

The Father Style

by Gayle Erwin

This sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and seeking God's will, highlighting the power and significance of the Lord's Prayer as a guide for believers. It delves into the concept of God's love and patience towards His children, encouraging a deeper understanding of His compassion and generosity. The sermon also touches on the role of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives, emphasizing the need to ask for His presence and guidance without the need for elaborate experiences. The speaker underscores the freedom of choice given by God and the importance of choosing to believe in His love and blessings.

Scripture: Luke 11:1, Luke 11:9, 1 Corinthians 14:18, Matthew 19:16, Isaiah 41:10

Topics: "The Power of Prayer", "God's Love and Guidance"

Description

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Transcript

You folks have been so kind to me, and I've had such a wonderful time here. And I just have to say, especially with Chuck and Pat Lynn, we've been friends with them somewhere near the Middle Ages, and it's always a delight to be around them. And you know, when you've lived this long, you have so much to talk about.

And I'm finding that the older I get, the more I want to talk about things, because I've got stuff to tell you. And I imagine you feel the same way. And some of you here are at least as old as I am, maybe.

No, Tom? No. No. Okay.

But I know Tom, he likes to talk too. He has stories to tell me. But I tell you what, let's dig in tonight, shall we? I've got something to share with you, and I hope you're going to have as much fun with this as I am.

And some of it just may be absolutely revelation to you. I hope so. So let's go.

Luke chapter 11, page 914, it says, Now it came to pass, as he, that's Jesus, was praying in a certain place, when he ceased or stopped, that one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. Now, really, this was a little manipulative thing. It's like they're saying, hey, Jesus, you know, John taught his disciples how to pray.

What are you doing for us? It's like a rooster finding an ostrich egg somewhere and rolling it back to the hen house and saying, now, girls, I'm not complaining, I just want you to see what they're doing in other places, okay? And so Jesus said to them, well, when you pray, say, and you know what follows here. This is what we call the Lord's Prayer. Now, I want us to say it together, not this one because it's slightly abridged, but I want us to say it together, and I want to mention something about it.

I won't spend a lot of time on the Lord's Prayer, except to say something that ought to really turn you on to it. Ready? Let's say it. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, amen. I get goosebumps. I want you to understand this, folks.

It's not just a rote thing that we say, but if Jesus told us to pray this, then when we do, it gets fulfilled. God isn't saying, okay, okay, okay, I'll take this under advisement. I'm a little busy right now, but if I get to you today, then I'll help you out.

No, no, no, no, no, no. I love to take the opening part of this and just worship the Lord. I just love to worship the Lord.

I tell him, I try to tell him, well, I don't have words to tell him just how much I love him and appreciate him and enjoy him, and then he authorizes us to pray for his will to be done. Now, folks, when you pray that, relax, because it is going to be done. He doesn't say, well, I know that I told you to ask that, but that's a little out, really, of my area right now.

No, no, no, no, no. When you pray that, thy will be done, you can rest in the knowledge that his will will be done. And when you ask him to lead you not into temptation, you can be confident that he's watching over you and guarding you in ways that are even beyond your capability to understand.

Don't just say this with rote, but with belief, with belief, okay? And then thine is the kingdom. Boy, that sure does speak to the human heart, because if you turned me loose just to be Gale Irwin, it would sound like this, for mine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Love it, love it, love it, amen.

But no, folks, you're never going to have enough glory for yourself to be satisfied. I think I've said this to you, yourself is never satisfied, but when you are giving him the glory, there's something about that that is so, it just elevates you, it's just so incredibly wonderful. So don't think of it as just another rote thing to say, no.

If Jesus said pray it, then that means you can count on it being fulfilled. Now do you understand that? Nobody does, okay, that's all right, I'll move on. Now he wanted to explain further how God works with us.

I am so amazed, and it's like what took me so long to really realize that, but I understand because I grew up, well, no, I've never grown up, but my early days were in a very legalistic kind of situation, and the teaching that I had never made me feel comfortable with the Lord, because I always thought more in terms of I'm not living up to it, so God's probably not very happy with me, and at any moment lightning's going to strike, and there's not anything I can do about it, I just, that's the way it is, but, you know, and I grew up around, well, a lot of people whose Christianity went something like this, you know, it's really hard living for God, you don't, not everybody can be a Christian because it's really hard living for God. Would you like to be a Christian, too? And I want to say, no, thank you, I'll just follow God if it's okay, I don't think I'm going to be your brand of Christian. Well, if I can say this to you and have you believe it, you have no idea, you don't have a clue as to how much God loves you.

You are not, you're not, there's not a big finger up there. My grandma used to thump me when I misbehaved, and that's why I'm not as intelligent as I once was, because I needed a lot of thumping. And God's not waiting, I once thought he was a band, director of a band of angels, especially trained in karate, and he had appointed about six of them to me, just waiting for me to have a bad thought, I ain't got you, I'll teach you, buddy.

But it's taken me a long time, but I've come to it because I had to get over so much to realize he is crazy about me, you know, just look at it. He wasn't crazy about some of my hair, but I don't care, that's okay. And folks, you have no idea how much he loves you.

I think one of the things that's helped me to understand it is our great-grandchildren. Now, our children and grandchildren, they were okay, but our great-grandchildren are awesome, you know. I could spend the rest of the night talking about how awesome they are, but they have no idea how much I love them.

If they ever could figure out, if they just knew they could take advantage of me, I'm just waiting for them to, you see. And God, I think, is waiting for you to take advantage of him because he's so crazy about you. You just need to understand that.

He's not angry at you, he is not just saying, I'm going to get him, no. He's just wild about you. So to help us to understand that, because there's a little something, and I mentioned this Sunday, but I'm going to reemphasize it.

So he says to them then, which of you shall have a friend and go to him at midnight and say to him, friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey and I have nothing to set before him. And he will answer from within and say, do not trouble me, the door is now shut, my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise and give to you. I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he's his friend, yet because of his, and I'm going to put my interpretation of this right here, because of his persistent genuine need, he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

Now, it sounds like God doesn't want to help us, doesn't it? And we have to beg him, but here's what was being straightened out here. These Middle Eastern villages, well, in the Middle East, their highest trait, they feel, is hospitality. They're proud of that.

It is the one thing that they cannot do without. So when here is somebody whose friend came at night and he had nothing to set before him, he had nothing, he couldn't offer him hospitality. So he goes to his friend's door and knocks.

Now here's a second thing you need to know. These Middle Eastern villages operate as one. If one person cannot give hospitality, it is a shame to the whole village.

It's as if the whole village has failed. So there's an important thing going on here, the hospitality of the village as well as the hospitality of the individual. Now there's another very important thing, very important thing.

What if this guy goes to his neighbor and he says, hey, friend, I usually get up at midnight and have a midnight snack, but I got up tonight and I'm snackless. Would you mind giving me your bread? You make some very good bread. He would go home snackless.

This is an important thing. When you, you see, he wants to bless someone else. This guy wants to bless someone else.

He didn't have anything to bless. So he goes to this other fellow and he says, I need to bless this guy. Will you help me? And he knew, this is important, he knew when he asked for this bread, for that reason, he was going to get the bread.

And Jesus is kind of telling us, when you want to bless somebody and you just don't have the ability, you go to him and he will guarantee that you will have the ability to do this blessing. That's when he's on your side. But if you go and say, you know, I usually get up at midnight and have a midnight snack, but I'm snackless at night.

Would you help me, poor little old me? And he'll say, go home and go to bed. You've missed the whole point, you see. So it ends by saying, so he gave him everything he needed.

Now this is the way God is with us. Anytime you want to bless someone else, you're going to find resources you didn't even know that you had. I happen to be crazy about children, and one of the things I love to do is to catch their face and their eyes.

Do you know that adults don't look at children? And they know you don't look at them. But if you ever try to just catch their eyes, you will make a friend, because they'll know you're different. You actually are interested in them, you see.

And I love to show my interest in children. Sometimes when I'm in an airport, and children don't like airports, I don't either. But usually I'll find them crying, and their parents trying to, you know, they almost want to slap them to make them quit crying.

I don't understand that. But once in the Dallas airport, I'll never forget this. They were pushing this little guy forward, and he was just really miserable.

And I was walking toward him, and I caught his eyes. And I've learned to use my eyebrows, you know, and to smile at them. And he shut up, and we started talking to each other with our faces.

I'd smile at him, he'd smile back, and he would try to move his eyebrows too, you know. And he knew I was his friend. And I passed by, and we were looking at each other, I passed by, the parents never figured out what was going on.

He tried to crawl out of that thing and follow me. But I made his life a little better in that miserable airport, and I enjoyed that. I felt better the rest of my trip myself.

And when you have an interest in people and want to bless them, God's on your side. You can go to him even at midnight, so to speak, when it is not normal that you would do so. And then he goes on and says, and this is the explanation that's phenomenal.

So, I say to you, now this is Jesus talking, and if he says this, believe it. Ask and it might possibly be given to you. It will be taken under advisement by the Congress.

No, no, no, no. Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you might possibly find, no, seek and you will find.

Knock and it will be opened to you. Now, the reason that you can believe this and know it is because once you decide, he really does love me. God is crazy about me.

Now, you might not feel like that at any given times of the day, but that doesn't change the way he feels toward you. Please understand that. And he understands your moments that are low.

He understands your pain and your difficulty. That doesn't change his love for you. And he isn't getting even with you over something.

No. He wants you to know that no matter what stage of life you're in, he's crazy about you. I think he always sees us as I see my great-grandchildren, you know.

I just love them to pieces. And I think my love is hatred compared to his love. And if you know that and just rest in that, ah, come on.

So he says ask and it might possibly, no, and it will be given to you. But that's not even enough. God is wildly generous.

Listen to this. For everyone who asks receives. Are you an everyone? Yeah.

Whoa. And he who seeks finds. Are you a he who? And to him who knocks it will be opened.

Are you a to him? Folks, this is not idle chatter by Jesus. No. He's making some promises here.

When you ask, he's listening. And he is prepared to give more than you even ask and maybe in ways you didn't ask. But he is interested in you and he's interested in your life.

Now keep in mind, you really open the door to his blessings when you're wanting to bless someone else. Remember? If this guy had just wanted him to be blessed himself, he would have go home unblessed. But because he had someone he wanted to bless and he didn't have it, then he goes to his neighbor and he got it.

He knew when he knocked on his neighbor's door he was going to receive it because that's the way those Middle East villages operate as one. So keep that in mind. God is on your side more than you can even begin to imagine.

And then Jesus uses a kind of crazy illustration here. I love this. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Hey kid, you had bread yesterday.

Here's a rock. Go sharpen your teeth. No, no, no, no, no.

Now the apostles at this point, though they were very slow learners. Now that encourages me because that being true, I would be qualified to be an apostle. So all of us here, please hear this because this is important.

All of us here are apostolic quality. Now I'm going to insult you because they were jerks. I look at them and I think as I studied them, you know, I would have fired those guys.

I hire people sometimes and if all I ever do is argue with each other over which of them is the best employee, they would all be gone. They wouldn't get any work done. They just argue.

That's what they did every day, most of the time. And Jesus patiently taught them. Why? Because he loved them, you see? And he loves us even when we don't get things right.

He will patiently, patiently explain to us and help us out. Now, if I were the one who had hired the apostles, they would have been gone after the first month. I'd have said, here's your slip, go get your pay, you're through.

Now the thing that really impresses me is when we get to the end, to what we call the last supper, after all the times Jesus had taught them, they fought that day over who was the greatest. If I were Jesus, I'd have said, that's it, I'm going to create myself a set of apostles. But he didn't fire them.

He patiently taught them once again. Now, has he patiently taught you? Have you been a beneficiary of God's patience? Yes, you have. I certainly have.

And I'm so glad he is patient. And as I read the attitude that he has toward us, man, I realize he isn't saying, well, you know, Irwin, your nose is too big, and your hair is too little, and your intelligence is too little. I'm not sure I can make use of you.

No, he isn't that way. He isn't that way at all. And when his love for children, he said, you let them come to me.

I spoke about this on Sunday, because that's what my kingdom is made of. And we have to have that simplicity of understanding, or we don't make it, you see. How many of you were here Sunday morning? Most of you were.

Then you know that I tried to simplify the gospel, because Jesus did. Love God with everything you got. Love your neighbor as yourself.

On these two commandments hang all, how much? The law and the prophethood, that was their word for the Bible. See the Bible really is pretty easy to get through. You don't have to memorize every word of it.

You don't have to struggle over the conjugation of every sentence or anything like that. No, just love God with all your heart. Love your neighbor by acts of servanthood toward them, and you've got it down pat.

All the law is fulfilled in that. Now that's too simple, isn't it? Yeah, so make it as complicated as you want to. I'm going to go with the simple one, as far as I'm concerned.

But let me keep going here, because he says, I'm sure the apostles at this point looked at each other kind of, what's he talking about? Will you give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Here kid, think fast. No, no, no, no. Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

Here kid, no pain, no gain.

No, no. Can you see the apostles looking at each other and saying, what is he getting at? This makes no sense. And then Jesus says something that I really want you to especially zero in on tonight.

He says, if you then being evil. Now he was talking to his staff. I love this.

You evil dogs, if you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more? Now when you see that, how much more or much more, in the New Testament, it means that you do not have a computer that can total this up. You will never be able to figure out how much more.

Because God's love for us, we can't measure. How much more will your heavenly Father give millions of dollars to, no, no, no, no. Give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

I thought it was deserved. No, we don't deserve him. All you have to do is ask.

And God does not say, when we ask, well, let me think about it, or we'll take it under advisement, or we're a bit busy right now, we'll get to you eventually, if we can get it through Congress, no. How much more? You can't even figure it out with the best computer you've got, with the fastest computer they've ever invented. You can't figure that one out.

How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? Now I'm not going to ask you to raise your hands, but how many of you have asked him to fill you with his Spirit? Now here's what I find. These are words that kind of scare us, because some of us have had maybe experiences with or heard about situations that were, let me put it this way, Holy Spirit wild. You know what I'm talking about, some of you? I grew up, no, no, I've never grown up, but my early years I had the opportunity to observe every part of that.

For many years I was ordained in an organization that they, you know, founded because of the early 1900s revival of the Holy Spirit, and I can't even spend the rest of the night telling you some of the wild and crazy things I saw. Now the thing about it is I was with good people. I couldn't fault the people, but I struggled with their understanding of how God operates with us.

Sometimes they think you have to work up the Holy Spirit, and so they do, you know, physical things to try to work him up, but the Holy Spirit doesn't have to be worked up, he just has to be asked for. Now, I've had people say, well, I asked for the Holy Spirit 40 years ago, and I'll tell them, you sprung a leak. It's time to ask again.

Every day I ask, Father, fill me with your Spirit, every day, sometimes several times a day. Now, you may be like the guy who's talking to the Lord, and he said, Lord, this has been a great day. I mean to tell you, God, I have not sinned today, and I am so proud of that, I just want you to know, because I have not sinned today.

But he said, I'm going to get out of bed now. Well, we face that because we live in the flesh, you see, and he wants to cover that, and so when people say, well, how often can I ask him to fill me with our Spirit? As often as you wish, as often as you think you need it. If you're going into a situation where you think, I don't know how to think or how to act, Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit.

And will he say, I don't know, no, no. How much more? You are guaranteed. Now, you're looking at me like you're wondering, which planet am I from? But do you hear what I'm saying? God isn't taking it under advisement.

How much more? You can't even count up how much more he wants to fill you with his Spirit than he does. So why don't we just say that together, Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit. Ready? Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit.

What do you think is happening? Let's say it again, Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit. What do you think is happening? Let's say it again, Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit. Ah, man.

Now, it's not like if we say it another time, that's when he does it. No, he heard you the first time. I just want you to get used to those words so that you wake up and man, Lord, I've got things to do today.

I need your Holy Spirit, and you want me to have it. How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? You're such a blessed bunch of people. Do you realize that? God's crazy about you.

Now, let me put you on edge. Let's talk about speaking in tongues. Now, officially, so to speak, Calvary Chapel believes in them.

But there are groups, and my early years was in one, that you could not be in any official position until and unless you spoke in tongues, or as they called it, being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Now, Paul made a statement to a church. There was a church like that in Corinth.

The Corinthian church was sort of a wild Pentecostal church. And things went on that Paul had sort of taken the task over, because apparently they didn't think he spoke in tongues. He just, you know, they had much nicer looking people that call themselves apostles.

From the little bit of history that we get and legend, we understand that Paul had this squeaky and very bad voice, you know. And he probably was hunchbacked and short, and his eyes, we know, were really bad. And he says, Hi, I'm your apostle.

And there were other guys, you know, who were tall and dark and handsome and had hair and could see well. And so you're walking along with Paul, and someone wants to introduce you to your apostle. Which one are you going to shake hands with? It must be this big one.

He looked much more like it. He could even be an apostolic Hollywoodian. But Paul didn't have much to say for himself, except, I'm crazy even to defend myself in that way.

But here was the thing. That was kind of a wild church, the Corinth church was. And they thought that Paul just wasn't Pentecostal.

But he makes a statement that's very important. He says, I speak with tongues more than you all. They didn't know that.

Why? Because he didn't use it to prove that he was anything, and didn't use it to prove that he was something in the service. Then what was it for? Why would he speak in tongues more than they all and not know it? Because it was a private thing with him. And it was used for prayer and for praise.

See, now when you really love God, which he asked you to do, and you don't even have the words to tell him, in your private prayer, you can speak in tongues. And the Holy Spirit will take care of the interpretation before the Father. Or when you have needs, you don't even know how to pray for them.

Then in your private prayer, you can speak in tongues. Well, how does that happen? Do I have a I got to tell you this story. Every once in a while, I like to drop names, you know, as I did with Johnny Cash.

But he was a friend, not a daily friend, you know. Another of my friends that I really enjoy was, when I first met him, he was a pastor of Hollywood Presbyterian Church, and that's Lloyd Ogilvie. Now, he's a guy that when you hear him, don't close your eyes or you'll think it's God.

He has this melodious voice. Well, he told me once that when he was first graduated from seminary, and at his first pastorate, he said, I had the squeakiest, most irritating voice you have ever heard. And he said, the only thing worse than my voice was my sermons.

He said they were a weekly crime committed on the people. But he said, one day when I was walking along the Chicago shore with two of my buddies who are also recent graduates, I said to them, guys, I've been reading the Bible. Now, that'll do it.

And it seems to me that I need the Holy Spirit. Now, he said, I read, sometimes they laid hands on people, and sometimes they didn't. But at least we're here together.

If I kneel in the sand, would you guys lay hands on me and pray for me? Well, I guess so. We've never done it before, but we can try. So he knelt down in the sand, and they laid hands on him.

Probably didn't know quite where to lay them, you know. And they prayed for him, and he said, nothing happened. I stood up, and we looked at each other and just shrugged, and went home.

He said, the next morning, I preached the worst sermon ever heard by human ear. But people got saved, and other great things began to happen in the congregation. And he said, I had made the mistake of thinking that I had to have a kind of experience in order for God to answer our prayer.

But the real thing was the results of it, you see. God began to do things that couldn't have been done otherwise, and he realized when we asked for the Holy Spirit, he gave it. And if you're expecting to have some thrill, he may not give it to you.

But, you know, I have had people ask me, do I have to speak in tongues to receive the Holy Spirit? And you know what I tell them? You probably do. Because if you can't just believe that God keeps his promises and fills you with his Spirit, you probably are going to have to have some kind of physical experience to really understand it. But folks, God keeps his promises.

And you don't have to work him up. You don't have to build yourself into an excited state in order to know that the Holy Spirit is there and he is operating in your life. But it is important for you to ask.

Because here's something, I'll leave this with you. This is kind of the end of my message in a way. I believe that the image of God in you isn't that you have a head and two arms and two legs or something.

And people say, well, what about Jesus? Jesus was made in our likeness, the Bible says. So what is the image of God in us? It's the ability to choose. That's why God had to put two trees in the garden.

You realize that? So we could operate our image of God. We could choose. We blew it, but he still loves us.

And history is the story of his redemptive effort in our half. But he will not violate your ability to choose. Please remember that.

I marvel at the rich young ruler, you remember, who came to Jesus. And he wants to know what must I do to be saved, you know. And the Bible says Jesus loved him.

And he says some things and he says, I have kept those since my youth. And Jesus perceived, you see, he was a rich young ruler. Jesus perceived his problem.

And he says, I tell you what, why don't you just go and sell everything you've got, give the money to the poor and come follow me. He was offering this guy the best job in the world. And he went away sad because he had a lot of goods.

Now, I think if I were Jesus, I would have said, oh, wait, wait, I was harsh. Forgive me for being so strong. How about let's talk about half price today, special.

No, do you realize Jesus let him go? Why? Because he will not violate our ability to choose. When we choose one way or the other, he accepts that because that's his image in us. And so what we, I want to do is make sure that I choose him and that I choose to believe him and that I choose to recognize that he is crazy about me and he is not going to withhold from me any good thing.

Is this clear enough? Now, I'd like for you to look a little more loved. Just begin. You know, it's like I've seen you in the airport and I'm trying to help you have a better day.

And God has arranged for you to have access to him in every way and have all of his blessings. He pours them out on you. He is on your side.

And I think somebody's phone has just gone off. So it's time for me to quit. No, that's OK.

I was quitting anyway. I just had to make a joke out of it. So have I been clear tonight? OK, let's say it one more time.

Father, fill me with your Holy Spirit. Amen. God bless you.

I thoroughly enjoyed being with you. Now come and see if you can rescue it.

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