

GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL GOD SERMON SERIES DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

19 & 20 JUNE 2021

THE GOOD AND TRUSTWORTHY FATHER

Scripture: Luke 11:1-13

The recommended time allocation for your group meeting is:

If you meet weekly :

- Worship through song (10 mins)
- Discussion - 1 session worth of core questions (40 mins)
- Discussion - 1 session worth of additional questions (30 mins)
- Sharing, Prayer, Fellowship (30 mins)

If you meet fortnightly :

- Worship through song (10 mins)
- Discussion - 2 sessions' worth of core questions (60 mins)
- Optional - additional questions (10 mins)
- Sharing, Prayer, Fellowship (30 mins)

Luke 11:1-13 Passage breakdown

Context	
Relationships as Jesus' disciples and children of God	<p>From Luke 10:25, the Bible records Jesus' teachings about how his disciples should exercise different relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship to neighbours: Lk. 10:25-37 - compassion and mercy • Relationship to Jesus: Lk. 10:38-42 - humble undistracted attention to Jesus • Relationship to God the Father: Lk. 11:1-13
Topic of prayer elsewhere in Luke's gospel	<p>Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; cf. 22:32, 40-44; 23:46</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus received the Holy Spirit from the Father while he was praying • Jesus frequently withdrew to pray by himself • The disciples had taken such notice of Jesus' persistent prayer life that they asked him to teach them how to pray
Observation	
vv.1-4	<p>Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, by giving an example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence: the LORD's name is divine and to be revered • Provision: God provides for us what we need

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pardon: God forgives; we should forgive those who sin against us ● Protection: God can lead us away from temptation
vv.5-8	Jesus teaches through parables: our prayer life should be boldly persistent
vv.9-13	<p>Jesus teaches through examples from daily life: prayer reveals God's faithfulness and generosity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If earthly fathers (usually) give good/excellent gifts to their children, God's gift is exceedingly good ● We should ask God for the gift of his Holy Spirit

Core Questions for Discussion

(If your group meets fortnightly, combine Core Questions of two sessions and choose one Further Question from either session.)

- 1. Jesus' faithful and persistent prayer life reflects the trust He has in God the Father. What aspects of God's trustworthy character can we recognize in the Lord's prayer (vv.2-4)?**

“Israel is my son, my firstborn; let my people go, that they may serve me” (Exod. 4:22-23); “When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son” (Hos. 11:1). Calling God “Father” not only evokes all kinds of associations of family life and intimacy; more importantly, it speaks to all subsequent generations of God as the God of the Exodus, the God who rescues Israel precisely because Israel is God’s firstborn son. The title Father says as much about Israel, and about the events through which God will liberate Israel, as it does about God. Jesus’ own sense of vocation, that of accomplishing the New Exodus, was marked principally by his awareness of God as Father. Now in the Lord’s Prayer he invites his followers to consider themselves Exodus people.

*- N.T. Wright, *The Lord’s Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer**

God’s covenant relationship with Israel as their Father demonstrates His steadfast loyalty to His children, particularly in the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Because of faith in Christ, Jesus’ work on the cross marks a New Exodus for all who are now called God’s children. This New Exodus is departure and deliverance from fallen humanity’s slavery to sin and death.

- Exodus 2:23-25: having heard the cries and prayers of His children the Israelites in slavery, God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and put His plan into action by calling a deliverer, Moses.
- The plague of death was God’s final plague He brought over Pharaoh and Egypt, demonstrating His power over life and death (and all of Egypt’s gods). God provided the Passover sacrifice to protect the Israelites, by passing over the doors marked with the lamb’s blood.
- In Christ Jesus, God provides the true Passover Lamb; the bread and wine of the Passover meal now symbolise Jesus’ body and blood on the cross. The cross on which Jesus died, covered in His blood, points to the door of a New Exodus in Christ.

Jesus is also the true Deliverer, through whom we experience forgiveness and freedom from sin.

- The New Exodus also marks New Birth; God's Fatherly love for us is seen in how God is now able to call us His children because of the New Birth we have in Jesus Christ His Son (1 Jn. 2:28-3:10).

2. Trusting His Father's will and purpose is another key characteristic in how Jesus prayed. The Lord's prayer in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 6:9-13) includes the clause "your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven".

2A. What do passages like Philippians 2:6-11 and Isaiah 53:1-12 reveal about the Father's will, His trustworthy salvation plan for humanity?

2B. In Luke 22:39-46 Jesus prays for His Father's will to be done, not His own, even if it meant receiving God's cup. How does the prayer on the Mt. of Olives reveal Jesus' trust in His Father?

What does God's cup refer to here? (Cross references to Psalm 75:8-9 & Isaiah 51:17-22)

Although this may seem to refer to the suffering he was about to endure during his trial, flogging and crucifixion, the "cup" more accurately points to "the cup of God's wrath" that was to be poured on Jesus, as He bore all of fallen humanity's inequity, transgression and sin on himself.

- 3. Jesus made it a point to illustrate through a parable that our prayers should be bold and persistent. From vv.5-8, what basis does Jesus give for such confidence in prayer? In what circumstances do you find it difficult to be bold or persistent in prayer? How will you pray differently after studying this Scripture passage?**

- 4. Recall any of the previous BRMC series about who the Holy Spirit is; what His role and relationship within the Trinity is, and his role working in us today, both corporately as the church and as individual disciples of Christ. With this in mind, why is the Father's gift of the Holy Spirit such an important topic of prayer for Jesus in vv.9-13?**

Further Questions for Discussion

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

- 5. Why does Luke's record of the Lord's prayer omit two sub-clauses that are included in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 6:10b "your will be done..." and Matt 6:13 "but deliver us from the evil one")?**

6. Suggested Spiritual Workout: Counting our Blessings

(For each session in this sermon series, a spiritual workout will be suggested for you to exercise on your own or together as a group. We encourage you to try this spiritual exercise, then share at your next small group meeting how it has impacted you.)

How have we been recognising God’s love and provision for us in our lives? Recall Paul’s opening doxology and prayer in his letter to the Ephesians (Eph 1:3-14); how have you been encouraged knowing that God the Father has already “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”?

(The following is extracted from *The Good and Beautiful God*, by James Bryan Smith)

Most of us are accustomed to waking up and thinking about our problems. This exercise will help us shift our focus away from the few things that are wrong to the many things that are beautiful and wonderful.

- Make a list of all of the things God has blessed you with, all of the things that make life wonderful.
- Pay attention to the details of your life. Look for the hidden things. Take notice of all of those wonderful things you easily overlook.
- Start small: try to come up with a list of ten things God has blessed you with. It can include things like your loved ones, material provision or opportunities you have been given. It can also include things in the created world: the sun, the stars, the mountains and so forth. Or you might want to include things you love, like coffee or ice cream!
- Finally, also include things that God has done for you. Each day God is at work providing for us, even though we cannot always see it.
- Keep adding to your list each day. Strive to make a list of fifty things.
- Then keep going! See if you can come up with one hundred blessings, things you are thankful for, this week.

7. Prayer Suggestions

Notice that Jesus taught the disciples that praising God should be at the forefront of our prayers. Also note that Jesus taught to pray for “us” corporately rather than an individual “me”.

Would you consider praying for the following:

- In response to our trustworthy heavenly Father’s will and purpose for us as His children, pray that we are able to praise our Father and ask for His provision, pardon and protection, just as Jesus did.
- For God’s love and provision over others in your family, community and wider society.