

[To Speak of Many Things] / Gospel of Luke Chapter Eleven

~ Dr. Luke will sternly lecture our Spiritual Safari classroom in this report as we sit through an excruciating examination of the causes that render a Christian life barren and weak. Another term for those to whom these things happen is Christian Tragedy. We will have the problems presented definitively. We have many so-called believers today who are utterly dead inside. Luke, in the power of the Holy Spirit of God, will explain in this section of Scripture the cause of these malefactors. We will also consider completely the remedy for said problems, and we will conclude unequivocally that the remedy is prayer. Prayer seems so simple, doesn't it? Well, let's investigate exactly how difficult and complicated prayer really is, shall we? Let's try praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment in Holy Writ right now. In this report – we are going to be keeping it very, very real, friends....

1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

~ A meaningful prayer life is of utmost importance to any genuine child of God. This passage may sound similar to other sections of Scripture, but this is the primary text of instruction concerning our communication with God in what we call prayer. This chapter almost appears to be an intrusion into the chronological account we have been following in the earthly ministry of Jesus. I'm not sure it's important to fit it in chronologically, because we have so many implications that go along with our safari. What we know for sure is that this disciple overheard Jesus pray, and the desire to emulate

that was born in his heart. It was the custom and habit of Jesus to retire alone to pray - but the disciples still recognized something was going on.

Today, Christ is at the right hand of God making prayers of intercession for us! I don't care if you have been saved for seventy-five years, I think it's a good idea to ask Jesus to teach us how to pray – and then ask Him again and again every day. It would certainly be an appropriate petition in each individual life of the believer before we enter the Throne Room of God each day. You know – get in accord with Christ and THEN go into the presence of the Father. That is when prayer becomes very effective, by the way.

If you are like me there are many times I don't know how to pray – don't know what to say – I know what I want to say and I know what I feel - but I just can't form the cohesive sentences in thoughtful conversation as I try to pray. Do you know anything about that? Sometimes, we can only cry out, "... Father!" Well, I am sure God knows and understands exactly what we want and need. I also know He wants us to learn how to communicate our thoughts and desires to Him effectively.

The man in this account was not only asking how to pray, because Jesus had already told them how in the Sermon on the Mount. He needed to be taught TO pray. He wasn't interested in a technique, system or a ritualistic art form of talk; - and there is a huge difference. That is the angle we will approach this subject from in this report. We're not going to be instructed in HOW to pray - but we are going to be admonished TO pray.

Most people treat prayer as an "a-men" they tack on a busy day as they drift off to sleep. I was brought up in a home where we prayed – but it was just a few seconds of a prayer at bedtime. Yes, it was better than nothing, but it could have been a whole lot better than it was. I had a Bible by age seven, but I didn't learn to pray and do it properly for many more decades; in fact, I'm still asking the Lord to teach me how to pray. Frankly, I need to be taught to pray today and the Holy Spirit speaking through Luke is just the Man to do so.

We should desire establishing a meaningful channel of communication with God the Father in Heaven. I don't believe most prayer makes it past the

ceiling, because of myriad obstacles in the life of a believer. Their minds at the end of the day are easily disconnected and short circuited by Satan. We just read that John taught his disciples to pray; and that tells us all we need to know about John Baptist. It is an unexpected glimpse into the life of this man that we have seen so much of – and this reveals him fully and exposes the contents of his heart completely bare. This is also our farewell to John because he comes before us no more. This is the last snapshot of him and it's a picture of a man teaching others to pray. John Baptist was a man of prayer, friends. All of the great men of God are great men of prayer. Is anyone ever going to ask, "... teach me to pray like Andrew?" Does anyone want to pray like YOU? I highly doubt either! The dead and barren life is the result of one thing and one thing only: prayerlessness.

This prayer has become something in the public service realm that I do not think it was ever intended to be. It's just a stilted formality in the church. It was never intended as a public service announcement; it is a very personal and private prayer. It should be spontaneous to be most effective – a normal and natural – or supernatural - conversation you have with our Father in the Name of the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is your Father you are talking to; why not talk to Him like you would your real dad on the telephone? Your Father knows you and He isn't impressed with your ritualistic holiness and pious vocabulary that you don't even half understand. God wants you to keep it real with Him friends.

We see pastors and others slip into an unnatural voice as they pray out loud with either painfully flowery or just-plain-painful pseudo-ex cathedra language. It's mostly pure nonsense. I believe God wants us to talk to Him just like I am typing this out – plain and simple. I honestly get weary hearing most prayers and I find myself asking God to turn that man off. I have prayed that more than one time. Most "prayer warriors" are just playing the same old broken record over and over again. Well, we saw Peter say the briefest prayer in the Bible when he said, "... Jesus save me!" That was one of the most effective prayers there are. All of the best prayers are brief and to the point.

So, the first element of our prayer program should be confession of sins - and then worship because those sins have been forgiven. To honor God and

to acknowledge Him, and that we desire His will on earth and in our lives, is of primary importance. Prayer is the privilege of the redeemed. The lost man knows nothing about the Kingdom of God, so they cannot possibly understand prayer – period. This means we must put down the evil and lift up the good! That means there must be a desire in your life for the will of God to be performed through us. When we mouth some words to God there needs to be substance and action behind said words!

From here forward, Jesus is not speaking to unsaved mankind. This prayer has no application for a lost person whatsoever. This section of the Bible is only directed at redeemed saints. The unsaved have another prayer that asks God to be merciful because they are sinners; but they don't even have to pray that prayer if they simply start to believe! You don't have to beg God to do something that He already promised He would do, friends! We don't really need to ask God to be merciful because He already IS merciful. No, what we need to do is come to Him and thank Him for already having performed our redemption and forgiveness - and mercy - and lay hold of His truths. That can only be done when we have a proper prayer life with Christ! Most people cannot ask for physical provision with a straight face; at least, they should pause in hypocrisy. Maybe they don't. I think God just smiles at many of these things. However, forgiving others is something I need a whole lot of help with! Do you forgive everyone that has wronged you? If God forgave us on the same basis that we forgive each other then NO ONE would EVER be saved.

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you ~

Well, that's our standard for today from Ephesians and it says God was forgiving us before we were forgiving of others. We were without strength and were yet sinners when God commended His love towards us! Accepting the salvation that God holds out to us is not some struggle we ultimately win at some point in our Christian life. If you are a child of God and you are struggling, then it is highly likely that you need to do a whole lot of praying. In which case, this is a perfect prayer for you. God wants you to be a man or woman dependent on and trusting in Christ through prayer. The most effective and fulfilling ministry is the prayer ministry of the strong-faith

saint. We don't need more missionaries; we don't need more churches or preachers or teachers – what we need is more people that know how to pray properly. Well, we're not through with this matter of prayer as we come to a parable that only Luke records; and it is so tremendous, as well as different, from the other parables - to the point that I regard this as remarkable. This is a contrasting parable, if you will; but we will not fully develop the other shade of this contrast until we get to chapter eighteen. It's a paint stroke of sheer Godly Genius that will finish this portrait of Christ that Luke paints for us....

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

~ So, Let's bring this parable up to date. Suppose you are expecting visitors who are planning to come and stay at your house from some far away place. Well, these visitors tell you they will arrive about the middle of the afternoon on a certain day. So, you decide that you're going to take them out to dinner that night after they get there. Six o'clock comes and goes and no one arrives. Then, at about eight, the phone rings and they announce they have had car trouble. You would assume they would go ahead and eat dinner, so you just forget about it. At around one in the morning, they pull up and you go out in the driveway to meet them. You ask how the trip was and what they ate; but they tell you they were in such a hurry and the repair took so long that they didn't eat yet! Well, you don't have anything to prepare because you were planning on dining out with them. What are you going to do with a house full of hungry guests?

Well, you have a very close friend that lives next door, and they were grilling out earlier. This man is always calling you "brother!" They invited you over to eat because you were hanging out with them for a while when you were waiting for your guests. So, you know they have plenty of food

left over. It shouldn't be too much of a problem to knock on the door and grab some vittles, right? Well, trust me - when you knock on the door, you realize this is not the best friend you ever had. He looks at you like you have three heads and tells you to go home; he tells you, obviously, you won't starve to death between now and breakfast....

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

~ You have some hungry guests on your hands, so you bang on the door saying "get up" because you need some food. Remember, this is a parable of contrast. The contrast will show us that God is not asleep when you pray! Does it feel like God has closed the door and won't wake up and help you? You don't have to knock the door down and storm the gates of Heaven. God is not reluctant to answer you – God WANTS to answer all of your prayers. God says, "before they call, I will answer them." Of course, we better be careful what we ask for because we may get our prayers answered when it's not a good prayer, too. Maybe this man should have just let everyone go hungry until morning without a second thought about it? Friends – this right here is what most of you try to pass as brotherly love. I think we all need a real Biblical lesson in Christian giving.

This parable teaches exactly the opposite of what we usually think it teaches. Most parables are by comparison but this one is by contrast. God wants to hear and answer your prayer. I think most people feel like God doesn't answer all of their prayers. Maybe you ought to find the message in that, friends. God is, more than likely, telling you "no!" If you're like me then you don't like to take "no" for an answer! God hears and answers the prayers of His own and that answer is "no" most of the time. At least, that's what He usually says to me. I'm sure I don't pray for the things that

are best in my life! Interestingly, the BEST answer you may ever receive from God is that resounding “NO!” When God says no it is for very good reasons, too; reasons you cannot foresee. God doesn’t let you down saying “no” because He has something better for you. Take everything to God in prayer....

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

~ Jesus tells them to ASK for the Holy Spirit in prayer but, as far as I can tell, none of the apostles asked for the Holy Spirit to come over them at this time. Later, Jesus will say “receive the Holy Spirit.” They really needed the Spirit of God during those interval days. Later, on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did come and baptized them into the body of believers, which put them all in Christ! All believers have been baptized into the body of Christ; it’s the indwelling and filling of the believer with the Spirit of God that is so desperately needed today. By One Spirit are we all baptized into One Body! Jew or Gentile – bondman or free citizen; we all are made to drink from One Spirit....

14 And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

~ We considered this passage thoroughly in our sophomore year through Matthew, and we discussed the notion of a so-called ‘unpardonable sin’ at that time. We examined that there can be no unpardonable sin today and we discussed at length why not. That reason is because Jesus is not in the flesh any longer. We know Him no longer after the flesh. The unpardonable sin was blaspheming His miracles by attributing them to Satan during His earthly ministry. It would literally be impossible for anyone to do that today. Here in our graduate courses, we need not dwell on this matter as it is now a fundamental doctrinal precept to our studies. There is no sin Christ didn't die for. So, we pass on now to a very important verse for all men today....

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his house, his goods are in peace:

~ We know all about gun control issues and people who don't want United States citizens to have weapons. God says, “keep the gun powder dry, weapon loaded and the Safety off.” Now, I agree that guns and bombs are terrible inventions – but – they're here to stay so we have to deal with them on that basis. We easily see Satan abroad, but we have difficulty seeing the murderous men in our own house! Naturally, they are the embodiment of the devil. Isaiah has already concluded that Satan is a person. You have a very real enemy, and you will do well to remain armed – ‘to the teeth,’ as they say. I don't like it, either – but it happens to be true that a strong man armed will keep his house and keep his goods. If the enemy knows there is a likelihood that they won't make it out of the situation alive, then they will think twice about coming into it. I want them

all to know it, myself. I'll be honest with you dear readers because I always am honest with you: if you break into my home, you will not leave alive....

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

~ Our Spiritual Safari visited this haunted house before in other Gospels. This is the condition of a great many people today who sincerely believe they lead a good life. Tragically, their lives are a horror show to everyone else around them. The super-duper saint usually has nothing but terrifyingly spooky stuff flying in and out of their spiritual house at all times. If you haven't read all of our previous safari reports from Matthew and Mark, I can only highly suggest you go back and do so now. We're just going to leave it at that in this Gospel....

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

~ With that little outburst, we now know beyond any doubt that the mother of Jesus has nothing to do with anything in our relationship to Him. Get your Bible out and study it, friends – that is what Jesus just told you to do! Are you going to finally listen to Him? Are you finally going to obey Him? Jesus quickly takes us from here to the sign of the prophet Jonah. That sign is resurrection, of course, and definitively. That is the only lesson that is in Jonah - resurrection; and Mary isn't a part of the sequence of events, has no influence over them, and doesn't appear as any sort of contributing factor in our salvation....

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

37 And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 And the Lord said unto him, now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold; all things are clean unto you.

42 But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

~ The parable of the lighted candle has been dealt with properly, correctly and completely previously on safari; and we are done with that subject. If you have not traveled in our safari for very long, I suggest you start from the beginning and read forward; because from here, we only examine the rich and new things that Luke is adding to the Gospel record now. You only have several months of reading to catch up on. That means you owe a whole lot of time to God, and He is ready for you to pay up!

We close out this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with Jesus being a little tough on the lawyers. This doesn't need a great

deal of thoughtful explanation if you'll just read the text, after asking the Holy Spirit to reveal its meaning to you. It's one thing to tell someone what to do, and it's entirely another thing to do it yourself! That makes more hypocrites than any other single act - and we all do it. Let's be careful about that. What we preach, teach or write about had better line up with and be part of your own personal experience. That's what the Lord Jesus is talking about when He denounces these lawyers. Will you become a safari missionary today and tell someone to read something smart? ~

II