always be that which we ask for. But Luke has this theme of the Holy Spirit throughout his first book, and we see this, and it's building to where in the second book, this idea of the Holy Spirit really flourishes and is fulfilled.

Acts 2 is the beginning where we see it in a great way, where the work of the Spirit begins to come down on people and empower them for service, and then taking and opening the gospel to the Gentiles and empowering Christians throughout the world, Jews or Gentiles, and they're being helped and strengthened and led and taught and conformed to the image of Christ.

The word of God is being applied by means of that Holy Spirit. And so when Jesus says giving them the Holy Spirit, he's not making this right turn that makes no sense.

He's saying in a sense and very real way, he gives what is absolutely best, gives us the Holy Spirit.

[35 : 03] God is God and so as I conclude, one of the things I want to just take a moment to think about is why?

Why am I, why are you, why are people who are Christ's disciples in this kind of situation? Why are we in a situation where Jesus instructs us to address God as our Father?

why are we in a situation where we can ask for our needs, daily needs to be met? Why are we in a situation where we can ask for forgiveness for our sins?

Why are we in a situation where we can ask for deliverance from temptation? Why are we in a situation where Jesus reveals the Father's desire to meet our needs and the fact that he has no desire not to meet our needs?

He loves to meet our needs. Why would all this come about? Because we were born in sin and we rebelled against God and we didn't deserve anything but God's judgment.

[36 : 17] We have these privileges because of the wonderful work of Christ who came and took on flesh, lived a perfect life, took the judgment we deserve, died in our place so that we can have this kind of relationship.

Because of the work of Christ we have been adopted into the family of God therefore we can call God Father. Galatians even says Abba Father.

Because of the work of Christ for us, our Father desires to meet our needs. In fact, he commands us to ask.

And he will give us what is best at the right time. So I will ask you, brother or sister, are you the kind of person, or are you as you should be, a person who goes to God regularly?

if I have to ask for daily bread, then I need to be praying daily. Is this the kind of relationship that you're endeavoring to foster and build?

[37 : 41] I mean, of course, he's the one who does the work, but we're called to be people who seek the Lord. We're called to be people who are praying regularly. is prayer part of your everyday life?

Is the prayer more than just a grocery list of things that happen? Is it where you're developing this relationship with God? Are you beginning to know God?

Are you walking with him? Are you depending on him for everything? I would challenge you, not so that you can put this not in your belt and say you're a good Christian.

You need to be praying because you need your relationship with the Father. You need his strength. You need his guidance. Not to add on to yours.

You need it. We cannot survive without being connected for grace and strength to our Father.

[38 : 45] So, let me encourage you. not as a mark of your spirituality, but as something you need in your everyday life. Be a person who takes these teachings that Jesus has given us and makes them part of your everyday walk with the Lord.

Having the right understanding of the God that you're approaching and resting in him for your needs. Let's pray. Father, I thank you for revealing this to us.

I pray that you would be with us. Help us be people who see you for who you are. And Lord, I pray that you would bless that we would be people who are coming to you as you've laid out with an understanding of you that is here.

Help us be people who don't quit in prayer. Help us be patient. Help us to know and stand on the truths that God is going to do for his people that which is good and he does indeed answer our prayer.

I pray that you would be with us. And Father, we haven't addressed it much this morning, but I pray that you would be with those who don't know you today. None of this can take place except for their relationship with Christ.

[40 : 10] And so I pray that you would bless and draw people to yourself this morning. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.