

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 11:1-4

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. This week, we will read Luke chapter 11. Today, we will read verses 1-4.

This chapter is not easy to read. On the surface, it seems that Luke records many unrelated events and simply places them together. But if we read the Scriptures carefully and enter into the spirit of the author, he must have a particular thought behind it, wanting to tell us something special. If we can enter into the author's spirit and mind, perhaps we can discover the thread that connects these passages.

In the Bible—especially in the four Gospels—there are many similar sections placed in different locations. When they appear in different places, we should carefully consider why the author speaks about them here rather than elsewhere. Through such careful consideration and meditation, perhaps we can understand the author's intention in arranging them in this way. Of course, we also receive much help from the spiritual predecessors who have gone before us. In particular, I have received much help from G. Campbell Morgan, and many insights come from his writings.

Verse 1: "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.'"

At this time, Jesus' earthly ministry had already entered its final six months, and the disciples had followed Him for quite some time. If we were to say that the disciples did not know how to pray, that would be difficult to accept, because at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew chapters 5 and 6, Jesus had already taught them how to pray. So why did the disciples ask again at this time?

We see that it began with Jesus praying in a certain place. Jesus often had the habit of praying alone. The disciples must have observed His daily life, because they lived together every day. There was always a period of time when Jesus withdrew Himself and went to pray alone. The disciples greatly admired this practice. They longed for such a time in their own lives, yet it seemed they could not achieve it.

Therefore, the question the disciples asked here was not “teach us how to pray,” but “teach us to pray.” They already knew the methods of prayer and the words that could be spoken—just as we today may know many methods, yet we ourselves are not truly people of prayer. What the disciples desired was to become people of prayer like Jesus. Thus they said, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.”

Among the disciples were some who had previously followed John the Baptist. John lived in the wilderness and had a lifestyle completely different from others. His disciples learned prayer from him in the context of that kind of life. But when they observed Jesus, they sensed that His life was on an even higher level.

Jesus traveled through villages, went to Jerusalem and other large cities, and even taught in the temple. His daily life involved constant contact with people. Yet He still maintained a life of prayer. It was likely this kind of life that the disciples greatly admired. They perceived that it was even higher than what they had seen with John the Baptist, and therefore they hoped Jesus would teach them how to become people of prayer. When we desire to learn in this way, the Lord is very pleased. Therefore Jesus immediately answered them.

Verse 2: “So He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’”

If we compare this passage with Matthew 6:9–13, we find that they are very similar. In Matthew 6:9–13, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray and gave them a model prayer. That teaching occurred at the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Now we are in the final six months of His ministry.

When the disciples asked how to become people of prayer, Jesus returned to what He had originally taught them about prayer. However, here He did not repeat the entire prayer again. Therefore, this seems to serve as an example, highlighting certain key points or principles.

From the perspective of principles, Jesus taught His disciples that the first principle of prayer is to begin with God—to care for God’s interests, God’s kingdom, and God’s will. Thus He said, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” A name expresses a person’s being, actions, and achievements. Our Father in heaven is holy, righteous, and glorious. May people place the Father in the most glorious and sacred position: “Hallowed be Your name.”

“Your kingdom come.” The kingdom of God is the realm where God reigns. When people submit to God’s authority, God’s kingdom comes to them. May God’s authority have free course among people: “Your kingdom come.” “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” After praying concerning God’s name, God’s kingdom, and God’s will, we then turn to our own needs.

Verse 3: “Give us day by day our daily bread.”

We ask the Lord to supply our daily necessities. In this way we learn to live day by day depending on God, without worrying about tomorrow or the day after. If we have food and clothing today, we should be content. God desires that we look to Him daily and rely on Him daily. Therefore we pray, “Give us day by day our daily bread.”

Verse 4: “And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Because this prayer is directed to the citizens of the kingdom, when we ask God to forgive our sins, we must first ask ourselves whether we have forgiven others.

From the standpoint of truth, we know that when we sin and confess our sins to God, He forgives us. Yet here the Lord Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray. If you desire your prayer to be answered, and if you desire to be a citizen of God's kingdom, then while asking the Lord to forgive your sins, you must first examine yourself: have you forgiven those who have wronged you?

In our daily lives—especially in church life—when we interact with brothers and sisters, it is inevitable that we may offend one another. Are there matters you have long held onto, things you cannot forget or forgive? When you come before God in prayer, aware that you have made mistakes and asking Him to forgive you, God may first ask: have you forgiven those who have wronged you?

“Do not lead us into temptation; but deliver us from the evil one.” We know that Satan is like a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour. Therefore we ask God to help us not to fall into temptation and to deliver us from the evil one.

When the disciples asked Jesus how to become people of prayer, He gave them these principles: First, you must care for God's interests—His name, His kingdom, and His will. Then come your personal needs, and you ask God to supply them daily.

Next, consider whether there is any sin hindering your relationship with God. If there is, immediately ask for forgiveness. Yet while asking God to forgive you, He will also ask whether you have forgiven those who have wronged you. Finally, ask God to guard you so that you do not fall into the temptations and attacks of the evil one. But Jesus did not stop here. In verses 5–13, He continued by using a parable and a comparison to show how we can properly become people of prayer. May God help us.

Let us pray together: Lord, not only the disciples admired this life, but we also long to become people who have a life of prayer like You. Help us each day to set apart a time to come personally before You and have intimate fellowship with You in prayer. In our prayers, help us learn to place Your interests first—Your name, Your kingdom, and Your will—so that they may be honored throughout the earth and have free course in our lives. We also ask You to care for our daily needs, forgive our sins, and keep us from falling into the temptations of the evil one.

At the same time, please search our hearts. Are there still things we refuse to forgive in others? May Your grace continually increase in us, overcoming our weakness and limitations, so that we may become people who forgive others. In our family life and in our church life, may we meet everyone with a clear conscience. Bless our lives today. We pray in the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.