

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #178

(Note: You can read the online Newspaper edition of this post here.)

The Later Judean Ministry: Jesus Trains His Followers in the Basics of Discipleship

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray Luke 11.1-4 (Repeated Text: MT 6.9-13)

1 One day, Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

2 So he said to them, "*When you pray, say:*

*'Father, cause your name to always be honored as holy,
Cause your sovereign reign to be fully acknowledged by all people.
3 Continually give us our daily bread, every day.
4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And do not lead us into temptation.'"*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Judea
Timeline	October (Month 33)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	D. Jesus Minister in Judea and Trains His Disciples
	I. Jesus Trains His Followers in the Basics of Discipleship
Title	iv. Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

COMMENT:

Today's reading is the first of two postings that address the third core discipline of discipleship, according to Jesus: prayer.

All of our faith in God should be lived out in prayer, that is guided by his Word, as an expression of love. Everything in our lives ought to be experienced in the interplay between God's Word, love, and prayer. That was certainly how Jesus lived, and what he taught as the core of discipleship.

It is interesting to note that the only thing the apostles ever asked Jesus was to teach them was how to pray. They made their request, which was itself a prayer, when Jesus had been spending time in private prayer, as was his daily practice.

Of all the things they could learn from Jesus that really mattered, the disciples saw prayer as the most important. If they could pray like Jesus, everything else he said and did--every aspect of his example--would also become

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possible for them. Prayer was the key to everything else they needed to receive from their Lord. They were right about this. Jesus believed it.

Because Jesus believed in the priority of prayer in discipleship, he had already taught them how to pray in many different ways. The teaching he gave in today's reading was a slightly abbreviated version of the "model" prayer that he set forth in the "Teaching on the Mount" some 18 months earlier. (MT 6.6-15)

In Luke 11 Jesus eliminated the third of the six requests he commanded in MT 6.9-13. There, the second request, **"cause your sovereign reign to be fully acknowledged by all people,"** was followed by, **"cause your will to be done on earth with the same attitude that characterizes heaven."** This is the request that Jesus didn't include in today's reading. What is the significance of this omission?

The truth is that the third request in MT 6, regarding our attitude toward obedience, is actually a sub-category of the second request, for God's absolute sovereignty to be totally acknowledged by all people, including ourselves. Surrendering our lives to Jesus as our unquestioned LORD means that we have the passionate attitude toward obedience that characterizes heaven. It can be no other way. So Jesus could eliminate the third request of MT 6 in his teaching in LK 11 and not alter its essential meaning at all.

Rather than merely repeating this brief prayer word-for-word, Jesus was instructing his disciples to make sure and pray about these five crucial needs each and every day. These five requests are crucial to a healthy, growing relationship to God. Read through them and meditate upon each one, and how they impact your own life as a spiritual priest before God, and servant among people.

There is great passion, and fervent desire in the original Greek version of this model prayer. Jesus placed each of these five requests in a command form to emphasize their urgency. None of us is actually in a position to command God to do anything. Honoring his name with holy fear--the first request-- certainly precludes that. However, using the command form shows how important these request are to us, and how fully dependent we are upon God to meet these needs. We are desperate for him to do these things for us, and undone if he he does not.

This is no perfunctory bedtime prayer to be repeated in mindless memory retrieval, and then dropped. These prayer requests are the difference between spiritual life and death for a true disciple. The fact that Jesus repeated this same teaching in different settings, over 18 months apart, shows us how important they are to him, and to us.

APPLICATION:

Jesus said to pray like this, **"when you pray."** The only way to learn how to pray is to engage in private prayer at a pre-scheduled time, on a daily basis. Every disciple should have a definite time set aside to pray every day.

When do you pray privately every day?

If you do not have a daily appointment to get alone with God in private prayer, make that commitment right now.

When will you pray?