

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

3-19-25

Luke 11

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer – Verses 1-4

¹ One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” ² 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 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.’”

11:1- 2 Notice the order in this prayer. First, Jesus praised God; then he made his requests. Praising God first puts us in the right frame of mind to tell him about our needs. Too often our prayers are more like shopping lists than conversations. These verses focus on three aspects of prayer: its content (11: 2-4), our persistence (11: 5-10), and God’s faithfulness (11: 11-13).

11:3 God’s provision is daily, not all at once. We cannot store it up and then cut off communication with God. And we dare not be self-satisfied. If you are running low on strength, ask yourself, How long have I been away from the Source?

11:4 When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he made forgiveness the cornerstone of their relationship with God. God has forgiven our sins; we must now forgive those who have wronged us. To remain unforgiving shows we have not understood that we ourselves deeply need to be forgiven. Think of some people who have wronged you. Have you forgiven them? How will God deal with you if he treats you as you treat others?

Pray With Boldness And Persistence – Verses 5-8

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

11:5-7 Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight: In the custom of that day, a whole family lived together in a one-room house. On one side of the house was a raised platform where they all slept; down on the ground were all their animals — a cow, perhaps some sheep and goats and so forth. There was no way the man could come to the door without disturbing the whole household. Yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs: It took a lot of boldness for the man in the story to so shamelessly ask his friend in the middle of the night; he really wanted and needed the bread.

11:8 Persistence, or boldness, in prayer overcomes our insensitivity, not God's. To practice persistence does more to change our hearts and minds than his, and it helps us understand and express the intensity of our need. Persistence in prayer helps us recognize God's work.

Pray With A Childlike Confidence – Verses 9-13

⁹ “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

11:9-13 Even though good fathers make mistakes, they treat their children well. How much better our perfect heavenly Father treats his children! The most important gift he could ever give us is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 1-4), whom he promised to give all believers after his death, resurrection, and return to heaven (John 15: 26).

Jesus and Beelzebul – Verses 14-20

¹⁴ Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. ¹⁵ But some of them said, “By Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.” ¹⁶ Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. ¹⁷ Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. ¹⁸ If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul. ¹⁹ Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁰ But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

11:14 A similar and possibly separate event is reported in Matthew 12:22-45 and Mark 3:20-30. The event described by Luke happened in Judea, while the other took place in Galilee. According to Luke, Jesus spoke to the crowds; in Matthew and Mark, he accused the Pharisees.

11:15-20 Some of the Pharisees' followers also were exorcists— that is, they drove out demons. The Pharisees' accusations were becoming more desperate. To accuse Jesus of being empowered by Satan, the prince of demons, because Jesus was driving out demons was also to say that the Pharisees' own exorcists were doing Satan's work. Jesus turned the religious leaders' accusation against them. Jesus first dismissed their claim as absurd (Why would the devil drive out his own demons?). Then he engaged in a little irony (“By whom do your followers drive them out?”). Finally, he concluded that his work of driving out demons proved that the kingdom of God had arrived. Satan, who had controlled the kingdom of this world for thousands of years, was now being controlled and overpowered by Jesus and the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' kingdom began to come into power at Jesus' birth and grew as he resisted the wilderness temptations. It established itself through his teachings and healings, blossomed in victory at his resurrection and at Pentecost, and will become permanent and universal at his second coming.

Jesus Proclaims His Strength Over All Demonic Forces – Verses 21-26

²¹ “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. ²² But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder. ²³ “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ²⁴ “When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ ²⁵ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. ²⁶ Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first.”

11:21-22 Jesus may have been referring to Isaiah 49: 24-26. Regardless of how great Satan’s power is, Jesus is stronger still. He will overpower Satan and dispose of him for eternity (see Revelation 20: 2, 10).

11:23 How does this verse relate to 9: 50: “Whoever is not against you is for you”? In the earlier passage, Jesus was talking about a person who was driving out demons in Jesus’ name. Those who fight evil, he was saying, are on the same side as the one driving out demons in Jesus’ name. Here, by contrast, he was talking about the conflict between God and the devil. In this battle, if a person is not on God’s side, he or she is on Satan’s. There is no neutral ground. Because God has already won the battle, why be on the losing side? If you aren’t actively for Christ, you are against him.

11:24-26 Jesus was illustrating an unfortunate human tendency: Our desire to reform often does not last long. In Israel’s history, almost as soon as a good king would pull down idols, a bad king would set them up again. It is not enough to be emptied of evil; we must then be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God’s new purpose in our lives (see also Matthew 12:43-45; Galatians 5: 22).

Jesus Reveals The Truly Blessed – Verses 27-28

²⁷ As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” ²⁸ He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

11:27-28 Jesus was speaking to people who put extremely high value on family ties. Their genealogies were important guarantees that they were part of God’s chosen people. A man’s value came from his ancestors, and a woman’s value came from the sons she bore. Jesus’ response to the woman meant that a person’s obedience to God is more important than his or her place on the family tree. Consistent obedience is more important than the honor of bearing a respected son.

The Sign of Jonah – Verses 29-32

²⁹ As the crowds increased, Jesus said, “This is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰ For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. ³¹ The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom; and now something greater than Solomon is here. ³² The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and now something greater than Jonah is here.

11:29-30 What was the sign of Jonah? God had asked Jonah to preach repentance to the Gentiles (non-Jews). Jesus was affirming Jonah's message. Salvation is not only for Jews but for all people. Matthew 12: 40 adds another explanation: Jesus would die and rise after three days, just as the prophet Jonah was rescued after three days in the belly of the great fish.

11:29-32 The cruel, warlike men of Nineveh, capital of Assyria, repented when Jonah preached to them— and Jonah did not even care about them. The pagan Queen of the South (Sheba) praised the God of Israel when she heard Solomon's wisdom, and Solomon was full of faults. By contrast, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, came to people that he loved dearly— but they rejected him. Thus, God's chosen people made themselves more liable to judgment than either a notoriously wicked nation or a powerful pagan queen.

11:31-32 The people of Nineveh and the Queen of the South had turned to God with far less evidence than Jesus was giving his listeners— and far less than we have today. We have eyewitness reports of the risen Jesus, the continuing power of the Holy Spirit unleashed at Pentecost, easy access to the Bible, and knowledge of 2,000 years of Christ's acts through his church. With the knowledge and insight available to us, our response to Christ ought to be even more complete and wholehearted.

The Lamp of the Body – Verses 33-36

³³ **“No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴ Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy,^[a] your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness. ³⁵ See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. ³⁶ Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a lamp shines its light on you.”**

11:33-36 The lamp is Christ; the eye represents spiritual understanding and insight. Evil desires make the eye less sensitive and blot out the light of Christ's presence. If you have a hard time seeing God at work in the world and in your life, check your vision. Are any sinful desires blinding you to Christ?

Woes On The Pharisees And The Experts In The Law – Verses 37-41

³⁷ **When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. ³⁸ But the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed that Jesus did not first wash before the meal. ³⁹ Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹ But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.**

11:37-39 This washing was done not for health reasons but as a symbol of washing away any contamination from touching anything unclean. Not only did the Pharisees make a public show of their washing, but they also commanded everyone else to follow a practice originally intended only for the priests.

11:41 The Pharisees loved to think of themselves as “clean,” but their stinginess toward God and the poor proved that they were not as clean as they thought. How do you use the resources God has entrusted to you? Are you generous in meeting the needs around you? Your generosity reveals much about the purity of your heart.

Woes To The Scribes, Pharisees And Lawyers – Verses 42-46

⁴² “Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. ⁴³ “Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and respectful greetings in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴ “Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which people walk over without knowing it.” ⁴⁵ One of the experts in the law answered him, “Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us also.” ⁴⁶ Jesus replied, “And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

11:42 It is easy to rationalize not helping others because we have already given to the church, but a person who follows Jesus should share with needy neighbors. While tithing is important to the life of the church, our compassion must not stop there. Where we can help, we should help.

11:42-52 Jesus criticized the Pharisees and the experts in the law harshly because they (1) washed their outsides but not their insides, (2) remembered to give a tenth of even their garden herbs but neglected justice, (3) loved praise and attention, (4) loaded people down with burdensome religious demands, (5) would not accept the truth about Jesus, and (6) prevented others from believing the truth. They went wrong by focusing on outward appearances and ignoring the inner condition of their hearts. People do the same when their service comes from a desire to be seen rather than from a pure heart that is full of love for others. People may sometimes be fooled, but God isn't. Don't be a Christian on the outside only. Bring your inner life under God's control and your outer life will naturally reflect him.

11:44 The Old Testament laws said a person who touched a grave was unclean (Numbers 19:16). Jesus accused the Pharisees of making others unclean by their spiritual rottenness. Like unmarked graves hidden in a field, the Pharisees corrupted everyone who came in contact with them.

11:46 These “burdens” were the details the Pharisees had added to God's law. To the commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (Exodus 20:8), for example, they had added instructions regarding how far a person could walk on the Sabbath, which kinds of knots could be tied, and how much weight could be carried. Healing a person was considered unlawful work on the Sabbath although rescuing a trapped animal was permitted (14:5). No wonder Jesus condemned their additions to the law.

The Religious Leaders Only Admired Dead Prophets – Verses 47-51

⁴⁷ “Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your ancestors who killed them. ⁴⁸ So you testify that you approve of what your ancestors did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ Because of this, God in his wisdom said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute. ⁵⁰ Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

11:47-49 God's prophets have been persecuted and murdered throughout history. But this generation was rejecting more than a human prophet— they were rejecting God himself. This quotation is not from the Old Testament. Jesus, the greatest prophet of all, was directly giving them God's message.

11:50-51 Abel's death is recorded in Genesis 4:8. Zechariah's death is recorded in 2 Chronicles 24:20-22 (the last book in the Hebrew canon). Why would all these sins come upon this particular generation? Because they were rejecting the Messiah himself, the one to whom all their history and prophecy were pointing.

Keeping Others From God – Verse 52

⁵² **“Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”**

11:52 How did the legal experts take away the “key to knowledge”? Through their erroneous interpretations of Scripture and their added man-made rules, they made God's truth hard to understand and practice. On top of that, these men were bad examples, arguing their way out of the demanding rules they placed on others. Caught up in a religion of their own making, they could no longer lead the people to God. They had closed the door of God's love to the people and had thrown away the key.

The Reaction Of Jesus' Enemies – Verses 53-54

⁵³ **When Jesus went outside, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions,** ⁵⁴ **waiting to catch him in something he might say.**

11:53-54 The Pharisees and the teachers of the law hoped to arrest Jesus for blasphemy, heresy, and lawbreaking. They were enraged by Jesus' words about them, but they couldn't arrest him for merely speaking words. They had to find a legal way to get rid of Jesus.