

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 10

The Three Loaves

AIM: to teach my pupils what Jesus taught concerning prayer, as taught in Luke 11:1-13.

POINT OF CONTACT: It would be good, I think, to bring a piece of bread, a stone, a fish and an egg for object lessons. Also, if you could find a little rubber serpent or spider, it would be well. This is in connection with Luke 11:11, 12. You might act out these two verses with the above object.

I. THE REQUEST BY THE DISCIPLES.

1. The old Jewish prayers were basically composed of praise and adoration. In Luke 11:1c, we have one of the disciples saying to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." The reason he asked this was that John had been teaching his disciples another kind of praying besides the praise and adoration. He had been teaching that prayer was petitioning God and asking for things. Jesus' disciples wanted to know how to pray this way.
2. It is interesting to note that this was perhaps the only thing the disciples ever asked to be taught by Jesus. At least they never said, "Lord, teach us to preach," but they did say, "Lord, teach us to pray." They had observed Jesus praying. Luke, in his Gospel, gives us more of the prayer life of Jesus than the other writers of the first four books of the New Testament. The disciples had heard Jesus pray and had seen Him pray, and they wanted to pray like Jesus.

II. THE ELEMENTARY COURSE ON PRAYER. Read Luke 11:2-4. Here we have a model of the basic prayer that a Christian ought to pray. Let us notice the things for which we are to ask in the new type of praying.

1. "Thy kingdom come," verse 2. We are to pray for the coming kingdom. Actually, when we pray for the coming kingdom, we are praying for Jesus to come, for He will bring the kingdom when He comes. John prayed this prayer in Revelation 22:20 when he said, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
2. "Thy will be done," verse 2. We are to pray for God's will to be done in our lives.
3. "Give us day by day our daily bread," verse 3. We are to pray for our daily bread. Actually what this means is, we are to pray day by day for our bread, or we are to pray for day-by-day bread. It means we are to ask for today's bread today, tomorrow's bread tomorrow, etc. It is right for us to expect our Father to provide for His children.
4. "And forgive us our sins," verse 4. It is certainly important that a Christian pray daily for forgiveness of sin, not for salvation, but for guaranteed blessings upon our labors for Christ.
5. "And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil," verse 4. Here we are to pray not only for God to forgive us our sins but to ask Him to help us not to commit other sins. We are to ask forgiveness for the past and protection for the future. A good Scripture to teach here would be I Corinthians 10:13.

III. THE ADVANCED COURSE IN PRAYER. Notice Luke 11:5-13. The above prayer is certainly good for a day-by-day prayer, and every Christian is supposed to pray that way. However, there is an advanced course in prayer. There is a way that Christians ought to learn to pray, even beyond asking for the basic needs of the day. This is prevailing prayer, praying for the power of God, continuing prayer, praying without ceasing, etc. This kind of praying is for mature Christians. This is taught in the story found in Luke 11:5-13. A man's hungry friend came to him at midnight, but the man had no food for him. The first man went to another friend and asked for bread. The friend refused because of the hour of the night. The man continued to ask. He kept on knocking. He kept on asking. He kept on begging. Finally, because of his much begging, his friend gave him the bread. This teaches us that we are to prevail in prayer and travail in prayer and continue in prayer. Oftentimes God wants to give us something if we want it bad enough and if we pray and pray until God knows we are sincere.

1. Examples of this kind of prayer.

- 1) Jacob was an example of this. He prayed all night and wrestled with the angel until God gave him the desires of his heart.
- 2) When Peter was in prison, the Christians showed this kind of prayer as they continued in prayer for Peter's deliverance. There are other cases in the Bible which teach us we ought to travail in prayer and continue in prayer.
2. Notice the man's two friends. In Luke 11:5, 6, you find the word "friend" mentioned twice. There was the friend who came to him needing bread, and then there was the friend who had the bread. The friend who needed the bread represents a sinner needing salvation. The friend who had the bread represents God, Who alone can give us the power to witness. Let us look at these two friends.
 - 1) The hungry friend. Notice in verse 6, it is said of this friend, "For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me." Here we have the picture of a man lost and weary and destitute in need of bread. The man had none to give him unless he got it from his other friend.
 - 2) The friend who had the bread. This one represents God. There is no way we can do God's work without God's help. He alone has the bread. We can get it only from Him. Every Christian had better be friends with these two people. We better be sure the unsaved have confidence in us. Jesus was a friend of sinners. Then we better be sure that God has confidence in us. We had better keep the line open between us and God and between us and sinners. Our job is reconciling the two and getting what God has to give to the sinners.
3. The man was a bother to his friend who had the bread. Notice in verse 7, "...my children are with me in bed..." This is most interesting. The Oriental bed stretched across one entire end of the room. The entire family would sleep one beside the other. Consequently, when the man had to get up, it bothered everybody in the family. This was even the case oftentimes when in-laws lived with the family. The bed was so long that maybe the in-laws would sleep on one end of the bed, the children in the middle, and the husband and wife on the other end, etc. Suffice it to say that it was certainly disrupting the entire household because this fellow had to get up. This was a bother to him. However, it is not so to God. We do not bother God by our coming to Him often. He wants us to, and He answers our prayers if we keep on petitioning Him.
4. Continual knocking got the bread. See verse 8. The word "importunity" means that he was persistent in his request. In other words, the fellow would not take "no" for an answer. He kept on knocking until he got the bread. God wants us to mean business so much for Him that we keep on asking and keep on asking.
5. The bread represents the Holy Spirit. We find this explained in verse 13. God wants to give us His power. God wants to give us power to reach sinners, and this bread represents that power.
6. Notice the three words concerning prayer in verse 10: "asketh," "seeketh" and "knocketh." Take the first letter from each of these words, and you have the word "ask." It means "keep on asking," "keep on seeking," "keep on knocking," and God will give us our petitions and give us of His power.
7. God's promises. (Teacher, use the items you brought to class.) The Lord says, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" Now a stone oftentimes is shaped like bread, and it could be mistaken for bread, but no father would do that! Then he compares it to lunch. He says, "...or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?" In other words, a fish and serpent might be a lot alike. They could be cooked alike; they could be shaped somewhat alike, but no father would do that. Then he says, "Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" (It was a slogan in those days to say, "An egg and off to bed." Oftentimes eggs were used for the evening meal.) Now there were certain scorpions that would have looked perhaps like a prepared egg, but the father would not give this to his son. This is ridiculous. A father wants to give good gifts to his son. Consequently, Jesus will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. The word "ask" in verse 13 is in the linear tense, which means "keep on asking, keep on asking," "keep on knocking, keep on knocking, keep on knocking." In other words, if we mean business enough to keep petitioning, God will give us power and bread for our friend who has come at midnight.