

Sermon Brief, Helpful Links, Discussion Questions

March 21, 2021

Luke 11:4

“Desperate Prayer”

Sermon Brief

1. Prayer is not something we are naturally good at. It's something we need to learn, to practice, to work at. Like a child looks to its parents to learn to talk, we are looking to Jesus to learn to pray. In Luke 11:2-4 Jesus is giving us a pattern to help us practice and become better at prayer, and we've seen his pattern for prayer involves a number of different elements: Believe, Remember, Hope, Ask, Confess.
2. The word for today is **HELP**. When you pray you need to ask God to help you face the pressures of living in a world that's been broken by sin. And what I want you to feel today as we unpack this phrase is how desperately you need God's help in the middle of that. I want this to be an urgent prayer for you. **I want you to feel that you face a battle that on your own you are unable to win. I want you to be confident that God can, and that God wants to help you fight this battle and then I want you to remind you of the importance of asking Him to do that.**
3. In other words, I want to show you a number of reasons why praying for help should be a regular part of your prayer life.
4. **One reason you need to ask God for help is because sin is dangerous.** As one old theologian once said, “If we truly sensed the evil and dreadful nature of sin, we should have an exceeding dread of it upon our spirits. We should hate it worse than death, and should fear it worse than the devil himself, and dread it even as we dread damnation.” Sin is dangerous because of what it is, who it is against and what it does. **And yet, even though sin is so clearly dangerous, we often don't feel like it's a very big problem, which is a second reason, we need to make praying for God's help a regular part of our prayer lives.** This needs to be a habit for us. We need to deliberately and intentionally think about the danger of sin and our need for God to protect us from sinning, because we often don't think that sin is very dangerous. One reason sin doesn't always seem dangerous to us is because we are not believing what the Bible says about sin. Another reason however is because we are not believing what the Bible says about us. We think sin is terrible, but we are not concerned, because we don't think we are that terrible, really. We don't feel an urgency about praying God would lead us not into temptation because think of ourselves as stronger than we really are.
5. And I am going after this, because I am wanting you to understand why Jesus ends this prayer telling us to cry out, help. Because it is a strange way to end a prayer. He doesn't end it with some glorious statement, but instead by telling us to cry out that God would help us not give in to sin. That's what “lead us not into temptation” means. If you want a good idea of what Jesus is saying, you might look at Luke 22:40 where Jesus tells the disciples to pray this same prayer. And why does Jesus tell them to pray this? It's because he's concerned they are going to give up and give in and succumb to the temptation in the middle of the trials they were about to face to sin and abandon him. He knows that temptation is dangerous for them. In fact, you might remember he's just told Peter about how he's going to betray him. And here he's challenging Peter and the disciples to pray that they might not give

into temptation, and yet, what are Peter and the other disciples doing? They are not praying this prayer. They are sleeping, which I am saying can also be a problem with some of us when it comes to sin, because like Peter we have pretty high views of ourselves and our righteousness and godliness and self control.

6. **So let me help you see a third reason we need to pray this prayer by walking through why sin is dangerous even for the mature Christian.** Obviously, most of us know we were in a desperate position before we came to Christ. Now that we are Christians, God's done some amazing things in us. We are not who we once were. But one thing God hasn't done yet is remove all the sin from us and so we still have sin in us. This is called indwelling sin, and this indwelling sin is still very powerful, which is why as long as we live in this world with indwelling sin living in us, we would be very foolish to be casual about the spiritual threats we face. Sin is dangerous, even for us as mature Christians. So dangerous in fact, that apart from the grace of God, you have no hope of defeating it.
7. Which I know maybe sounds discouraging at first, but of course, you are not apart from the grace of God. The good news is God wants to help us. You can be really confident about that. He's proven that by giving us spiritual life, the Spirit, His Word, and many precious promises. And so because God's willing to help, we are not hopeless, but because we have all this indwelling sin, we still are concerned.
8. In fact, as we pray the Lord's prayer it takes away a lot of our fears. But looking at God and God's plan and what the Bible says about us, one thing does become more frightening. And that's sin and our own deep rooted sinfulness. That's scary. But while it's scary, we don't give up because God's proven He cares. And yet, as we look at all the resources He's given us, it's obvious all the hope we have for winning this battle comes from Him, which is why, while looking at God, we are not giving up, looking at ourselves, we know we need to be watchful.
9. And what does it mean to be watchful exactly?
10. First it means you run from anything that would tempt you to sin, and second it means, that you feel an urgency about continually asking God to help you not give in to it. It means you know praying "lead us not into temptation" is not just a nice way to end a prayer. You know you urgently need God's help not to give in to sin.
11. And I am asking, do you feel this urgency?
12. How do we pray? We pray believing, remembering, hoping, asking, and confessing. And we pray desperately and confidently pleading with God to uphold and strengthen us by the power of His Holy Spirit so that in this spiritual war we do not go down to defeat but always firmly resist our enemies until we finally obtain complete victory.
13. In other words, we pray, "God help!"

Helpful Links

1. [Prayer is a great place to begin biblical counseling](#)
2. [Three facts about the fight you are in as a Christian](#)
3. [Sin in the believer](#)
4. [How to Pray in Spiritual Warfare](#)
5. [A Prayer for Turning from the Idol of Self-Sufficiency](#)
6. [The Enemy Within](#)

Discussion Questions

1. Are we naturally good at praying? Why did you answer the way you did?
2. I think the fact that Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray indicates prayer is something we need to learn. What are some of the ways you have been working at growing in your prayer life in the past few weeks? What have you been practicing?
3. Jesus ends the Lord's prayer by teaching us to ask God for help in our battle against sin. Specifically he says lead us not into temptation. What does this mean? What insight do we get into what this means from later in Luke?
4. In the message on Sunday we wanted to especially help you feel the urgency of asking for God's help in our battle against sin. One reason we spent time doing this is because we don't always feel urgent about this. What kinds of prayer requests do you think someone would have who felt urgent about fighting sin. How might a sense of urgency about sin impact the way you pray for yourself and others specifically?
5. One reason we should be urgently asking for God's help in our fight against sin is because sin is dangerous. What are some biblical descriptions of sin that show how dangerous it is? What does the Bible reveal about sin that makes it obvious this is something that is really deadly? Can you think of a memorable way you would try to express to someone how dangerous sin is?
6. In spite of how dangerous sin is, we often don't take it seriously. What are some reasons for that?
7. One reason we don't take sin seriously is because we sometimes think we are stronger than we actually are. Do you think a Christian in this life ever gets to the point where they are out of the reach of the danger of sin? Why or why not?
8. To help us remember that sin is dangerous even for people who are mature Christians we looked at what the Bible teaches about indwelling sin. What is indwelling sin? Where in the Bible would you go to talk about it? What are some things that stood out to you as we talked about indwelling sin on Sunday?
9. Does this indwelling sin mean we are hopeless in the battle against sin? Why or why not?
10. If sin is as dangerous as the Bible says it is, and if indwelling sin means that it is dangerous for us even as believers, and if we have hope, and if all our hope in the battle against sin comes from God, what should we do?
11. One thing we said we should do is be watchful. What are two specific ways a watchful person deals with the reality of temptation?
12. What do you think about the following quote: "None are in as much danger as the most bold. They are most safe, who are most sensible of their own weakness, most distrustful of their own hearts, and most sensible of their continual need of restraining grace." What difference would that make in our lives if we believed that?