

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on June 11, 2017**

**"Spiritual Formation through Prayerful Dependence
(Luke 11:1-13)"**

[In today's sermon, "Spiritual Formation through Prayerful Dependence (Luke 11:1-13)", Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows us through Jesus' teaching how His key elements of prayer will strengthen us to better engage in God's spiritual relationship with us.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Today's message is crucial in the lives of those who believe and consider themselves as disciples of Christ.
- Pastor Craig talked about how he struggled with prayer especially the first 10 years of his Christian life.
- And many of us still struggle with prayer from time to time.

- Now prayer is not a human based activity.
- Prayer is a spiritual based and a spiritual plain activity.
- So in our humanity we can struggle a little bit communicating with God.
- We need to acknowledge that prayer sometimes doesn't come easily or naturally to us.

Teach Us to Pray:

- Prayer takes some skill to develop and some training.
- We need to acknowledge that – as the disciples did.
- As the disciples were walking along side of Jesus, they asked Him, "Teach us to pray."
- We'll look at that in Luke 11.

- Prayerful dependence is one of our key strategic themes.
- We are prayerfully dependent on Jesus and what He is doing – so we can come along side of Jesus and participate in His ministry.

Spiritual Formation:

- Spiritual formation comes out of what the apostle Paul mentioned in his letters, "Let this Christ be formed in you."
- Our lives, as followers and believers in Jesus, is to have Christ formed in us.
- Now this is a spiritual transformation that doesn't happen on our own.
- And so, we'll find that prayer is one of those means to accomplish that.

- Now spiritual formation is mentioned in the same breath as spiritual disciplines.
- Some of the spiritual disciplines are: study, fasting, meditation, prayer, worship, etc.

- Now when we come to faith in the Father, Son and Spirit, when we acknowledge who we are in the relationship of who God is, there are then certain rhythms that come out of the Christian life that become natural.
- So obedience is not so much about what we do, but rather what flows out of us.
- So then, we can see that obedience is a fruit of the Spirit.
- And so it's out of that faith in God that we establish practices and rhythms and prayer is certainly one of those.
- So spiritual formation is the practice of those rhythms, those habits – and prayer is the key one of those.
- Now prayer is not like a casual conversation we might have with friends, but rather it's on a Godly plain, where we are elevated to a spiritual level.
- Prayer also develops our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.

2017 Theme Scripture for New Hope:

- “Abide in the Vine, our source for renewal and bearing much fruit” – John 15:5.
- Abiding means a participation of relationship with Jesus
- Fruit here means the “fruit of the Spirit” – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal.5:22).
- When we try to seek that love, peace and joy from physical things, such as yoga and stretching, etc., we find that it's fairly short-lived.

A key to Flourishing Relationship:

- While communicating with God through prayer, we can then experience the various fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, etc.
- Now when we “bear much fruit” that means we are engaged in a flourishing relationship with Jesus Christ.
- So how do we move in that direction? – it's through prayer.
- When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, they wanted to pray like Jesus did and have that intimate relationship with God.
- Now we know that John the Baptist had set an example for his disciples in teaching them to pray.
- It's so important on a daily basis that we abide in the vine through prayer and reaching out to communicate with our Creator.
- Remember the survey that showed that only 11% of avid church goers had a flourishing relationship with Jesus.
- Now when we are abiding in the vine and engaged in spiritual practices and disciplines and the Holy Spirit is flowing through us, that flourishing relationship becomes natural – it becomes a part of who we are.
- It's not that difficult to obtain – rather it's a matter of where we place our time and our priorities to have a relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit

Obligations of Faith?

- The Greek word for disciple means “a pupil or learner, and one who adheres to what they have learned and make it a practice of their life style.”
- So disciples and followers of Jesus are going to be different by living out a different life style – in a sense that’s our obligation of faith.
- And we will share God’s love, joy and peace with others who seeking these qualities through physical means.
- This is our role of sharing Jesus’ ministry of redemption and reconciliation.

Luke 11:1, It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.”

- As we said before, prayer often times doesn’t come easily or naturally.
- But if we adopt this pattern that Jesus was teaching, our prayers will become an ongoing conversation with God.
- As we see here, the disciples want to pray like Jesus did.
- Prayer is a pattern of life for one who is engaged in that spiritual union with Father, Son and Spirit.

2) And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.

- The first thing we should do in prayer is to praise and honor God in thanksgiving for all the physical and spiritual blessings He gives to us – which are many.
- In the book of Psalms, we find the many ways David praised God.
- We can praise God for the creation around us, for the spiritual understanding He gives us, how He’s touching our lives, for answered prayer for us and those close to us, etc.
- When we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are praying for Jesus’ ministry of reconciliation that we are involved in, praying for the opening of hearts and minds of others.
- “Your kingdom come” is an intercessory prayer where we can pray for our local church, such as what community we should be located in to engage the ministry of reconciliation.
- Our intercessory prayer can include praying for the denominational church and its leadership, for the entire ministry.
- We can also pray for those themes we’ve developed here at New Hope: prayerful dependence, Christ-centered worship, disciple making, mission minded, small group community, and vibrant leadership.

3) ‘Give us each day our daily bread.

- “Daily bread” implies daily provision.
- In this context, it means that we are praying to God on a daily basis.
- So the rhythm of prayer is a daily ongoing relationship where we can ask for additional physical and spiritual blessings.
- God wants our faith to be built and strengthened and encouraged – and that happens when prayers are answered, when our needs have been provided for by God.

- One can't store up a relationship with God – it's an on-going daily occurrence.
- So if our prayer life isn't what we want it to be, we can change it.
- The key to change anything is connected to the word CORE – C for "call it or acknowledge it", O for "own it", R for "our response to that with a plan of action and change" and the E for "execute or act on it."
- So, if our prayer life isn't exactly what we want it to be, we can look to scriptures for examples of how and what to pray for.

4) 'And forgive us our sins,

- When Christ died on the cross through his incarnated life, our sins were forgiven, past, present and future.
- It's not that we have to ask God to forgive us for this or that sin or because we were disobedient because we know that we have been forgiven.
- And from God's point of view, we are held righteous in His eyes.
- Now when we know we haven't done our best, or we've missed the mark and we reach out to God and ask for His forgiveness and that separation we feel from Him, not how He feels toward us, then changes in our lives occur.
- And so the process of forgiveness is acknowledging that we've been forgiven, that we've been loved and even though we haven't lived up to that, we want to.
- This stands for physical relationships as well. When we've sinned against someone, a disciple of Jesus will recognize it and then reach out to repair that relationship – "Hey, I screwed up, I'm sorry, please forgive me."
- In doing this, we acknowledge our forgiveness from God.

For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

- Someone can do us wrong as well.
- In response, we acknowledge that we have been forgiven and were loved by Father, Son and Spirit, and then we respond to that by forgiving others when they've done us wrong.
- We need to repair relationships no matter whose fault it is.

And lead us not into temptation.'"

- We should ask God to help us to be prepared for temptations and trials.

5) Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6) for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

7) and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' 8) I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

- Jesus then gives a parable related to prayer.
- Now a home at that time was typically one or two rooms with the door opened during the day.

- But at night, the door was shut and the family huddled to sleep in one room.
- Now the man's friend comes knocking on the door at midnight but is initially rejected by the home owner.
- But his persistence in knocking changes the home owner's mind and he gives his friend what he needs.

9) "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10) For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

- So what we are encouraged to do in prayer is a continual acknowledgement of thanksgiving and continual acknowledgment of requests, both physical and spiritual.
- Luke records Jesus words that if we can do good for a friend that comes at an inappropriate time, how much more will our heavenly Father provide us with the things that we pray for because He has so much more love for us than we can imagine.
- What about "unanswered prayer"?
- From God's standpoint, He hears our prayers.
- When we ask, when we seek, when we knock God hears, but we don't always get a response that we were looking for, yet God answers us.
- Because God's love is so great, He works in ways that we don't necessarily see right away, yet He provides us with things.
- Pastor Craig then gave an example of how God provided him with a replacement contact lens but not in the way he prayed about.

11) Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 12) Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 13) If you then, being evil (or just human), know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

- Our love for our children is only a reflection of God's love for us, so God will be far more gracious to us.
- We need to pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to fill our minds and our hearts and our desires.

Concluding comments:

- So, we become like Christ when we engage in prayer.
- And we know that prayer doesn't always come easily or naturally.
- But over time, we recognize that prayer is a foundation of our relationship with God – we walk before we run.
- And so by using the Lord's prayer that Jesus gave us and by asking the Holy Spirit to teach us how to pray and ask for the things that are the best for us, it is the means to start a flourishing intimate relationship with God on a daily basis.

Closing Prayer