

## **Lord, Teach Us To Pray**

✠ **Your prayer** (vv.1-4)

✠ **Your boldness** (vv.5-8)

✠ **Your confidence** (vv.9-13)

In the name of Jesus, who still teaches us to pray, dearly redeemed children of the heavenly Father:

Sometimes our greatest asset can be our worst problem. For instance, one of the things I enjoy most about my fellow Americans, especially in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, is their inventive imagination. Surrounded by millwrights and engineers, carpenters and educators, this is a very interesting place to serve as a pastor. One of my greatest challenges is to keep visits to one hour. Sometimes it's pretty obvious I'm not the only one who lost track of the time. People's lives tend to be very interesting.

Naturally, our first thought as problem solvers is, "What am I going to do about this?" Today Jesus and His disciples show this is not just Americans. A thousand years before His ministry on earth, Jesus spoke as the Christ surrounded by evil doers who kept attacking Him. And the Messiah's response? **"I am a man of prayer."** (Psalm 109:4) That's what the disciples noticed about Jesus. He always prayed, often all night long. So they asked: **"Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."**

✠ **Your prayer** (vv.1-4)

Comparing the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 with this in Luke 11, shows Jesus taught this prayer more than once. The Master Teacher knows "repetition is the mother of learning." So the words are slightly different with the same meaning. This is not a magic incantation needing exact syllables, but a model prayer and a great outline when you're walking and talking with God. You can review each petition in Luther's *Small Catechism* as you ask, **Lord, Teach Us to Pray – Your prayer.**

Here in Luke 11, we do not have, **"Our Father in heaven..."**, only, **"Our Father..."** What was Jesus stressing by this? Look at how unique this really is. No other religion teaches us to pray to God as our dear Father. God's Word tells us He is **"Our Father..."** in the sense that He and His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the co-eternal Three-in-One, infinite in love and compassion and goodness and power. We have been taught by Jesus to address **"Our Father"** as dear children speak to their dear Father. "Father dearest," is what we're saying in a way that no earthly Father can ever come close.

His Name-reputation is already holy. But we're asking Him to keep it holy among us by helping us love His Word as our dearest treasure, to meditate on it and to put it into practice every day of our lives. We want His kingdom to rule our hearts with every blessing. All the priceless fruits of the Spirit – **"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"** (Galatians 5:22f) become ours as Christ rules our hearts to the glory of God our Father.

So we pray each day for necessities – not too much, not too little – just our **"daily bread."** So wrote the God-inspired Agur son of Jakeh in his oracle recorded in Proverbs 30. Such balance: **"Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God."** (Proverbs 30:7-9 NIV) We don't want our possessions to bring guilt on us either.

Notice: **"Forgive us our sins, for indeed we forgive all those who owe us."** I'm praying for you to be forgiven, and you're praying for me and everyone else. We forgive others and help them forgive too, so that they can also be forgiven by God. Likewise, God never tempts us. But, **Lord, Teach Us to Pray – Your prayer** as you lead us away from temptation and never give us over to it. We need...

### † Your boldness (vv.5-8)

Could you actually see yourself doing this? A friend comes at night, so you go next door and wake up the neighbor for food for your guest? That's Jesus' point, isn't it? This just isn't done. This man has a shameless **boldness** that persists without worry of propriety for what's right. This is not like the boldness of James and John, the "Sons of Thunder," who wanted Jesus to destroy a whole village of unwelcoming Samaritans. Jesus is not teaching here what he corrected in those eager beaver followers who boldly forgot the personal loss of following Jesus. He does not want us bold for personal gain or even for ministry success like the Seventy-two disciples returning all excited from their first mission trip. We need God's Word to help us rejoice that our names are written in heaven. Then, dear Jesus, our **Lord, Teach Us To Pray** with **Your boldness** that forgets all the reasons why God should not answer.

Can you find a better example than father Abraham in today's Old Testament Lesson (Genesis 18:20-32)? If you were listening, you know that 50-45-40-30-20-10 is not a combination for a lock. It's not some odd body size of a Cyclops. This is Abraham's "Count-down Prayer" where he does think about what's proper. Twice he speaks of **boldness**, "*Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes....*" And at the end, "*May the Lord not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more....*" But Abraham will not let his concerns about propriety keep him from praying. He keeps at it even though he doesn't actually ask what's on his mind.

The Lord God knows our hearts. This is why we can be especially bold. In the great victory chapter, Romans 8, we're told that both Jesus and the dear Holy Spirit are interceding for us. Even when we can't get the words out, when all we can do is groan and sigh, "*He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*" (Romans 8:27) The Holy Spirit knew Abraham really wanted his nephew Lot saved. Sodom and Gomorrah had to be destroyed; not even ten righteous could be found there. But God saved Lot for Abraham.

### † Your confidence (vv.9-13)

We have a childlike joy when Jesus teaches us to pray. Jesus was overflowing with joy when He said, "*I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.*" (10:21) And it is the Father's good pleasure when Jesus teaches us to pray with childlike **confidence**.

Nothing burns **confidence** like guilt. Ever hear someone say, "Watch out what you pray for; you might get it." Know anyone in the Bible who did that? Remember the storm? Remember Jesus walking on the water? Remember Peter praying, "*Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water?*" Remember what happened after Jesus said, "*Come?*" Ah, the wind and the wave can terrify us too when we take our eyes off Jesus, asking for responsibilities and blessings beyond what we can handle. Our Father does not like to say, "No," to His children. He reaches out His hand like Jesus to lift us to safety.

Isn't that what our Lord is teaching by switching these verbs? Did you notice? "*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*" Then He assures us, "*For everyone who asks receives,*" i.e., *reaches out and takes hold of what is given.* Along with giving, we need God's power to receive with thankful hearts and His grace to power responsible lives.

Here's the best **Confidence**-builder, not for self-righteousness like the expert in the law testing Jesus to make himself look good. Not Martha's confidence in her own hard work. Christ-like **Confidence** pays close attention to God's Word. See in our Second Lesson (Colossians 2:6-15). All these verbs are in the past tense. "*You have been given fullness in Christ....In him you were circumcised...not...by the hands of men but...by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and [having been] raised with him [literally] through faith powered by God....God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins...*" No, "if," or "maybe" here. This is done, like a mortgage paid, an artery opened, a heart beating boldly for God. **Lord, Teach Us To Pray** with all the **confidence** of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.