

Teaching about Prayer (11:1-13)

Jesus' personal example in prayer (11:1) caused the disciples to request that He teach them how to pray. The teachings on prayer can be divided into these sections:

1. The Model Prayer (11:2-4). We call this prayer "The Lord's Prayer," but more properly it should be called "The Model Prayer." A fuller account of it is given in Matthew 6:9-13. In this prayer, Jesus taught men to pray about these things:

- "Our Father which art in heaven"—a recognition of our relationship to God
- "Hallowed be Thy name"—praise to God
- "Thy kingdom come"—prayer concerning His kingdom, the church
- "Thy will be done"—submission to God's will
- "Give us this day our daily bread"—pray for daily sustenance, realizing dependence upon God
- "Forgive us our sins"—pray for forgiveness
- "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil"—prayer for help in overcoming sin's temptation

2. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight (11:5-8). This parable teaches us that (1) God is our Friend to whom we turn in time of need; (2) Prayer is intercession for the needs of others; (3) Man needs to persevere in prayer. The friend of the parable answered the request, not because he cared about his friend's needs, but because of his "importunity" (shameless impudence; persistence). The parable *contrasts* God with this friend: if persistence results in this friend meeting your requests, how much more will it work with God!

3. Instructions to present petitions to God (11:9-13). Jesus taught us to "ask, seek, and knock" in order to receive our requests from God. Then He emphasized the Fatherhood of God. If parents, who are sinful humans, grant their children's requests, how much more will our Heavenly Father grant the

this false charge constitutes an admission that Jesus performed the miracle of casting out a demon. In reply, Jesus made these arguments:

1. A divided kingdom cannot stand (11:17). Everyone admitted that demon possession was a work of the devil. If Jesus cast out



requests of His children, giving them even the greatest of gifts—the Holy Spirit.

Conflict over Casting Out Devils (11:14-26)

When Jesus was casting out a devil, some charged, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils" (11:15). Even

demons by the power of the devil, then the devil was working against himself. His was a divided kingdom, one which could not stand.

2. The Jews cast out demons (11:19). Jesus then asked by what power the Jews cast out demons. There must have been those whom they considered to be faithful who were casting out (or attempting to

cast out) demons. The Jews attributed this work to God. Hence, He is asking them to be consistent.

3. Casting out demons certifies that the kingdom is come (11:20). If the Jews are logically compelled to admit that Jesus casts out demons by the power of God, the evidence then confirms that the kingdom is come. The miracles of Christ confirm His message.

4. His casting out demons confirms His power over the devil (11:21-22). Jesus compared His casting out demons to entering the house of a strong man and plundering his goods. One cannot plunder the goods of a strong man unless he is stronger. Jesus' casting out demons proves that He is stronger than the devil.

Having answered His critics, Jesus turned to warn the one whom He had healed. He said, "He that is not with Me is against me" (11:23). Then He warned that, should this man accept what His critics said, He would be compared to one from whom one devil had been cast, but was possessed again by seven other devils. "The last state of that man is worse than the first" (11:26).

Misdirected Praise (11:27-28)

One who heard Jesus teaching said, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee . . ." (11:27). The blessings on Mary had been foreseen (1:48). However, Jesus corrected the woman saying, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (11:28).

Demand for A Sign (11:29-32)

After seeing Jesus cast out demons, some in the crowd wanted to see "a sign from heaven" (11:16)—some heavenly display. Jesus condemned this sign-seeking

generation (11:29). He told them that they would receive the sign of Jonah. Jonah was swallowed by a large fish, was in his belly for three days, and then was vomited on land. He was a sign to his generation. In a similar way, Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. He would be a sign to His generation. On lesser evidence, the Ninevites repented to obey the message of Jonah. Hence, they would rise

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up in condemnation of that generation which had greater evidence but refused the message (11:32).

The Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13) would rise up in condemnation of this generation. She heard of the wisdom of Solomon and travelled hundreds of miles to hear his wisdom. Jesus was greater than Solomon, but that generation would not hear Him.

The Light of the Body (11:33-36)

Jesus' teaching is compared to lighting a candle to give light to the world (11:33). Man perceives that light with his eye. So long as the eye is clear, man can see clearly and perceive all things. However, if the eye is jaundiced, man's vision is destroyed and he walks in darkness.

Those who said that Jesus cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub had an evil eye which left them

in darkness. Everything which He did was condemned, regardless of how good it was. Consequently, He warned the audience, "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness" (11:35).

Denouncing the Pharisees and Lawyers (11:37-54)

While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee invited Him to dinner. When Jesus entered the house to eat, He did not comply with the tradition of the elders to wash His hands before eating (cf. Matt. 15). Seeing the Pharisees, Jesus said that cleaning the inside of man is more important than ceremonial washing (11:39). God is more interested in the spirit of man being clean than in his outward body being washed. He encouraged them to give alms of what they had (11:41).

Jesus pronounced several woes upon the Pharisees. (1) They tithed of every herb, but left off judgment and the love of God (11:42). (2) They exalted themselves, loving the chief seats at the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. (3) They were hypocrites. They were like unmarked graves. Contact with the dead made one unclean. Walking over an unmarked grave made one unclean without his knowing it. In a similar way, contact with the Pharisees would make one spiritually corrupt.

Having heard Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees, one of the lawyers (of the law of Moses, not secular law) said, "Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also" (11:45). Jesus did not withdraw His criticisms. Instead, He made these criticisms of the lawyers: (1) They impose heavy burdens to be borne by the common man, although they would not bear those burdens themselves

(for examples, defining what was “work” on the Sabbath day, defining how far one may travel on the Sabbath day).

(2) The lawyers built tombs honoring the prophets whom their fathers had killed (11:47). Yet, their conduct toward Jesus and His disciples was exactly what killed the prophets whom they honored. God would send prophets and apostles to that generation; they

would slay them just as their fathers before them had done. As a result, God would require their blood (the blood of Abel to Zachariah—the first and the last man who was put to death by the wicked, according to the arrangement of the Hebrew Old Testament) of that generation. This occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

(3) The lawyers were condemned for taking away the key of

knowledge (11:52). They rejected Jesus as the Christ and then turned everyone else they could away from Him. For these things, Jesus pronounced a woe on the lawyers. The Pharisees and lawyers did what they could to provoke Jesus, hoping to ensnare Him. They were looking for a reason to put Him to death (11:53-54).

Questions

1. Why did the disciples ask Jesus for instruction on prayer (11:1)? _____

2. List four things for which we should pray based on your study of the Model Prayer (11:2-4). _____

3. What lessons do you learn from the parable in 11:5-8? _____

4. How are God and the friend contrasted? _____

5. What do 11:9-10 teach us about prayer? _____

6. How is God’s response to our prayers compared to a father-son relationship? _____

7. How did Jesus’ enemies explain His casting out demons (11:15)? _____

8. What did His miracle prove (11:20-22)? _____

9. What danger threatened the healed man (11:23-26)? _____

10. Who is the truly blessed person (11:27-28)? _____

11. In what sense was Jonah a sign to Nineveh (11:29-30)? _____
12. In what sense was Jesus a sign to His generation? _____

13. Why would the Queen of Sheba and the Ninevites rise up in condemnation of that generation (11:31-32)?

14. What does “thine eye is evil” mean in 11:34?

15. Why did Jesus refuse to wash His hands in 11:38?

16. Explain why the Pharisees were under divine judgment in:

a. 11:39-40

b. 11:42

c. 11:43

d. 11:44

17. Explain why the lawyers were under divine judgment in:

a. 11:46

b. 11:47-51

c. 11:52

True or False

___ 1. God is not interested in how much we give so long as we practice love and judgment.

___ 2. Jesus refused to give any sign to the Pharisees (11:29).

___ 3. One’s “eye is evil” when he explains Jesus’ casting out devils as being done by the power of Beelzebub.

___ 4. When Jesus’ teaching offended people, He apologized for it and withdrew His charges.

___ 5. Importunity in prayer (v. 8) is necessary because God is like the friend of v. 7.

Find the Verse

1. God is our heavenly Father.

2. God is our Friend.

3. God gives good gifts to His children.

Answering Denominational Error

The Roman Catholic Church honors Mary to the point that prayer is offered to Jesus through her as a mediator. What does 11:27-28 say about the Catholic veneration of Mary?
