



Christ's School of Prayer-Part 3
When Praying About Our Needs

Well I know I freaked you all out when I told you I traveled with my own showerhead earlier this year. Sorry you took that so hard. Speaking of bathrooms and travelling: I will admit another thing that I don't think is quite as weird, but I keep my travel bathroom bag, you have one of those? I keep it packed and ready to go at all times. Kind of like the prep-per with his bug-out bag. You know? I'm ready. And I just do that cause every time before I had that bag I would forget something, and so I packed the bag. It's got completely duplicates of everything. I've got the comb in there and the razor, and I've got a little mouthwash bottle and the toothpaste and the toothbrush. And I've got that all, and it's ready to go so when I speak out of town, work out of town, travel whatever, I'll have that. I'll just throw it in my suitcase, and off I'll go. And I know some of you do that too. Maybe no one travels with their showerhead, but you pack your own bathroom bag. You have a double. Right?

Well speaking of my toothbrush. I have a toothbrush in there that I really like. I bought it traveling somewhere. But it had a little grip-y handle, little fatter than normal, and I like that and so I travel with that. Now it's not like the one I get to use everyday that's high speed, electric, and you put it in your mouth, and you don't even have to move your hand. It does all the work for you. Buzzzzzz. I've got one of those that home, but when you're traveling you know you've got to make some sacrifices on the road so I've got the old fashioned, you know plain old toothbrush.

Well I'm speaking out of town. I was out of state. And they were gracious enough to invite my wife to come with me so she's traveling along with me. And it's always great, and we're there in the hotel and getting ready. I'm going to speak that morning, and as we're there and we're talking, and you know how that goes. I'm brushing my teeth, and I can't say much. I'm nodding a lot and brushing my teeth as she's talking to me. We're getting ready. And I finished brushing my teeth, and I do what most people do. I rinse out my toothbrush under the flowing water. And then I flip it upside down to get all of the excess water out of the bristles of my toothbrush, and I knocked it on the counter there, and all of a sudden to my great surprise it went. Buzzzzzzzz. It started vibrating. I freaked out. I thought, what is going on there? Now these are the kind of realizations you'd like to have by yourself with no one else around, but my wife is sitting there going what are you crazy? What is happening? I said I don't know, but my toothbrush is... I first thought it was an earthquake. We're in this high-rise hotel. We weren't in earthquake country, but I thought, what's happening? So I had to admit that I had traveled with this toothbrush for many, many, many months and never knew that it was an electric toothbrush. You see, I flipped it upside down and well concealed and hidden on the bottom side was a little tiny button that when you pounded on the sink and hit it just at the right spot it turns the thing on. This dormant toothbrush comes to life. I had brushed my teeth the old fashioned way with that thing for I don't know how many times and all of a sudden now I realize it's a high powered low drag you know super deluxe travel toothbrush. You're saying didn't you know that when you bought it? Didn't it cost like \$10.00? I don't know. Sometimes you're at Wal-Mart and you throw things in the basket, and I don't know what it cost, but I was doing it wrong all that time.

When I actually thought about that story, which is a true story. Don't ask me that. People ask me, is that a true story? Of course it's a true story. I would not make this stuff up. It's a true story. But I thought back to that story when I was thinking of this passage.

We've been studying prayer for the last three sessions in our study of Luke, and we reached Luke 11, and I thought about that story because I thought, here we reach a section that tells us something about prayer that if we're not careful we'll think, well yeah that's what I do when I pray. And yet, just the simple juxtaposition of two concepts here can radically transform our prayer life. And we start to think. You know what, I didn't realize that prayer was supposed to be like this. In other words we can say, well of course I pray. I know how to pray. You tell God the things that you need and the things that you want. And, of course, we've already seen and that one's clear to see that you ought to elevate your view of God. You ought to know who you're speaking to. You've got to remember the hallowedness and greatness of our Father. And you say, I get that. But these two things that come next in the bottom of verse 2 in the whole of this very short verse 3, the combination of those two things will really, if you take it to heart, transform your prayer life from just going before God with your list of things saying I need this. I need



that. I'd like this. I'd like that. To really getting to the place where you'll start to see if I can just adjust our prayers. The way that these two concepts together will help us to adjust our prayers will start to make me realize that our prayer life can be much more powerful and effective than we ever knew it before.

As a matter of fact you can read verses in the Bible... you look at "the effectual prayer of the righteous man accomplishes much" and you'll say, wow, I didn't think that was my prayer life. But if you get this particular section right, you'll start to say my prayer life's changing. My prayer life now is much more focused, and it takes me to areas in my Christian life I recognize. I mean this is really what praying is all about. But you need to combine these two.

Now I've heard sermons on this, read books on this and usually when you deal with the last phrase of verse 2 and verse 3 these are taken as separate, and usually they're discussed separately. I'd like to do something a little bit differently this morning. I'd like to take these two imperatives, and remember that's how we can break this down and that's how we've broken down the series. We started with an introductory sermon just to start on the importance of prayer as Jesus teaches prayer to his disciples. And then we started with the first imperative which is an interesting verbal imperative which is "Hallowed be your name." There's a verb. It's a command. "Hallowed be"... what is that? That's weird. God is not any more hallowed because I'm asking for his name to be hallowed. And we learned last time that's the word holy. But that's the first thing. We looked at that. And I hope we learned a lot from that. And then we have the next two verbal imperatives. I want to take those two together. And then the second verbal imperative is the word "come." Alright "Your kingdom come" and then the third one is "give" "Give us each day our daily bread."

Let's get the context. Let's read it all. Your eyeballs are already on the text, but let's follow along here. Luke 11 verses 1 through 3. Let me read that for you. "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place," Now we've learned throughout the gospels, he does that all the time. He's praying. Going away and praying. I'm not talking about praying throughout the day – throwing up some thoughts as you're going down the road. We're talking about getting to a private place and being focused on communicating with God. He does that. He's going to teach his disciples to do that. When he's finished one of the disciples says, "Lord, teach us to pray," When you go out there and talk to God, what is that like? Tell us how to do that. How to do that as John, that's John the Baptist, taught his disciples. And so he responds positively. Ok. I'll teach you. "And he said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name.'" There's the first thing I'm asking. Second thing I'm asking here, bottom of verse two, he says, "Your kingdom come" I want your kingdom to come. I'm asking that your kingdom would arrive. Does it say, is this in the present tense? I mean is this something that we expect to be here now?

There's so much we could say about the kingdom. I'll give you one book on the back that is as comprehensive as I could pick for you. There's so many things about the kingdom that we need to understand, but when it comes to the ultimate hope of the kingdom. The thing that the average Jewish person in the first century would think of, like the disciples in Acts 1 when they said, is now the time that you're going to "restore the kingdom to Israel?" That's something that Christ was going to do when the son of David was seated on the throne and then everything was made right, and the king was going to rule. As it's put in the Book of Revelation, yet to come, when "The kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord [that's the Father] and of his Christ, [that's Jesus] and he shall reign forever and ever." That is the thing that we are waiting for. That's the thing that we should hope for. That's the thing that we should anticipate. And that's the thing he says you need to be praying for. "Your kingdom come." Then, "Give us each day our daily bread".

Now I want to look at those two things together. Usually those are handled separately and distinctly. And I don't mean to short change the first one. Okay we'll get back to the direct statement – God we want your kingdom to arrive – at the very end, but let's just now, say, okay if you're thinking about the coming kingdom before you think about the things that you want to bring to God as requests. See this is a great combination of two things that will help really sort out not only what I pray for and the things that I think I need, but how I pray for those things. So let's spend our time this morning just doing that. Let's put it this way just to kind of get the big overview. Number 1 on your worksheet, if you're taking notes, jot this down. The first thing we need to note and the first thing we need to see about the combination of these two things is before I get to the things that I'm asking God to do I want to



see and think and feel and experience in my own mind that anticipation of the coming kingdom. I put it this way. We need to...

1. Filter Our Requests Thru Kingdom Values

I want to filter my requests thru kingdom values. Now that's a statement that needs some explanation, and we'll not only explain it, but we'll try to illustrate it. That would be the better way to explain it, but we're looking at that word, filter, like you would the filter on your, you know, the water inlet on the back of your refrigerator for the icemaker and the water in the door. You want to put a filter on it so you can take all the bad stuff and filter it all out. You want the pure stuff on the other side. The kingdom as an anticipation in your heart becomes the filter that when I'm going to bring requests to God I want to make sure that really what I'm bringing to God are the right kinds of pure requests. And then what you'll find is, hey, look how effective my prayer life has become because I'm praying differently about different things. Because I started with, God I really can't wait for your kingdom to arrive. I can't wait for, as it's put in Matthew, "...your will to be done, on earth as it is in heaven." And now I can start to pray for those kinds of things now, but the ultimate fulfillment of that is when Christ comes back, and he establishes his kingdom.

I want to illustrate this a number of ways from the book of Romans. So go with me to the book of Romans and follow this logic if you would with me as we see in the book of Romans starting in Chapter 14 and we'll work our way backwards. We will see that when you think about things that you want or things that you need you'll see how Paul keeps bringing up eternal ideas that relate to the kingdom. As a matter of fact I thought this would be the most logical place to go in Romans 14 because we have both the mention of daily food and kingdom principles. And what he's saying is you better make sure to think about what you eat in light of kingdom values. That's helpful. It will change the way, not only you act, but the way that you pray.

Now I know there is nothing more mundane than eating I suppose. We have to do it every day. That's the thing that you're going to, after our church service is done, you'll do. It is something seeming so insignificant that we eat, although it's important and our life depends upon it. The reality of this being the example, super helpful. Before I even pray for the simple things in life, I want to think about the kingdom.

Now here's the point of Romans 14, the simple things aren't always that simple because they might have an impact on people around me. For instance, the problem in Rome which is not the problem at Lucille's this afternoon, but the problem back in the first century Roman church is that there were people that grew up in Judaism, very strict Judaism, that were told that you had to worship on this day and you had to keep these festivals and you had to always eat these foods based on the Levitical dietary laws. That's what's going on in Romans 14. Now he says here's the problem. The dietary laws and the days and the ceremonies and the Sabbath and the festivals, those are all gone. Those are all just looking forward to the reality of Christ. Christ is what it's all about. In the church those are things we don't worry about any more. Now it's easy for us, right, in the 21st century, but all those years ago you had people that grew up with strict dietary laws that now are told, hey you know what, all those unclean things - shell fish and bacon and ham and all these unclean things - you don't have to worry about that anymore. Matter of fact there's some very tasty things on the prohibited list that now if you want a BLT. Go for it. You want a western omelet? Have it. It's fine. Go for it. Not a problem any more. That was a problem for some people that had become Christians who said, well I realize I'm allowed to do this, but you know I have a problem with the way my conscience was conditioned that if I do that I feel like that's not right. Now I know it is right, but I don't prefer to do it because of how it makes my conscience feel. Okay, well that seems to be a very personal matter.

The point of Romans 14 is, you never live or die to yourself. Which is the whole bookends of life. You don't make any decisions in a vacuum. Ultimately your decisions as to what you do effect other people. So, as we get around to my freedom to eat, you know, bacon it fine and I may be fine in my conscience to do that, but there may be a new convert from Judaism sitting across the way that when I eat that he's going what in the world are you doing? Don't you feel guilt doing that? He talks to his friends saying shush shush, it's wrong for him to eat that. Don't you think it's wrong? You start to now have this division within the church with a lot of people whispering behind people's backs even saying I don't think you're very Godly to do that. There's lots of ideas and thoughts floating around



because of what people were eating. Therefore, this whole chapter, you've heard me preach on this, is about being willing to limit my freedom for the sake of someone else's conscience and that's not always fun because of things I want to do I now have to give up so that I make the right kind of impression and we get along without violating one another's conscience or impinging on one another's sensibilities. And I need to do that because I want to love the people of God.

Pick it up now if you will in this passage in verse 15. With all that background it says, ...“if your brother is grieved by what you eat,” if in his heart he sees that and says, ah man that just isn't right, “[then] you are no longer walking in love.” You don't live your life anymore by love. You're not thinking about loving that person if you exercise your freedom and impinge on their conscience. “By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.” Now that seems like hyperbole, doesn't it? No one just goes poof and turns into ashes when I eat a BLT in front of them. No, well you're not just destroying them, but you are doing something in their heart by what you're exercising in terms of your freedom and that does something to him and because of that you really aren't loving that person. You are doing some kind of internal destruction in this person's conscience. Verse 16. “...do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil.” You don't want them whispering behind your back that something's wrong with your life with God because you're eating something. Why don't you just stop with that? Why don't you put things like love as a much more important priority. And speaking of priorities, one day when the kingdom arrives, the things that we ought to be practicing even now as people anticipating the kingdom. Don't you realize that kind of takes our priorities and turns them from not just what I want, but how does that relate to the economy of God? Next verse, here it is. “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking...”

Not stop there for a second. Don't think, and I've corrected this before, but if you're new we're not going to get to the kingdom in Casper the friendly ghost bodies which are no bodies at all. We're going to be in bodies just like Jesus according to 1 Corinthians 15. We're going to have teeth. You're going to have an esophagus. You're going to have tongues. You're going to have taste buds. You're going to have a nose. You're going to have the olfactory senses. You're going to be able to eat fish just like Jesus did in John 21 which we've just read our Daily Bible Reading. In the upper room in the locked room where they were, where they were gathering and he comes and eats meals. You're going to eat in the kingdom.

The point isn't there's no eating in the kingdom. No that's not the point. It's not a matter of... it's not the importance of... it's not the priority of what you eat. That's not the thing that says, yeah, I'm living for God. I had a double cheese burger at Fatburger today. Praise the Lord! That's not what it's about. What's more important is whether I'm loving people. He's already stated that in verse 15. Look now at verse 17. It's of things like this: “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Cause there's nothing the Holy Spirit wants more in the lives of people that I interact with than things like love, righteousness, peace and joy. That's what God wants to develop in people's lives, and I want to make decisions in keeping and in step with the Spirit that will help accomplish that in people's lives. And therefore, when it comes to what do I want to eat today in the first century church in Rome? Ah, I really have a hankering for a slab of ham. Ok, well that's great, but you know if you did that. If that became you're focused desire and you go after that and you said that's what I want and I've got the freedom to get it. I'm going to get it. You are not keeping the priority of the kingdom and it's values first. In light of the illustration I'm trying to make, you are no longer looking at your desires and your needs through the lens of the kingdom. Once you do that you'll filter out some of the things you want because you'll recognize what those wants do to those around you and when it comes to the kingdom what God wants among his people is love, righteousness, joy, peace. So I need to really rethink my desires even when it comes to daily bread. I'm not saying, God give me my daily bread and what I'd really like is this, this and this. It's not the smorgasbord of things that I can have.

It really comes down to service. That's a good opposing contrast. My natural prayer is all these things in the world... God I'd like this, God I'd like that, God I'd like this, God I'd like that and when it comes to needs I want this kind of thing. You know I need shelter. I'd like that kind of shelter. I've got to live somewhere. I'd like to live in that kind of place. It's really not about the smorgasbord of all those things that are out there; start praying for some things you want. No, it's about service. It's about loving people. It's about my life being an instrument to try and develop what the Holy Spirit's trying to develop in other people's lives. I don't make decisions in a vacuum. I have to see my requests through the filter or the lens of the kingdom.



Let me give you another one in Romans. Romans Chapter 5. Here we have in Romans Chapter 5 a statement about how great it's going to be when we enter the kingdom. When we have as it's put in Romans 8 this great presentation of the sons of God and we're all revealed in glory and won't it be great when the kingdom arrives. That's the idea of the eschaton – the consummation of all things. In Verse 2 we have a sense of that. "Through him [through Christ] we have obtained access by faith" We now have relationship with God because of trust. "... into this grace [we don't deserve it, but we have it] in which we now stand," We're very secure in our relationship with God because of the finished work of Christ "...and we rejoice in the hope..." [which is not cross your fingers hope. It's the confidence. We know where we are going.] "...we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." One day we'll be there. One day the kingdom of the world will be come the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. The glory of God will be all the way down to the bells on the horses bridle, and we will have everything that's inscribed on it and everything that is in purpose and not only inscription for the glory of God. It'll be great. We hope for that. We're going to be a part of that. We'll be participants in the kingdom by faith in Christ, and we can't wait for that. Aw that's great! But between here and there – between here and there – the hope and confidence we have in standing by faith with God and the promises of the kingdom, and when it comes we've got, as Jesus put it, we've got a lot of work to do... tribulation, struggle. The kingdom of God when all the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven we've got some trials to get through. As it's put in Acts Chapter 14, Verse 22, it is "...through many tribulations [that] we must enter the kingdom of God." Oh it's coming. That's our great hope, but it's through a lot of struggle that we get there.

Well that's the part we hate and that's why the next verse is there. Verse 3. "Not only that, but we [hate] our sufferings," Underline the word "hate" there. You see it in verse 3. Now correct me interactive 11:00 crowd if ever I read the text of scripture incorrectly... that's not what it says. Verse 3, Romans Chapter 5. We don't hate it. We don't like it. Guaranty you we do hate it, but that's not the emphasis in this text. The emphasis here is "...we rejoice in our sufferings," We not only rejoice in the fact that we're going to get to the kingdom, but we rejoice in the pathway through tribulation that is masochistic, ridiculous, illogical. Why would anybody do that? Well here's why. Because in the sufferings, next verse or middle of Verse 3, we know that "...that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces..." now here's the word we started with in Verse 2, "hope," What kind of hope? Well, it's the kind of hope that doesn't put us to shame because when we get to the kingdom, guess what is rewarded in the kingdom? That sterling character, that persevering endurance, that ability to say here are people that didn't fold under pressure. Here are people that stood faithful to Christ through the tribulation of work on earth. That is going to be rewarded. Talk about hope, and adding kind of the whipped cream and cherry on top of the hope of entering the kingdom, look at what God's going to do. He's going to richly reward those who come into the kingdom.

Now think this carefully through. We've got a challenge in our praying of looking at our lives, and we say here this hurts, make it easier. This hurts, but relieve the pain. This is a problem, would you please make this better. We pray for those things naturally just like we pray for things that we want, but the value in this text is now sometimes when God clearly puts those things in our path that hurt and he doesn't take them away when we pray. See, the end results is it produces endurance and that endurance produces character and that character becomes something necessary in the journey between here and the kingdom and that will be rewarded in the end. And I see what God's doing because I've got a job between here and the day of my death to do work for Christ.

Therefore, I should be praying for, now note the alliteration here, I should be praying for endurance rather than simply ease. First one is kind of a silly one, but smorgasbord - look at all the things - God do this for me. No, it's about service. When it comes to my life and all the pains, I can pray for relief and ease, but really through the lens of the kingdom I need to be praying for endurance.

When you can't find a cheap rate out of Orange County and you don't want to go our of LAX we all drive down to San Diego to fly out of that airport. When you're coming into the last leg of that off ramp off the 5 and you're going into the terminal into San Diego, you pass there the Marine Corps Recruit Depot. You know that place? MCRD they call it. Now when you go to MCRD, you're a young guy, they chop off all your hair and you walk through the door. You know what happens when you walk through the door? They say, "Sir, how can we serve you? They say the masseuse is over here. The pool is over here. Can I get you a lemonade? Do you need your back rubbed down a little bit? Can we get you some nice slippers for your feet? We have a nice fluffy robe over here where you're

going to sleep.” That’s what happens at MCRD, right? No. It’s pretty tough in there I’ve been told. Now why is it so hard? See why are these young men who are just so noble to sign up to serve their country, why are they treated to roughly in there? I mean come on. Well, the whole point of MCRD is to train them to become Marines so that they can go and do the work that needs to be done because between here and retirement there’s a lot of wars to be fought and a lot of work to be done. So you’re going to have to suffer so that we can build up some endurance and some perseverance and some muscle and some sterling character so that we can get the job done that we’ve got to get done.

Because between here and peacetime is a lot of wartime and that’s why Paul said to Timothy, “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier.” And every Christian not just pastors are involved in that. And the question is really how am I going to be ready to fight the battle that is waging in all the areas of my life, my family’s lives, the culture, the workplace? How am I going to do that without the strength and endurance that I need? Well God uses pain to get that done. So in my praying I know when I get this diagnosis, I say, oh God relieve the pain. I get this problem at work I go, oh God take that person out of the situation. It’s so painful. These problems in my neighborhood, please fix the problems because it’s so painful. We really naturally pray for ease, ease, ease, ease. And what we need to recognize is that though that’s not a bad thing, Paul himself did it when he had his diagnosis that he only describes as the thorn in his flesh. And he prayed God take it away, take it away, take it away. Three times he prayed and then he recognized this is part of the training. He recognized that this is part of something to accomplish good in my life, and he even figured out what it was. And so for us, I’m not telling you that you ought to pray for more suffering in your life. I’m not saying pray, oh God bring more pain in my life. What I am saying is that God is good at choosing those situations for us, but when we get them we need to pray, and I have no problem God take it away, but when he doesn’t we need to pray that God would give us the grace and the strength to endure the trial because we know it’s preparatory. It’s getting me ready from something and some of us are praying three thousand times, God take it away, take it away, take it away, because we have no view of the kingdom lens that says now wait a minute. I’ve been praying all week for this to change. It’s not changing, sooo, I’m going to start praying for endurance. Cause I know that will produce character and that character will be useful in the kingdom as a soldier of Christ to accomplish something eternal. That’s a kingdom perspective.

Romans 12. Stuck between these two passages that we looked at. Look at Romans Chapter 12. Is it a smorgasbord? No. That’s how some people approach their prayer list, but it’s not. It’s about service. Got to see all the things I want through the lens of kingdom service. Is it about ease? No. It’s about endurance ultimately.

Here’s another one. Romans Chapter 12, Verse 19. Beloved never avenge [yourself],” Now I never attempted to avenge myself unless someone has done me wrong. Right? You’re not just making up sadistic plans to hurt people. We want people to have bad things happen to them when they do something bad to us. Now it may not be that you want them to have a terrible car accident, but when someone hurts me I certainly want God to go out there and get ‘em, and, it’s easy for me to pray those prayers. God look at how unjustly they hurt me, my loved ones, my family, my church, the staff. God get those people. Now that’s what I’m tempted to naturally pray. I want retaliation. I’d like revenge, but he says no don’t to that. “...leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I’ am repaying. Is that what it says? Is it present tense or future tense? Interactive 11:00 crowd. Future tense. Because the wrath of God, the vengeance of God, the justice of God is coming when the kingdom arrives. You want to look specifically in the Book of Revelation, when the kingdom arrives, though it’s announced earlier in Chapter 10 it arrives in Chapter 20. In Chapter 20 part of that chapter is clearly the Great White Throne Judgment proceeded by a battle called the Battle of Armageddon. Chapter 19 where God’s justice is coming symbolically in the final battle, and it’s real, but it’s a symbolic battle in the last generation and then all generations are called to stand before the Great White Throne and to receive the just recompense for the evil they’ve done. The wrath of God is coming. When the kingdom comes his justice will arrive. For now though when I think about God’s wrath if I really understand the coming of God’s wrath what I’d really like to see, if I understand the kingdom correctly, that my job before the kingdom arrives is to be witnesses for him so that I might see people come to repentance.

Now follow me on this. In Romans Chapter 12 when you bring up the idea of wrath, we’ve already brought that up in the first chapter. And that is that the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. In other words it’s already on its way. The airplane has left the terminal, and it’s flying this direction, and it will soon



be here. My job is first of all in the Book of Romans to make sure I avoid it. I'd like to avoid the just recompense of my own sin. How do I do that? Well the book spends eight chapters talking about how I can put my faith in Christ; the propitiation of my sin can be there in Christ himself. Human sin paid for in a human payment, and I can be forgiven just by trusting in Christ. Putting my confidence in him and then by Chapter 8, no condemnation for those in Christ. Ah that's great. I've got the wrath of God coming toward me. I've gotten out of it by putting my trust in Christ. That's great. Chapter 10 he says this. Two chapters before this chapter hey, how is anybody else going to get this message of forgiveness? The exemption from the wrath of God unless someone brings the gospel to them? No one's going to get this unless someone preaches this message to them and we've got to get there and preach this message. There's the summary what we have in the middle of Chapter 10 of Romans. So when I hear about someone who's wronged now me and I'm in the debris field of their sin instead of saying God the wrath, it's coming, get 'em. Not only get 'em then, get 'em now. Put them at the front of the line. No. I should be thinking what I've already been taught throughout the whole book and that is the goal for us as sinners is to pray for and to plead for and to trust in Christ for his mercy so that I'm exempted from the wrath of God. And not only that I'm seen now as an ambassador to get that message to more people. So when someone sins against me and I'm in the debris field of all that instead of praying the imprecatory Psalms that God would blast them or zap them, I should be doing something else. What is that?

Take a look at the bottom of this thought. Verse 20. Comes next. If you're enemy is hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him something to drink. What? For so by doing that kind of thing you'll be heaping burning coals on his head. Now there's a million different interpretations of that and you should get the message I spoke on that. Looked at all of them, the Old Testament quote, and all you can make of that text but in the end what we know the interpretation that at least in general is given to us in verse 21 and that is this. That I'm doing something to end the evil by the good that I show which is not just about compassion and doing nice things to people, but is about getting them the message that ultimately ends sin and the penalty of sin. And that's the gospel, and ultimately that kind of behavior can overcome the evil. Put it to an end. Not by them dying and facing the Great White Throne, but by repentance and faith and forgiveness I can overcome evil with good. I can be a messenger and an emissary of trying to see them reach the place of forgiveness.

Now a natural prayer is retaliation. God, um they hurt me. Get them back. But what I really should be praying for is repentance because repentance is the thing that God is calling for us, not only to experience, but to profer and to put out in front of people. Did you notice the alliteration that's going on here? Smorgasbord service, ease endurance, revenge and repentance... that's good Pastor Mike!

Let me give you one more. I won't take time to turn there cause I'm running out of time quickly, but jot this one down and these are alliterated too. Riches or reliance. I hope you recognize because I'm praying for endurance and not ease doesn't mean I don't go to the doctor. I don't take my medicine, and I don't do what I can to alleviate even pray for that. At least at first and the same with riches. Doesn't mean I don't make a paycheck. Doesn't mean I don't save money for college for my kids. It doesn't mean I don't have a rainy day fund. That's fine. But when it comes to what the Bible's priorities are for kingdom citizens the question is if you want to feel like you have a sense of "having your life together" is it about riches or is it about reliance?

No better example of this, we won't take time to turn to any of this, but if you think about it King David was one who we meet on a field in a valley standing with nothing but a sling shot because he wasn't capable of putting on the armor. This little runt, shepherd boy, and he kills the biggest and best armed Philistine there is and then he writes a bunch of songs about how he relies on the Lord. And it's not about the horses, and it's not about the chariots, and it's not about the sword, and it's not about all these other things. It's about trusting in God. And then at the end of his life after all those battles and as he sits in this throne in Jerusalem in Israel and all of these borders have been batted back and don't think it's idealistic, just like today, he had lots of enemies on the borders of Israel and plenty of people that were looking for a vulnerable spot. And so David instead of writing about another song about how great it is to trust in the Lord, he sends his commander out to go number the troops.

Now we just finished with the DBR reading in First and Second Chronicles and we went through it the first time in First and Second Kings and the idea of David in Second Samuel even just giving that honor to God by relying on him and then all of a sudden at the end of this life, well it wasn't about that anymore. It was about if I'm going to



feel secure and live out the rest of my days in this kingdom I better have a huge army, and I need to know what those guys are all about, and how many we have and it would be a good thing now to publish that a little bit to all my neighbors hear it. If I'm going to dwell securely I'm going to put my trust in my army. Nothing wrong with having a standing army. That would be an important thing for you to do. That would be a wise and prudent thing to do. That's what the Book of Proverbs argues for, but where's your trust? The Bible's so clear on this.

When it comes to the issues of life that make me wince and lead me to prayer. The things that provoke and tempt me to anxiety that lead me to my knees and say God, my family and I and my church we need help. I often think could you just blow in off the street a orphaned lottery ticket. I know I don't play the lottery God, but how great it would be. Never have to worry about those problems again. Give most of it to the church. Keep enough to solve all my problem on my own. That'd be great. Then I could be secure. Now I don't really pray that. My prayers are much more sophisticated, but they are still along the lines of somehow God let me know have to worry about these things. You see the worry is supposed to lead us to, according to Philippians Chapter 4, to prayer, and prayer and my relationship with God, deepening that connection with God and trusting in his provision is supposed to lead me to a peace that surpasses all understanding. So much so that Paul can illustrate it this way at the end of the book. In Philippians Chapter 4 he can say, you know what I've learned the secret of contentment knowing what it is to live with a little bit or live with a lot that really is not the point, because I've recognized through my intimacy with the living God "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And that's not a high school football players verse to quote before a football game. You understand that? This is about someone realizing that where my trust is is the thing that makes or breaks the reality of my life. It is not about the resources that I have. I could have spent forever on this, and we could have gone on, but I gave you some smorgasbord through the lens of kingdom service.

Retaliation, ur what did I say, ease? Through the kingdom lens of priorities like endurance and character. Revenge, retaliation? No, you've got to see that through the value and the kingdom assignment of repentance. Riches? Just make me rich and I won't have to worry about all this. No, it's about having that anxiety lead me to a kind of prayer that results in reliance. That's the kingdom priority. There's so much we could say about that.

Number Two. Verse 3. Luke Chapter 11:3. Very simple, very short, very terse, here it comes. "Give us each day our daily bread," Now Jesus teach us to pray, would you? Yes, I will, "hallowed by your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread," Now that's almost absurd not only in the 21st century, but in the 1st century as well.

Here are people who have homes. They have places they keep their food. They have production of food in their backyards in their farms in their land in their lots. They've got relatives. They've got cousins. They've got brothers. They've got parents. They've got all these people that if really today I had a problem getting a meal I've got plenty of things that... I mean come on, you really want me to sincerely pray each day for daily bread? I mean – I can prove it right now. I can pull out the brain-o-scope put it on your forehead, and I can look into your brain, and I can say Ok, brain-o-scope try and find the prayer this week - a sincere prayer of someone saying on Thursday, God today, please I need lunch today. Provide me that God. I don't know, if you don't give me lunch I won't be able to have lunch. Put the list of names up there on the screen. How many people prayed that prayer? Zero. Who prayer that prayer? Jesus is this hyperbole? Are you kidding me? You want me to really concern myself in the morning. God I'd like my daily bread and since I like eating three times, well let's add a couple of snacks in the prayer list. I like breakfast, lunch, dinner maybe a late mid-morning snack and certainly an afternoon snack and if I could just have a few Chees-its before I go to bed that would be awesome. Give me that today, Lord. Who prays like that? What are you talking about? And if you picture these emaciated 1st century people with no food and they're sitting there, ahhhh, that's not it. They're normal people. Smart people. People that plan. People that have fields, people that have farms, people that have animals. What kind of prayer is this? The prayer is clearly trying to promote something in their own thinking because the things that they're thinking about praying about I guaranty is not they're lunch today. Are there people in the world? Sure. It's not the normal. I mean you've got these people they're disciples. They've already proved the faithfulness of God. They know as they carry about their supplies and go to people's homes, yeah, we're going to get food today. No one's going to starve to death.

This is about recognizing our complete and full dependency on God. And we need to go all the way to the basics of



life. And we need to think that through as we present our requests to God. Number Two. Let's put it this way. We need to pray knowing you are fully dependent, fully dependent.

2. Pray Knowing You're Fully Dependent

Well, you already told us how silly it is. It's not silly at all, and here's why. Because in the Bible Jesus is constantly comparing us to birds. Have you noticed that? Lot of comparisons. Job 38. Psalm 147. Matthew 6. Luke 12. And he says things like this. You really shouldn't worry about your food. I'm thinking, well most people aren't, because look if you would at the birds of the air, and the Lord, the Father, feeds them. Job 38. Look at those ravens, those young ravens. They need to be eating today. The Lord feeds them. I mean here's something that you're thinking now ok, they're birds and I suppose I can start to think, how does a bird get all his food today? Well he doesn't make the preparations that we do and it even says that in the Sermon on the Mount. He even says that - they don't have storehouses. They don't store their food up. So, yeah. The Lord feeds them. But those are birds. We're not birds.

Here's the point I'm trying to make. You are as vulnerable to dying today. You are as vulnerable today if you not having the sustenance you need to even live another hour. You are as vulnerable as a bird... as vulnerable... just as vulnerable... equally as vulnerable. Because if God for one minute chooses to take his interest and focus away from you, if he does not, as Colossians 1:17 says, if he does not hold together your life by the way that he chooses and decides and decrees to keep you alive, you won't live. I don't care if your pantry is full of food. If for a second as Hebrews Chapter 1 says in that great opening paragraph. If he does not hold up everything according to the power of his word then everything is not held up. As it's put in Deuteronomy if you come into the land and you cultivate it and you have crops and you have food and you have money and you have everything that you need. The stalls are filled with cattle. He says, don't forget the Lord because it is the Lord your God who gives you strength to earn that well. And I've said it this way many times; if God turns his back on you for just a moment, you would implode. If he takes just his interest away from the half side of your brain, every synapse in your brain would cease to function and you would not be able to make a living let alone have lunch today. You are as dependent as the birds.

You are dependent. And that dependence is not supposed to lead us to paranoia. It's supposed to lead us to praying in a new way, and that is, I take nothing for granted. I'm not going to be presumptuous about my life, about my children, about my family, about my church, about my job. I'm going to presume anything, but everything as it says in James Chapter 1 is a gift of God's grace. "Every good and perfect gift comes from him", and you can say well, I'm getting daily food and I haven't been praying for it. Non-Christians don't even acknowledge God and they seem to be well fed. You're right. The difference between non-Christians and Christians, thoughtless Christians and the kind of Christians I'm preaching about today is not one's dependent and one is not. Or one's really dependent and the other one's not so dependent. The difference is simply the acknowledgement of it. You want to build intimacy with God? Start to recognize that without him we can do nothing. Now you can choose to shrug your shoulders and say I don't believe all that. Well that's fine. One day we will recognize that we are as dependent on God for life as everything in the universe is to just atomically, cellularly hold together, because he's decreed it so. You have as much control over your life as you had about where you'd be born and when you'd be born. How did that planning session go before you showed up? You had nothing to do with it. You were here by an act of God, and now I'm just quoting Acts 17 when Paul stood up before the professors and university leaders there in Athens, and he said, think about it. Everything came from God. He made everything, and he put them in their appointed times in their epics in their times, and he put them in their specific places, and he says everyone was born according to the decreed plan of God, and not only that he gives to all people live and breath and everything else.

You've breathed several times since I've started this message, and the Bible says you have no idea how detailed God is in the sustaining of your life. You could not oxygenate your blood for another minute without his active participation in your life. And the Bible says I just need you to think about how fully dependent you are, not so that you'll be paranoid, but so that you'll be humble in your requests. And you will be thankful in your requests, and you'll recognize something about your connection to God through every single gift that he gives.



When Asa got sick at the end of his life and I quote this periodically, 2 Chronicles 16, the Bible says in his condemnation. And by that I mean the critical remark that the scripture makes about his life is that when he got sick at the end of this life though he was a good king and did a lot of good things, he sought which is a bigger statement than called for, in his heart, he sought the physicians, but he did not seek the Lord. Nothing wrong with calling your doctor when you're sick, but if you do not recognize that your health or your death depends on God's gracious provision. See then we've missed the point all together, and you can't really be said to be a Godly king anymore, Asa, unless you realize that your life is in his hands.

Isn't that the time anyway that we start to figure this out? When you get sick? And you don't even have to be a cancer diagnosis. When you just have the bad flu every other year whenever it is that you have. I happened to have it last year, and I was like I remember saying it to people when I got back. And I was like, Ok try and put in a half day or try to work today, and I was so sick during that period of time I remember saying, you know I never really appreciated good health until I was sitting there so sick I couldn't even stand up. Why don't we think that when we're healthy? Well, if we don't pray the way that we ought to we won't recognize that every good breath that we take and every day that we function on this earth without pain is an act of God and his grace.

It's to promote some thanksgiving. If I had more time I'd take you to Psalm 147 where I already quoted that when the young ravens cry out for food if they get anything today it's because of God's gracious plan. Psalm 147 is a great homework assignment. Know that you're fully dependent.

Now as I've said God's doing pretty well whether you've asked for it last week or not, I bet you got three squares a day. I bet you did, and that's where I'd like to end. Just with contemplating the last two words of Verse 3, and that is "daily bread." Even if you were, like the non-Christians on your block, rarely asking for God to provide your life and the sustenance of your life, he probably did it anyway, and you could probably look back at his gracious provision. I think that's where we ought to think and lead us to a place where we really get to a gratefulness about all God provides and that's implied here. It's not expressed. I mean there's no statement here that says be thankful for all that you get, but when I recognize that even the little things that I fail to pray for repeatedly he's provided I ought to really recognize the grace and the compassion of God. It's got to lead me to thanksgiving. Number 3 let's just put it down that way, we need to be mindful of God's compassion.

3. Ask (Be) Mindful of God's Compassion.

You want to be thankful in your prayer life. You'll start to ask for things and realize for all the things that God has provided maybe I have even been worshipful enough about the compassion of God. How compassionate is God? Jot this down if you would. Exodus Chapter 22 Verses 26 & 27. Exodus 22:26 & 27. God is so compassionate and concerned about the details of your life that he makes this a command and a standard for Israel that when you lend money to someone and they're poor, and they don't have a lot for collateral and you take as a pledge their cloak, their outer garment, their trench coat if you will. It says I know that's part of the business transaction, but before nightfall return their cloak to them. Here's Verse 27. "For that is that man's only covering. It is his cloak for his body. In what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear him. For I am compassionate." Do you recognize that the bodily temperature of someone sleeping at night is a concern of God? And if you make it through the night and you pull that blanket up around your shoulder and you say, ahh, every bit of that is an expression of God's grace and goodness. Common grace the non-Christians, but we need to recognize the difference between me and non-Christians shouldn't be our sense of dependence, but it is because they don't recognize the reality of their dependence. And when I recognize that every good thing is a gift from God, I should be filled with thanksgiving and worship.

And let me just side bar here at the end of the message just a second, on doing that. When we praise God we often do it so wrong. We do it in a way that we think is effective simple by saying the right words. I think of that in Psalm 103 when it starts with the phrase, "bless the Lord or my soul and all that is within me. Bless his Holy name." Right there we think, ok, soul, start blessing God. Bless, bless, bless, bless you God. That's not it. The next verse says "and forget none of his benefits whose redeemed your life from the pit. Who's given you, restored



your youth, or your vigor with good things.” Look at all the things he’s satisfied you with. Now it gets real detailed. The problem for a lot of people when I say think, think about the compassion of God. They think, oh God is compassionate. Let’s say praise God. And I’ve heard so many people saying, including myself, when I find myself just repeating phrases, I extol the Lord. Lord, I praise you. Lord I thank you. And we think because I said I praise you and I think you that we actually did it. You didn’t do it until you start remembering the benefits and connecting the two. And I know a lot of you think, well that’s kind of being a hair-splitter.

Try this one out on your wife today. Go home and say, honey, I compliment you. Try that. Try that. I compliment you. She’ll say, oh really, I’m ready. No, I compliment you. Means nothing. You’re a salesman. You’ve got a great product. Go to your next client or would be client and say, I extol this product. So buy it. Well, sell it to me. No, I extol it. Did you not hear me? I extoll it. Go to your boss and ask for a raise and say hey boss, I praise my work. Ok. What does that mean? Why? None of it makes sense without content. You cannot think that you are praising God for his great compassion by saying, I praise you for your great compassion. Doesn’t work. Anymore than you can say, I compliment you. And you can even say, I compliment you honey for your great compassion. She’s still going to want to know what are you talking about? When was I compassionate? I need some content if this is going to be taken as a compliment. God needs to be blessed for the specifics of his benefits. For the diseases that he has healed in your life. For the kinds of things that he has accomplished to renew your strength so that you soared on certain days like an eagle. That’s the picture.

God is super compassionate. So much so that there is not a single thing that happens to you that is positive, good, satisfying or pleasing that’s not from his hand and directly so, but we’ve got to be specific. Be mindful of God’s compassion because he gave you all the food that you ate. He helped your body survive through - sleep through the night. Oh, it wasn’t perfect, what... see this whole principle is going to help you when God does not answer your prayers the way that you want them answered. Cause for everything that he hasn’t done there is so much that he has done. For every disappointment that I didn’t get what I wanted, go back to point one, maybe I wasn’t even asking for the right thing. Perhaps the kingdom principles weren’t in view. Maybe when I think about it, I didn’t even understand my dependence on God or even highlight the fact that he is a compassionate God that’s given me so much more that I never did ask for. But we need to start at the specifics... give us each day our daily bread.

Now I said at the end of this I would want to not just use the principle of the coming kingdom and my hope in it as a lens or a filter for my request although that’s how we presented it today. All I can tell you is that when I pray for the kingdom to come, God’s not going to change the dates because I’m asking for him to come right now. But I do realize that’s something that my heart should cry out for, and it is something that should characterize every real Christian. In the first century historians and archeologists tell us this inscription probably predated the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. so we’re talking about a prayer in the synagogues that the rabbis would often recite at the end of the service and it was probably happening during the time of Christ. Certainly in his generation, but here’s the uncovered inscription. They would say at the end of a service that the rabbi would stand up just about to dismiss them, and he would say, exalted and hallowed be God’s great name. In the world let it be great. The world that he created according to his will. May God rule his kingdom and may he do it in your lifetime and in your days and in the lifetime of the house of Israel and may he do it speedily and may it come soon. Talk about “hallowed be your name your kingdom come.” There’s not a lot that’s changed in terms of Christian theology than it was in terms of Orthodox Judaism in the first century. But there is a hope that one day his will will be done on earth, as it is in heaven and with that in view it changes a lot about what’s important in this life. Can actually filter out the things I would pray for that really seem ridiculous in light of the coming kingdom. And it should be our hearts cry and a lot less complicated, truncated down and distilled into one word was the New Testament replacement of that prayer. It’s what Paul said at the end of his letter to the Corinthians in an Aramaic compound word. He said you know when it comes down to it, here’s the short hand for it. Maranatha. Come quickly Lord Jesus. One day he will. I hope we will be praying in a way that is commensurate with the coming kingdom.

Let’s pray right now. God, thank you for your word. Thank you for the truth of your word. Thanks for what you provided for us this morning in calibrating our prayer lives. Let us pray much more often with kingdom principles in view. Let us have that perspective that says we’d much rather have things that will be valued in eternity than just a few things in our lives that make our lives a little bit better. Thanks God for your provision and all that you give us everyday. Let us be much more aware of the things that you provide for us that we often don’t even see or think of. And God ultimately improve our prayer lives that we can have a better relationship with you. Do that Lord I pray according to your will in our lives, and dismiss us now with a sense of your presence in Jesus’ name. Amen.