

# Teach Us to Pray

by Anton Bosch

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*This sermon delves into the importance of prayer, specifically focusing on the model prayer given by Jesus in Luke 11:1-4. It emphasizes the need for genuine, heartfelt prayer that glorifies God's name and aligns with His will. The sermon highlights the significance of living out our prayers in daily life, reflecting God's character and bringing honor to His name.*

**Scripture:** Luke 11:1, Matthew 6:9, Romans 2:24, Ezekiel 36:22, Galatians 4:6

**Topics:** "The Power of Prayer", "Living Out Our Faith"

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## Description

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## Transcript

We're in the book of Luke, so we're going back to our study on the Gospel of Luke, and we're in chapter 11 this morning, and we begin with what is commonly known as our Lord's Prayer, and I'll be there for a while. It's not really His Prayer, the Lord's Prayer is really in John chapter 17, but this is the model prayer, and we'll make a few comments about that as we go. So Luke chapter 11 and reading verses 1 through 4. Luke 11, 1 through 4. 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.

And 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. Give us day by day our daily bread, 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.

The prayer appears also in Matthew, and slightly different, little differences between the two. And I obviously need to say that he does not give this to us as a formula for prayer, in the sense that we pray these words. The principles that are contained in the prayer, the structure or the ingredients in the prayer, are the things that need to make up our prayers.

And in fact, in the gospel of Matthew, he specifically says, Don't be like the heathen, or the Gentiles, who have vain repetitions, who say the same thing over and over. So while the prayer that the Lord Jesus

gives us here is a wonderful prayer, it can very easily become a vain or an empty repetition, something that we just say over and over and over, and it has absolutely no meaning. When I was a young boy in primary school, every morning we would be in what they call the quadrangle, which would be the courtyard in the center of the school, and we would say the Lord's Prayer every Sunday, every morning, five days a week.

Didn't have a clue what we were saying, but we said it. Now, that has no value whatsoever. But it is when the contents of the prayer become part of our prayer, that it has value.

So we're going to spend a little bit of time on this, not just today, but over several weeks, as we look at what He says, and how we ought to pray. So let's begin in verse 1. It came to pass as he was praying in a certain place. So it's interesting that Jesus is praying, and then they say, Teach us to pray.

So not only does He teach them with His words, but He teaches by His example. And we know that right through the Gospel of Luke and all the Gospels, Jesus is often found in prayer. He prays publicly, and He prays privately.

Many nights, and in fact, if you study the main crises in His life, before every one of those main things, just to name two, the choosing of the disciples, or the naming of the disciples, and the night before He is crucified, He is found in prayer. And so Jesus' custom was to pray, and the disciples noticed this. And so they said, and obviously they waited for Him to finish praying, they didn't interrupt Him, and they said, Lord, teach us to pray.

Now, it's interesting how that we read our own version of the Bible into the Bible. So if I asked you to quote this, if you didn't have it in front of you on the screen, or in your Bible right now, and I said to you, what did they say? I can guarantee you that 99.9% of us would say, they said, Lord, teach us how to pray. And in fact, if you look at, if you have a modern translation that, when I mean a modern translation, a more modern translation, which has headings, and the heading in some of these modern translations says, how to pray.

But now, is that what they asked Jesus? That they ask Him to teach them how to pray? No, they said, teach us to pray. There's a difference between saying, Lord, teach us how to pray, and teach us to pray. Now, obviously the how is important, but the praying is more important.

You see, and as I meditated on this passage during this week, I was struck by the need for the Lord to teach us to pray. Never mind the structure of our prayer. Just the idea of praying is something that every Christian struggles with.

I struggle with it. And I can guarantee you that the vast majority of us present here this morning, and those on the internet, struggle to pray. We find so many other things easier to do.

And I've shared with you before, and I'm not going to get into the details of that this morning, that there was a crisis in my own life 20-odd years ago, when God dealt with me about the fact that I found it easier to preach than I found it to pray. And if you find it easier to do anything, to read the Bible than to pray, you need to ask the Lord, teach me to pray. God, I cannot teach you to pray.

I can teach you the contents of the prayer. I can teach you the doctrine. I can teach you the theology.

But only the Lord can deal with your heart, and create within you a desire for time in the presence of God. Only He can teach you to pray. I can teach you how to pray.

But He alone can teach you to pray. And it's interesting, they go to Jesus, and not to John or to anyone else, but they go to Jesus and they say, Lord, teach us to pray. And I believe that when we go home this afternoon, there needs to be this desire in our hearts to say, Lord, teach me to pray.

Teach me to have a desire for prayer. Teach me to have, to spend time in your presence. Teach me to enjoy your presence.

And so it is different for each one of us, how and when we pray. And I don't want to, because I have seen the danger and the damage it does when we try and create formulas and we say, well, you must pray for a half an hour at the beginning of the day and a half an hour at the end of the day. Or whatever other formula, because each one of us is different and God deals with us different.

But let me just say that there needs to be two components to our prayer. And I don't want to get sidetracked because I want to get to the contents of the prayer. But there needs to be two components to your prayer.

The one is that you are walking with God moment by moment, all day, every day. That you're walking in His presence. That you are knowing His communion with Him at every moment, whatever you're doing.

That's the one aspect. And of course, you can immediately hear that that's something that most people don't really do. And yet it is something that is essential as we abide in Him.

And He abides in us. If I'm out there doing my own thing, whatever it is, whether I'm doing my job or I'm watching television or whatever I'm doing, if I'm doing my own thing and God is not involved in what I'm doing, I'm not abiding in Him and He is not abiding in me. So the one component of prayer is a constant awareness and walking in the presence of the Lord.

But then there needs to be specific times of prayer. Times when, like Jesus, drew aside in the Garden of Gethsemane on the mountainside and spent time with God. And how that looks for you and for me may be different.

The time I spend in prayer, in active prayer, is during the night. As you get older, as the older guys will tell you, you stop sleeping too well. You wake up and you're awake a lot of the night.

And I used to use that time to worry and stress about all sorts of things. But God has taught me to pray. And I'm not good at this.

I have a long way to go. But I thank God that He has created within me a desire to spend the hours, and it is hours at night when I cannot sleep, to spend that time in communion with Him, to spend that time in prayer. And so that's how it works for me.

But for you, it may be different. But you need to find God teaching you to pray. Not just how, but to pray.

So, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples. And obviously, John had taught his disciples to pray. Prayer was something which was common in Israel.

They prayed several times a day. And remember that that became an empty, vain repetition, because they would just pray, and they would say the same prayer over and over and over, with no reality and no substance. If you're going to just pray the same route prayer every time you pray, now I lay myself down to sleep.

I pray the Lord my soul to keep, or however the thing goes. Well, you may as well not pray, because it's meaningless. None of us have a conversation with our family.

And I trust husbands and wives do have a conversation. You don't say the same thing. You don't have a little rhyme.

I didn't think to make up a little rhyme, but I'm sure you can make up a little story. Just words that you say to your husband or to your wife every day. But it's meaningless.

No, if we're going to communicate, we communicate from our hearts. We communicate in a meaningful way, with intent. And if we're going to pray, it's no good just saying a little rhyme, whether it's this prayer or any other prayer.

But there needs to be communication from my heart. All right, so let's get into the prayer. We can spend a long time on just on that idea, but I want to really get into here.

And I'm just going to deal with part of verse 2 this morning, only the first half of verse 2. So I need to warn you that it's going to take us a while to get through these three verses. So He said to them, When you pray, say, Our Father in Heaven. Our Father in Heaven.

That is where it all begins. It begins in a relationship. It's not a relationship of God and people.

It's a relationship of Father and children. That is the very foundation of our prayer. And when I was a little boy saying, Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, every morning, it was meaningless.

First of all, because it didn't mean I didn't understand half of what I was saying. But secondly, because God was not my Father. I had not come into a relationship with Him.

And so to call Him my Father was hypocrisy and probably close to blasphemy. To call God my Father. Remember, they wanted to kill Jesus because He called God His Father.

They said, How can you do that? They didn't understand that, in fact, God was His Father. And if we're going to pray, it needs to begin with a relationship. That God is indeed my Father.

Not that He is just my God. But that He is my Father, that I have been born again into the family of God. You can't join God's family by becoming a member of this church or any other church.

You cannot join God's family by being baptized. The only way you can become part of the family of God is by being born into His family through the new birth. That's the only way.

There is no other way. Jesus says, I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but through me.

So the only way you can enter into prayer is by, first of all, being born again and becoming a child of God and having the right to call Him Father. It's interesting that He doesn't say, Our God in heaven. The Jews

would pray, God of the universe.

Is He the God of the universe? Yes, He is. But Jesus introduces something here which is different to what they were accustomed to. Only five times in the Old Testament is God called a Father.

And He is called a Father in the sense that He is the Father of Israel, that He birthed the nation. The same way as we look back to the founding fathers of America, God was the founding father of Israel. He founded that nation.

And so He was their Father only in that sense. But He was not a Father in a relational sense. He wanted to be, but He wasn't.

And so they prayed to the God of the universe. They prayed to the Almighty. But they could not pray to our Father.

But He has come to bring us into that relationship whereby we today are not just people, but we are children. We are not members of the congregation. We are His sons and His daughters.

And He is our Father. This is a tremendous privilege. I think that the world has looked with amazement at Harry the Prince.

I think we all know the story who turned his back on his royal heritage and decided that Hollywood was more attractive than Buckingham Palace. And I think that one of the things, and I don't care too much about the royal family, but I can't imagine having the privilege of being born into a royal family and saying, no, thank you. I want something else.

And yet we have been born into the most royal of families, into the family of God. He is our Father. And yet there are some who, like the prodigal son, said, I don't appreciate my father.

I want what the world has to offer. And they turned their backs on him. But He is our Father.

And the book of Galatians says in verse 6 of chapter 4, because you are sons, you are sons. You see, we are not servants. And you remember the difference between the prodigal son and his brother.

You know the story. The prodigal son turns his back on his heritage. He takes the money and he runs.

And he comes back after he discovered that in fact there wasn't that much out there anyway. And he comes back to the father. And what does he say? He says, I'm not worthy to be called your son.

Make me like your servant, because your servants are better off than I was out there. But the father embraces him and restores him to his sonship. But there was another son.

And you remember what he said. The other son is angry because they killed the fatted calf and they had this great celebration. And the other son says to his father, he says, all these years I have served you.

All these years I have served you. What was he confessing? He was saying, I have never been a son. I've just been a servant.

Not in his father's eyes, in his own eyes. And the father says to him, son. The father says, son, everything I have is yours.

You see, he was a son, but he was living as a servant. No, we are not servants. Yes, there is a sense in which we serve God and that we are servants of one another and we serve the Lord.

But it's on the basis that we are his sons. And so because you are sons in the context of Galatians and not servants, God has sent for the spirit of his son, the Lord Jesus, into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. And so Romans says the same thing.

It says that God has given us his spirit. And by his spirit, we know that we are his sons and we have the right to call him our father. Can you imagine calling the most important person in the world, whatever you would esteem him to be, your father, all the privilege that comes with being the son of the most rich or the most powerful or the whatever that the world has to offer.

And yet he has called us sons of the most high, of the great God of the universe. And folks, the relationship, and that's why he uses this word, Abba. It's hard to translate this word as we go back to Luke.

Father. It's almost impossible to translate it into modern English. And I spent a long time looking at all the alternatives.

Some people use the term daddy. And I think that there is merit in that. You see, there's a trend today for kids to call their fathers by their first name.

Now, that may be your culture and that's fine. But I think it's sad. Because what you're saying is, he's Joe and I'm Tom.

And my relationship with him is he's Joe and I'm Tom. Now, the relationship I have with my children is that I am their father, meaning that I love them, that I brought them into the world. Well, not really, but I had some part to play.

I care for them. I protect them. I provided for them when they were underage.

I'm still there as their guardian and as their protector and as their counselor, even though they have their own children now. No, my relationship with them is not Anton to Beatrice or to Evelyn. My relationship is I'm their dad.

And God's relationship with us is he's our dad. You see, the problem with the word father is that it seems to be too formal. And we don't really use that word.

So dad or daddy would be maybe a little better in understanding the intimacy of this relationship. And I'm afraid that because that word father is so formal, that when we use that word in our relationship with God, that it becomes something that it's not, that it becomes a formal title for God rather than an expression of intimacy. And the problem we have is that there are Christians who say, well, you know, the spirit of this word really is daddy.

And so they'll speak about God as their daddy. Now, that may be fine for them, and I'm not judging that. But for me, it doesn't quite work because it's a little bit too informal.

Now, it depends on what that word conjures up in your mind, I guess. And so that's why I struggle to find a modern equivalent for the word father, because father is too formal, daddy is too informal. But somewhere between those two ideas, those two words, is this idea of my relationship with him, of this intimacy that I have.

That he is, yes, he is the judge, but he is not my judge, he's my father. He is the God who rules the universe, but his relationship with me is not of a monarch or of a sovereign who rules my life, even though I obey him. But it's a relationship of father and son.

When we serve him, it's not because he is going to damn us or he's going to judge us if we don't serve him. But we serve him because we love him, and because he loves us, and because we're in that relationship where we don't want to disappoint him. I think many children, even those of us who are grown up, know the pain of disappointing our parents.

There were times in my life that I disappointed my mother, and it hurt me deeply that I broke my mother's heart, that I disappointed her. I don't want to disappoint my heavenly father. I don't want to displease him.

I want to make him, put it in human terms, I want to make him happy. I want him to be pleased with my love and my devotion of him. Our father, our father.

And maybe you say this morning, well, I am born again and he is my father. But I want you to examine your relationship with him again this morning. Is it really a father-son or a father-daughter relationship? Do you speak to him about everything? Do you expose your heart to him? Do you submit to his authority as the father, not just as the God? Are you driven to please him in everything that you do? Our father.

You see, it's not just father, and there's a difference in some of the translations, but the older manuscripts have the word our, which this one is based on. He is not just father. He is our father.

He is my father. He is your father. He is our father in heaven.

So obviously he's not nursery father. I'm not going to spend time on that word heaven, because I want to get to the next sentence, the next line. Hallowed be your name.

Now this is the New King James translation, so it's a more modern translation. It still uses the word hallowed. It's not a word that we use in common English anymore.

But again, we have a problem, because how else do we translate that word? We can say holy, but in fact it's not just, and that's what the word hallowed is based on. It's based on may your name be made and be holy. May your name be respected.

May your name be regarded as holy. So there's no easy translation for this word. Except to use this word.

God's name is as important as it is to us. In law, we have a facility to sue someone for defamation. For defamation.

In other words, if somebody says something and destroys your good name. Now, in Afrikaans, which is a lot more, a literal, a much more literal language. The title of the law that covers defamation is namskending.

And there are Afrikaans people who are watching, and they'll understand that word. You can hear from, it's made of two words. Nam, meaning name.

Skending, meaning to damage your name. To damage your name. In other words, you can sue someone if they damage your good name.

They say you're a thief if you're not a thief, or whatever it may be. Defamation. So God's name must be held in high esteem because God's name expresses who He is.

Today our names may not be that important, and yet they are important. One of the problems I have on the internet is that there are a whole bunch of Anton Bosch's on the internet. And there is another Anton Bosch who is a preacher.

Also in Ireland. Also happens to be South African. Has a different theological understanding that I have.

There are a bunch of others with the same name. So how do you differentiate between this one and that one? But there is only one Heavenly Father. There is only one Yahweh, or Jehovah.

There is only one Almighty. And His name cannot be given to anyone else. His name should not be depreciated.

But His name must be put in the place that it deserves. Now remember this concept that we can't give God glory. Because He has all glory.

But we need to affirm His glory. We need to affirm the greatness of His name. Because His name describes who He is.

Now we've never done that in this church, but you can do a whole study going through the Old Testament of the different names of God, and how that those names of God describe His glorious personality and character. And His name needs to be held high. So the question is, how do we do this? And the problem, of course, is that we often do the opposite.

Instead of elevating His name, we bring His name down. And we drag His name through the gutter, if you will. In the book of Romans chapter 2, a verse that I often quote, because it is such a heart-rending verse.

And remember that Paul is quoting this verse to Christians, but he's quoting it from the Old Testament, from the book of Samuel. And in Samuel, it appears in the context of David, who had stolen another man's wife and murdered that man. And because David did that, God says to David, You have caused My name to be blasphemed amongst the Gentiles.

David, what have you done? Not only have you sinned, but you've dragged Me into it. Because people say, You are My people. You're Israel, and you're the King of Israel.

What have you done to My name? And Paul applies this to the church. And he says, The name of God is blasphemed amongst the Gentiles, because of you, as it is written. Folks, today the name of God is being blasphemed amongst the world, because of the church.

The name of God is being blasphemed today, because on Wednesday, part of the mob and the riot that attacked the Capitol building, were people with signs saying, Jesus saves. And the unbelievers are saying, What kind of Jesus is this? Preachers were standing in the Capitol building, with Bibles under their arms. And the name of God is being blasphemed by the world.

Folks, this is not about politics. Christians do not riot, whether you're on the left or on the right, whether it's Black Lives Matter, or whether it is Proud Boys, or whatever it is. Christians do not riot.

Nowhere in the scriptures do you see that. We submit to the government, whether the government is righteous or not. Whether we like the government or not, we submit to the government, and we hallow the name of God by our submission to the authorities.

That's the teachings of Paul. That is the teachings of Peter. That is what Jesus exemplified.

And the difference was clear to Pilate, when Jesus stood in front of him. And Jesus' followers didn't riot. And he says, Why don't you defend yourself? And Pilate could see that here was something different, someone different.

Any politician, anyone of the world, any of the zealots of Jesus' day, would have been there and been campaigning, and been making their case, and been fighting. But Jesus just stands there, because he understands. He says, The power is not yours.

The power is God's, and I am in his hands. And that rattled Pilate. Folks, it doesn't matter how many arguments Jesus presented to Pilate on that day.

It doesn't matter how eloquent he would have waxed about his kingdom, and about his record, and that he had never committed any violence, that he'd never done anything wrong. It would not have affected Pilate. But what affected Pilate was when he saw Jesus standing as a lamb being led to the slaughter, not opening his mouth.

That glorified God. And that made Pilate think twice about what he was doing at that moment. That is Christianity.

The name of God is being blasphemed amongst the Gentiles because of you. I want us to look at three verses in the book of Ezekiel, because this is an old problem. Problem with Israel, and it's a problem for us today.

It says, When they came to the nations, wherever they went, speaking about God's people, they profaned my holy name. When they said of them, These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of his land. They have forsaken the land, and God has carried them out into captivity.

These are God's people. Both people are saying the same thing about the church today, not just concerning Wednesday, but concerning the way that Christians behave in their workplaces, concerning the way that Christians run their families, run their finances, submit to government, obey traffic laws. The list goes on and on.

These are the people of God. But I had concern for my holy name. You see, God's name will be vindicated.

I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations, wherever they went. And, folk, I believe this is prophetic for today. I believe that even today, God is saying, I have concern for my name, which the church, and I don't mean the real church, I mean the visible church, has profaned among the nations, wherever they went.

Therefore, say to the house of Israel, and we can apply this to the church, and I don't believe the church replaces Israel, but say to the church, Thus says the Lord God, I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations, wherever you went. And

I will sanctify, make holy, my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God.

When will God's name be hallowed? When will God's name be sanctified? When I am hallowed in you. Before their eyes. It's no good praying, Our Father who is in heaven hallowed be your name, when through our actions we are profaning his name.

But we hallow his name, he says, when I am hallowed in you before them. That's how God's name is made holy. That is how God's name is glorified, when it is glorified in us.

When we act according to the scriptures, when we live like Jesus, when we react like Jesus, when our values are God's values, when we obey him. And when the world looks at us, they will glorify God, because they cannot deny the reality of someone who is in a real relationship with God. God's name you can pray, Father your name be hallowed.

You can pray that a thousand times a day, every day for the rest of your life, unless your life is glorifying him. Unless your relationship with your husband and your wife is glorifying him. Unless your relationship with your children is glorifying him.

And folks, when your children are out of line, you are not glorifying God. When you cheat on your taxes, you're not glorifying God. But when you pay your taxes, even though you think it's unfair.

When you obey the government, even though you don't like the government. When you do your job, even though your boss is unfair, and treats you badly, but you do it with a smile on your face. Peter deals with us and he says, even if your boss is unrighteous, you're not serving him, you're serving the Lord.

That is how we glorify God. That is how we bring honor to his name. Folks, we've spoken about this so many times over these years, and yet we need to come back to it again.

Do we glorify his name in our homes, in society, in our jobs, in every area of our lives? Because you can pray as long as you like, if you're not doing it. It is of no value whatsoever. He goes on in the prayer, and if we go back to verse 2, your kingdom come.

And we're going to speak about that next week. His kingdom needs to come in me first, before it's going to come out there. Your will be done on earth.

God's will is not going to be done in Washington until it's being done in the hearts of his people. It needs to begin with you. It needs to begin with me.

And we can make laws and try and transform society, but until we're transformed, nothing is going to happen. And until we begin to glorify God in how we deal with trials, how we deal with suffering, how we deal with injustice, how we deal with being maligned, how we deal with persecution, when God is glorified in every detail of my life, that is when his name is made holy. At the end of the day, I want you to pray.

But it's no good praying if you're not going to live it. So let me get the prayer right. But let my prayer be more than just words.

But there may be a desire and a drive within me. Father, I want your name to be made great. And I want people around me to make your name great because of what they sing in me.

I want to glorify you, not just when I sing the hymns, or when I pray, but in the way I treat my wife, the way I relate to my children, the way I relate to the world. Father, we pray that you would teach us to pray. Lord, this is a real problem amongst all Christians, is the lack of prayer.

And Lord, we would much easier do something than pray. But Lord, teach us to pray. But Lord, I pray that more than just preaching, teaching us to pray, teach us, Lord, to live our prayer.

To live as those who are your children, and you are our Father. To live as those who want to glorify your name in every area, every aspect, every detail of our lives. Every moment that we're alive.

Lord, we want you to be glorified. We want your name to be made holy. We want your name to be exalted and to be lifted high.

Lord, we mourn for the way your name is being dragged through the mud in our nation and in the rest of the nations of the world today. But Lord, begin in me, that your name may be glorified in me and my family and in my society. I ask these things in Jesus' name.

I pray, Lord, that you'd help us. Lord, we can talk about these things. And Lord, I know there'd be some who will disagree with what I said this morning, and there would be those who agree.

But Lord, at the end of the day, it's not a matter of whether we agree or disagree, it's whether we do your will and whether we obey your word. And so Lord, help us to be obedient. Help us to be those who desire above all to please you, because you didn't please yourself, but you laid aside that which was your own agenda that you might save us.

And so Lord, I pray that these things may be more than just a sermon again, more than just the words of a preacher, but Lord, that they may be a reality, that we become the substance of our lives. I ask this in Jesus' name. I pray that you'd go with us now, Lord, keep us, protect us, bring us together again safely on Thursday, on the Zoom meeting.

I pray for Diana who's leaving for university again this afternoon. I pray that you would protect her and grant that as she goes, that she may be a testimony. And Lord, that your name would be glorified through her.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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