

Ashley has been a Christian for almost 6 months now. She's excited to be a follower of Jesus. She knows God heard her when she prayed for Jesus to become her Lord and Saviour. But if she's honest, she hasn't really prayed much since. Sure, she's said a few prayers, especially when something goes wrong. She knows God loves her but she just feels a bit uncomfortable praying, she's not sure exactly what to say.

Greg is different. His prayer life has been quite comfortable over the past 20 years. He can pray on demand, in church, with a friend, with kids, in bible study, no problem. but when it comes to his own prayers, it's a different story, He gets up in the morning, and he's a busy man, occasionally he might spend a few minutes praying But if he's honest, he doesn't really think about praying himself, life is busy and he struggles to spend time praying to God.

Praying to God can sometimes be a struggle for us, can't it? No matter how long you've been a Christian. There are many reasons why we don't pray. We have busy lives, we forget to pray, we don't know what to pray, or maybe it's the opposite, we think that God is all knowing and he knows what I'm about to pray, so why pray. Perhaps we don't pray because you're disappointed that your prayers have not been answered, so why bother praying - God's just going to say No! Do you feel like this sometimes when it comes to prayer?

Well, both Ashley and Greg have been going to church on Sunday, and they've been looking at the gospel of Luke as well. As they've heard the gospel of Luke read each week, they've noticed how often Jesus prays. Have you noticed it? For example, In chapter 5:16 Luke tells them that Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. At another time in chapter 6, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. Last week in church they saw Jesus

taking Peter John and James with him and they went up a mountain to pray. Well this week, It's chapter 11, and once again Jesus is praying. And finally, a disciple who has been observing Jesus' example, and sees how important prayer is to Jesus, asks him, Lord, teach us to pray. Ashley is excited to learn about prayer from Jesus and Greg is ready to reawaken the desire he used to have for prayer. Both glad that a disciple has finally asked the Lord to teach them to pray, and they find out that Jesus starts by giving an example of prayer.

And the Lord Jesus says, When you pray say....

Father - It's a word that we tend to skip over quickly in our prayers. We don't really think twice about calling God our Father today do we? But if you were a Jewish disciple who was asked to call God Father, you would be astonished. Did You know in the whole Old Testament God is only referred to as "Father" 14 times. In those 14 places, the term was always used with reference to the nation of Israel - rather than a personal father. God's people knew God as The sovereign creator of the world, he was their Mighty King, there was a distance between them and God. In teaching his disciples to pray, Jesus says to those who follow him - you can call God - Father, you can call him Dad. On our own, we don't deserve to stand in front of God and call him Father, it is only because of Jesus, who has given everyone who trusts in him the right to become children of God. So as we approach God in prayer, we come to him as his children. I think this changes the way that we approach God doesn't it? I would rather ask my Father to help me with something, rather than ask President Obama. Because I know that my Father knows me, he loves me, and he wants to give me what is good for me. Knowing that God is our Father affects how we approach him. In verses 11-13 Jesus is saying that God is better than an

evil father who knows how to give good gifts to his children. We can be confident that our Father will listen to us, we can be confident that we can go to him with anything and everything and know that he will not reject us. He is our Father.

Well Jesus goes on to say ask this of your Father -

Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

Jesus is teaching us to pray BIG prayers- what do I mean by that? Jesus wants us to pray for God and his kingdom.

And it starts with the name of God. Hallowed be your name. Hallowed means to make Holy, to honour and respect God's name.

You may not think honoring or respecting your name makes much sense, but think about it this way.

How much money do you think coca cola spends each year on building it's name up -they spend about 2.6 billion dollars, and If I made up a drink which may include pepsi max, chilli and salt and started calling it coca colas new drink. How much money do you think it would spend on stopping me if I made up a drink and started selling millions of bottles of it and called it coca cola. I would imagine as much money as it would take to make sure that their name coca cola was not damaged. You see names matter, there is value in a name.

In the Bible, a name was very important - the name was linked to your character, your reputation. So when we pray and ask to Hallow God's name. We are asking that his name be honoured and respected. So that as His name spreads throughout all the world people are to treat his name with the honour and respect that he deserves. That's what we are praying for. You see, throughout the whole bible, God is

concerned about his name, that it will not be dishonoured and not respected. Read what God says about his name in Ezekiel 36:16

Again the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁷ “Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions.... ¹⁹ I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; ²⁰ And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, ‘These are the LORD’s people, and yet they had to leave his land.’ ²¹ I had concern for my holy name, which the people of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

²² “Therefore say to the Israelites, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD”¹

Throughout the bible we see that everything that God does is for his glory, he saves the Israelites for the sake of his name.

Jesus says pray that God’s name will be honoured and respected everywhere, in our lives, at home, here at church, in our community,

¹ *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Eze 36:16-23.

and all around the world. Do we have that desire to see God's name be honoured and respected? Jesus teaches us to want that desire, to ask for God's name to be hallowed.

I want to ask ourselves the question, Do we honour and respect God in the way that we behave? We are God's children, people look at us and we bear His name. If you have children, can they see through your actions that you honour God in your life? As we go out into our community or work places and meet people, do we behave in such a way that honours God's name?

Is that what you think about when we say Hallowed be your name?

The next line in Jesus prayer - Your kingdom come continues to develop this idea of God being honoured and respected. Because we are praying for God to be King over all the earth - we are praying for the time when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. We are praying for Jesus to return where he will be King over all. I think this line in the prayer is quite a confronting one. We are asking for the life that we have now on this earth to pass away, and for God's kingdom to come. As we pray your kingdom come, We are to be reminded to keep our eyes on heaven, and not to be too comfortable with our life on earth. How do we live this out while we wait for Jesus to return - it's through our obedience to Jesus as his disciple. Are we helping to build God's kingdom, to see people enter into his kingdom. That is our church vision isn't it -to be disciples and make disciples. Are we obedient disciples helping God to bring obedient disciples into his kingdom. That's what we pray for when we say your kingdom come.

Then Jesus says to ask God these 3 things:

Give us each day our daily bread, Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.

These three requests allow us to recognize that it is God who provides everything for us. I think this can be hard for us to recognise. Because it means we have to acknowledge that we are weak and need help. The world tells us to be strong - you can do it on your own, you have the power within you, if you want it, you go for it. These three requests remind us that we can't do it on our own - we need help. And who better to ask than a good loving Father who is powerful enough to give us the things that we need every day.

How often should we pray for bread? Daily.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

This line of the prayer gets us to acknowledge that we need his forgiveness. An important part of our relationship with God, is making things right between us and him. And he wants us to ask for forgiveness to acknowledge when we wrong him and say sorry. The next part of this prayer I think this line can be one of the hardest lines to say in this prayer. As we forgive those who sin against us. There will be some of us that may have people in our life, who we find hard to forgive because of the way that they have treated us. For us to forgive someone, especially if there is great hurt involved, is usually a process that will not happen quickly, it will take time. But we aren't left alone in this, God gives us the capacity to forgive, and God asks us to be willing and try.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

We know that we disobey God, and we are tempted to do the wrong thing many times during our day. Sometimes we allow ourselves to be in situations that tempt us, we sometimes trust that we'll be able to handle it and stop ourselves going too far. One of my friends Andrew Errington talked about how we sometimes tend to 'flood our eyes with images of sex and violence, and our ears with cruelty and ludeness and darkness, and then flatter ourselves that we are "engaging with the world". We are weak when it comes to obedience, our mind may want to be obedient, but we often get pulled down into disobedience too easily. So we need help. Jesus teaches us to ask God to lead us not into temptation.

So what has Jesus taught us about prayer? He has taught us to pray Big prayers, to ask God - that he will be honoured and reign as King overall. Jesus has taught us to ask God for his help knowing we can't do it ourselves.

Well, Jesus finished his example on prayer, but he continues teaching about prayer, and he teaches the disciples more than just what to say, he teaches them about their attitude.

He teaches his disciples to be BOLD in asking God anything.

In verses 5-7, Jesus is saying, God is not like our neighbour friend. He is the opposite. We can be BOLD in asking our Father anything and he will not be grumpy. IN verse 9-10, it says Ask and it will be given, Seek and you will find, Knock and the door will be opened. Not only does Jesus encourage us to ask, we should ask boldly knowing that he will give us what is good.

Now at this point in the teaching, I'm sure we could be thinking excellent, God will give me whatever I ask for. But wouldn't we be

treating God like a vending machine at this point - I put in my \$2 and I get my can of drink, I put in my request and God will answer my prayer.

But God isn't a vending machine. He is a loving Father who knows what is best for his children. He will always give us what is best, even though sometimes that may mean pain for us. We have experience of this. We don't always know what is on the Father's mind, our Father is good and loving, we can have confidence and trust him in giving us the right answer. Are you prepared to trust his answers?

So what have Ashley and Greg learnt about prayer today?

They have learnt that they are God's children, and they are asked to pray BIG and BOLDLY. They can be confident in asking God for all things, at all times, and confident God will give what is good.

You may have noticed in my sermon today, that for almost each line there was some question for us about how we lived and what we thought. You see, what we learn from the Lord's prayer is more than just words. Jesus is teaching his disciples how to live. Because what this prayer shapes is not just our prayers, but our whole attitude towards life, we pray for what we desire.

In this prayer we learn who we are - we are God's children - how often do we spend time talking to our Father?

In this prayer we learn to want what God wants and that is for his name to be glorified and honoured - are we obedient disciples honouring his name.

In this prayer, we learn to depend on God in all areas of life, are we thankful for what he has given us.

As we say the Lord's prayer in church together, will we allow God to change us, and to give us a heart that desires what God desires?

Prayer is hard isn't it? There are so many things in our lives that distract us from praying to God, but we have a Father in heaven who is waiting for us to speak with him, to honour his name, and ask him whatever is on our hearts.

I want to finish off with some words from a hymn that I love because it reminds me of my desperate need to talk to my loving Father.

What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Let's Pray together the words that Jesus taught us here in Luke

Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation. Amen.

DO you find it interesting that we are asking for bread? Why do we ask for bread? Well if we look back at the history of God's people, we remember the time when the Israelites who have just escaped from Egypt, in the desert grumbling to God about their lack of food. What does God do for them? He provides for them enough manna- which was like bread- to eat every day for 40 years. When we don't have much

we can depend upon God to provide for us what we need. But I think it also reminds us of the opposite warning - by world's standards we are quite wealthy people and we can generally provide for ourselves. But praying give us each day our daily bread - is there to also remind us that whatever we do have - God has given it to us. So we ask God to give us each day our daily bread, because we know that he provides all that we physically need.

But bread doesn't mean just our physical needs, Daily bread also includes our spiritual needs. In John's gospel, after feeding a very large crowd, Jesus said "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever." (John 6). When we pray give us our daily bread, we are trusting Jesus' sacrifice to save us and give us eternal life.