## Following Jesus on the Way to the Cross: The Lord's Prayer and the Gift of the Spirit

1. In Luke 10, Jesus showed Mary and Martha that life with Him and His Word comes first. We often reverse that order, focusing first on worries, responsibilities, hobbies, or entertainment. Even good and necessary things—like Martha's work, or our own callings in parenting, serving others, and daily responsibilities of caring for our neighbors—can begin to crowd out devotion to Jesus and His Word. Now read Luke 11:1–4. How does Jesus teach that same priority in prayer? What does He put first, and what comes after?

   Even service in the church can fill life with so much activity that we begin to treat time in God's Word and prayer as a luxury rather than a necessity. Yet prayer begins not with our needs, but with our relationship with God and the joy of glorifying Him. Prayer is precious even when no urgent burden is pressing on our hearts. It is time spent with our first love. One simple and rich way to build prayer and devotion into daily life is to read a portion of Scripture—perhaps the Psalms—and pause every few verses to pray in response to what God has spoken. In this way, His Word shapes our prayers, and prayer becomes a steady rhythm of communion with Him throughout the week.

   This is the only occasion on which any of the disciples ask Jesus to teach them something. It was customary for a Rabbi to teach his students how to approach God in prayer. Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer is shorter and more direct than Matthew's version, which is usually followed in the church today. Luke's version contains the invocation of God as Father; two petitions that refer to God; and three petitions that deal with the needs of the petitioner.

2. Both Matthew and Luke present Jesus' teaching on prayer in response to the disciples' desire to learn how to pray, yet the wording of the Lord's Prayer differs somewhat in each Gospel. What might these differences suggest about how Jesus intended the Lord's Prayer to be used? Should we understand it primarily as a fixed prayer to be repeated, as a pattern or model for prayer, or in some sense both? Why?

   Sometimes people are troubled by the differences between the Gospel accounts, as though the inspiration of Scripture were somehow at stake. But these variations need not unsettle us. They suggest that Jesus was not merely giving His disciples a rigid formula to repeat word for word but teaching them the kinds of things they ought to pray for. In that sense, the Lord's Prayer is not only a prayer to be spoken, but also a pattern that shapes our praying. To repeat it thoughtlessly or mechanically would miss its purpose, much like the empty repetition Jesus warned Pharisees against. At the same time, the Church rightly prays the Lord's Prayer together in corporate worship, much as it recites the Creed: not as vain repetition, but as a way of teaching, confessing, and forming the faith. And because these are Christ's own words, the prayer carries enduring value, comfort, depth, and meaning in every petition.

3. Why does the petition for daily bread sound redundant? In Greek, it quite literally says, *"the bread of us daily give us each day."* What might Jesus be teaching us about our tendency to worry about tomorrow?

The wording of this petition is striking because it places our attention firmly on the present need. Jesus teaches us to ask not for every possible future trouble, but for the bread we need for today. This does not encourage laziness or forbid wise planning; rather, it confronts our anxious desire to secure ourselves against every uncertainty. We are often preoccupied with tomorrow—what we will eat, what may happen, what we might lack. But in teaching us to pray this way, Jesus calls us back to daily dependence on the Father.

The repeated emphasis on "today" underscores that God gives His mercies in a daily rhythm. As Israel received manna one day at a time in the wilderness, so believers are taught to live by trust rather than by anxiety. The petition reminds us that life is sustained by God's ongoing care, not by our ability to control the future. We may prepare responsibly for tomorrow, but we are not to live in fear of it. Tomorrow remains in God's hands; today's bread comes from Him as a gift.

4. In the next petition, how does Jesus expand our understanding of "daily bread" beyond merely physical or worldly needs? Right after teaching us to pray for daily bread, He adds, "and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us."

With this next petition, Jesus shows that our daily needs are not limited to food, provision, or other earthly concerns. We also have a deep spiritual need to live in the grace of God—receiving His forgiveness and extending that same forgiveness to others. One of the most urgent questions in our lives is whether we are truly living in and living out the grace we have received through Christ.

We should ask ourselves:
- Whom do we struggle to forgive?
- Toward whom are we harboring bitterness or hatred?
- Where do we need to seek peace and reconciliation?

This also connects back to the first and second petitions, "hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come." God's name is to be glorified and His kingdom is meant to take shape in our lives as we reflect His mercy, pursue reconciliation, and live as people transformed by his grace.

5. In the final petition, the word "temptation" can also be translated as trial or test. But Jesus makes it sound as though God might lead us into temptation, so that we need to ask him not to. It might seem more natural to pray, "Give us strength when temptation comes," or, "Guard us in the midst of temptation." So how should we understand this petition?

The scriptures clearly teach us that God never tempts anyone to sin. James 1:13 says, "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone." Instead, the phrase is understood as a plea for protection: asking God to guard us, not let us fall, and rescue us from the spiritual forces of the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature.

Temptations come from three enemies: the devil, the world (its sinful culture and values), and our own sinful nature (the flesh).

While the Phrasing "Lead Us Not" is the traditional wording and is a faithful translation of the original Greek text, it might sound more forceful in modern English.

In the ancient biblical context, "leading" is understood as *allowing* or *permitting* us to enter into situations of severe testing. And so it a plea for God to guide our steps entirely *away* from danger. We are asking God to protect us from being deceived, falling into false belief, or giving in to despair when these temptations inevitably attack. By praying this, Christians confess that they do not possess the strength to fight spiritual battles on their own. We are utterly dependent on God to hold us up.

6 Look at each of these sections: verses 5–8; 9–10; 11–13. What encouragement does each section give us and what do you find interesting about each section?

In verses 5–8, Jesus encourages us to pray with boldness and persistence. It is striking that he describes prayer in somewhat adversarial terms, suggesting that the man responds not out of friendship but because he feels worn down by repeated requests. The point, however, is not that we must stay on God's good side or prove ourselves to be good enough friends in order to receive an answer. Nor is it that we have to badger God into listening. Rather, God is good and just, and he will provide what we truly need.

In verses 9–10, Jesus assures us that God hears our prayers and gives to those who ask. Our asking, seeking, and knocking are never in vain.

Then, in verses 11–13, Jesus compares God to a father who does not refuse the good requests of his children. Notice, though, that Jesus specifically speaks of the Father giving the Holy Spirit. The implication is that this is the request God always answers.

When has the Holy Spirit been mentioned in Luke up to this point?

Lk 1:15 -- The angel promised that John the Baptist would be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.

Lk 1:35 -- The Holy Spirit came upon Mary at the conception of Jesus.

Lk 1:41 -- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when Mary, pregnant with the holy Child, came to visit her.

Lk 2:25-27 -- The Holy Spirit directs Simeon to know that Mary's infant is the Christ.

Lk 3:22 -- The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism.

Lk 4:1 -- Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted.

Lk 4:14 -- Jesus returned from his temptations to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.

Lk 4:18 -- The Holy Spirit rested upon Jesus at his first sermon in Nazareth.

So this is a literal "bomb" dropped by Jesus. Believers can request the Holy Spirit and God will give of the Spirit like a father who enjoys giving good things to his children!

## Following Jesus on the Way to the Cross: The Lord's Prayer and the Gift of the Spirit

1. In Luke 10, Jesus showed Mary and Martha that life with Him and His Word comes first. We often reverse that order, focusing first on worries, responsibilities, hobbies, or entertainment. Even good and necessary things—like Martha's work, or our own callings in parenting, serving others, and daily responsibilities of caring for our neighbors—can begin to crowd out devotion to Jesus and His Word. Now read Luke 11:1–4. How does Jesus teach that same priority in prayer? What does He put first, and what comes after?

2. Both Matthew and Luke present Jesus' teaching on prayer in response to the disciples' desire to learn how to pray, yet the wording of the Lord's Prayer differs somewhat in each Gospel. What might these differences suggest about how Jesus intended the Lord's Prayer to be used? Should we understand it primarily as a fixed prayer to be repeated, as a pattern or model for prayer, or in some sense both? Why?

3. Why does the petition for daily bread sound redundant? In Greek, it quite literally says, *"the bread of us daily give us each day."* What might Jesus be teaching us about our tendency to worry about tomorrow?

4. In the next petition, how does Jesus expand our understanding of "daily bread" beyond merely physical or worldly needs? Right after teaching us to pray for daily bread, He adds, "and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us."

5. In the final petition, the word "temptation" can also be translated as trial or test. But Jesus makes it sound as though God might lead us into temptation, so that we need to ask him not to. It might seem more natural to pray, "Give us strength when temptation comes," or, "Guard us in the midst of temptation." So how should we understand this petition?

6. Look at each of these sections: verses 5–8; 9–10; 11–13. What encouragement does each section give us and what do you find interesting about each section?