

LIFELINE: Power Through Prayer

Confidence: Will We Trust Him?

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CONFIDENCE: WILL WE TRUST HIM? Luke 11:11-13

We're going to continue the trend that we've had during these last few weeks as we're talking about prayer and studying the Word at the top of our time together this morning and letting that evolve us into time and prayer as a faith family. I want us to look this morning at confidence in prayer. We've talked about desperation and desire and boldness in prayer. As we close out this series in studying this particular passage in Luke 11:1-13, I want us to think about confidence. This is a word that if we're really honest with each other, even those of us who have been Christians for a long time really struggle when it comes to really having confidence in our prayer lives. Can you really say that your prayers are very confident? And I want us to look at the basis of our confidence in these couple of verses that we're going to look at along two lines.

The Basis of Our Confidence in Prayer is Twofold ...

I think the basis of our confidence in prayer is twofold. First, the basis of our confidence is in the God we pray to. The God we pray to. And then second, the gift He gives us. And so what we're going to do is we're going to divide up our time in this text this morning along those two realms, the God we pray to and the gift that He gives us. And I want us to see that unfold at the end of this passage. Let's read the whole thing just to make sure we bring in what we've studied over the last few weeks into the context that we're going to look at in these last three verses. Luke 11:1,

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." He said to them, "When you pray, say '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 has sinned against us. And lead us not into temptation.'" Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me and I have nothing to set before him.' Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not give him the bread because he is his friend yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you: Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Now, here's the verses we're going to camp out in today.) Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil,

know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (Luke 11:1-13).

Those verses are thick, and we're going to have to really fly through some things to get through these three verses today. I want you to see the God we pray to and the gift He gives us.

The God We Pray To...

God is Father.

First of all, the God that we pray to—God is Father. That is what Jesus is trying to teach His disciples from the very beginning of this passage to the end of this passage; it's bookended. Start by praying, "Father, hallowed be your name." Comes to the end and He starts talking about what it means for God to be Father. And so there's an emphasis here, and it doesn't seem like that big a deal to us when we hear that and we read that. That doesn't leap off the page, "Wow, Father!" but it did to those disciples on that day and here's why.

These guys knew a lot of the Old Testament. You go back into the Old Testament, you only see God referred to as Father in the Old Testament 15 times, only 15 times. And those 15 times, out of them not one of those times is referring to praying to God as Father. And so this is a whole new picture. You get to the Gospels and in the Gospels alone, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, you see God referred to as Father 165 different times. And almost every single one of them, in fact 164 of them, all but 1, Jesus talks about His Father as He relates to His disciples. And so what we're seeing in Jesus' ministry with His disciples is that there is a right and a privilege and an honor that those who trust in Jesus and those who follow Jesus have to be able to come to God as Father. That when we talk to God or we talk about God, we don't talk about God in some theological monologue with these pious sounding phrases. We don't come to God and say, "Almighty God, God of all gods, the dreadful Creator of the earth and ground of all being." We come to this God and we say, "Father, dad." This is an incredible picture that He was showing to His disciples that they have a relationship with God as their Father.

This is something that we need to remember when we pray because we have a tendency, if we're really honest, we have a tendency when we pray to sometimes approach God as if we're the father and He's the child, as if we know how to run the house a little better than He does, as if we can give Him some tips on how to run this universe because He's messing up in some areas and some things He wouldn't do exactly like we're doing.

And even in the Church, there's a popular idea, misconception today that when we pray, the purpose of our prayers is to control God. The only problem with that is if millions of Christians around the world are controlling God with their limited understanding and mixed motives, they're controlling God's will, then what is to keep this world from shattering to a zillion shards of personal priorities that are represented across this room as well as across the rest of the world? And, if God's will is under my control then doesn't that make me God?

That's not the way prayer works. He is our Father. And when we pray to Him, it's Father. We basically are acknowledging two things. Number one, we are expressing a reverence to Him. We are expressing the fact that He is in control, that He is sovereign. We've talked about that. We talked about that last week. He is in control of things not us. He is our Father, but not just expressing our reverence to Him, we're enjoying our relationship with

Him. There's that intimacy here with the fact that we pray to God as Father that is astounding. You think about it with me.

Ladies and gentlemen, for those of you who have trusted in Jesus Christ to save you from your sins, you have intimacy with the Creator of the universe. Let that soak in. You have intimacy with the Creator of the universe. Can anybody say amen to that? Are we excited about this? You have intimacy with the Creator of the universe. You come to this God and you have the privilege of saying, "Father." Wake up this morning, we've got intimacy with Him. We express our reverence to Him, and we enjoy our relationship with Him.

We are children.

God is Father and we are children. This is the overriding picture that Jesus is giving us here. God's Father, we are children. And what He does here at the end of this passage is He begins to contrast earthly fathers with the heavenly Father. And He begins to help us understand what kind of father we are praying to.

And says this contrast, arguing from the lesser to the greater, "If this is this way then God is even more so this way." How much more? It's a great phrase that He's showing us here. I want you to think about who God is as our Father and how this gives you incredible confidence in your prayer. He basically says, "You know. You look at relationships, fathers and their children on the earth." This is the principle here, fathers care for their children, we know that. Fathers care for their children. That's the picture that we most often see, although obviously there are many of us, I'm guessing, in this room who that has not been the picture in our families. But overriding, the picture is fathers delight in caring for their children. And just like a human father, if his son, if Caleb comes to me and asks me for a fish, I'm not going to give him a snake. If he asks me for an egg, I'm not going to give him a scorpion.

And so we can trust that fathers just as human fathers care for the children, how much more will our heavenly Father care for his children? What He does is He gives us a contrast, and I want you to think about it with me. He says, "We are evil." Human fathers are evil. "He is good." He's good.

Now, here's the deal, Jesus knows that there will be frustration in His disciples prayer lives and there'll be frustration in our prayer lives across this room. And we all have been there where you're asking God for things and it seems like you're not getting what you're asking, it seems like your prayers are sometimes useless, they're not going anywhere.

Did it ever feel like in your prayer that when you ask God for something, you're actually getting the reverse of what you asked for? Isn't that frustrating sometimes? You ask, you pray that somebody would get better and they end up getting worse, and you almost think, "I wish I just would've prayed that they stayed the same so nothing would have happened. It's almost like when I pray, the reverse happens."

So we start playing games. We start thinking, "Well, maybe I'll ask for the opposite of what I want and maybe I'll get it," like we can pull some reverse psychology on God. Well, we get frustrated, and Jesus is saying, "Listen. Listen, human fathers care for their children even though they're evil." Now, that doesn't mean that every father in this room is a horrible person, but it does mean that every father in this room and every father in all of history has sinned and has struggles with sin. And as a result of that, every father in this room, contrary to some of our beliefs, is not right all the time. And every father in this room does make mistakes and doesn't always, most of the time maybe, but doesn't always know what is best. And what Jesus is saying is the Father in heaven always does. He always knows

what is best. He is completely good. Don't miss this. We pray to the Father who is right 100% of the time. We may question that sometimes, but Jesus is reminding us when we're frustrated and we're really wrestling with our prayers, don't forget the Father's right 100% of the time, He's good. Not only are we evil and Him good, but we have limited wisdom, He has infinite wisdom. We have limited wisdom, but He has infinite wisdom.

We have wisdom. I know my own dad was an example, a hero for me when it came to wisdom. That's one of the things I admired most about my dad. He was so wise, had such good advice for every situation. Even as an adult when I would explain things I was walking through or a decision I was having to make, and he would tell me something that I didn't agree with, I'd say, "Well, dad just doesn't understand the whole situation." And I would learn to come back and say, "Alright, dad, I guess you were right on that one." But even his wisdom was limited.

He knew situations, he knew how to judge those situations. But God knows best in every single situation. He knows me better than I know myself. He knows everybody I pray for better than they know themselves. He knows the whole picture, there's nothing that is surprising to God. He has infinite wisdom.

So He's good, He has infinite wisdom, and we have imperfect love. Fathers in this world have imperfect love. God has perfect love. God has perfect love. God is the loving Father beyond the most loving father in the world, and His love is perfect. And He always, always, always does what is best for His children. This is the Father we pray to.

Now, this doesn't mean that there is not a level of disappointment and hurt and struggle in our lives in this room when things don't work out the way we were praying for them to work out, when we don't get the promotion at work or when we fail the test or when our son or daughter rebels, when the illness gets worse, when injustice occurs, when the relationship just erodes, when evil seems to have its day, there is hurt. It's not that there's not hurt and struggle and wrestling with that in our praying, but faith and confidence in prayer leans on the certainty that whatever didn't work out the way that I really would've like to have seen it worked out is due to God's infinite wisdom and perfect love and my finite wisdom and imperfect love.

That's a level of faith that Jesus is calling us to in our praying, that we can trust in that and I don't say this lightly at all. I remember praying on my knees and asking God to let my dad live through that heart attack. I remember calling out for Him to do that. I remember the fact that on that Monday night I had meant to call him earlier in the day and had forgotten to. And I remember praying, crying out, "God, I just want talk to him at least one more time. God, please spare his life." And I remember getting the phone call in the middle of my praying saying that he had not survived that heart attack. And I still pray today, "God I trusted in that moment when I asked for a fish you did not give me a snake. I trust that you're good and you have infinite wisdom and perfect love for me and for my dad and for the rest of my family."

I'm not saying this is an easy thing, but it is the God that we pray to. He is good. He is infinite in wisdom and He is perfect in love. This is the care of our heavenly Father that is the fuel for confidence in prayer. People say in the Church, "If you have enough faith for what you're praying for, then God will answer your prayers, if you just have enough faith." The only problem with that is it's not biblical and it's not practical. It's not practical.

Are you saying that if I had more faith then my dad would've lived through that? That it was because my lack of faith that that happened? It's not biblical. Jesus said, "You don't have to

have a lot of faith to move mountains, all you have to have is faith of a," what? "A mustard seed." A small amount of faith. It's a little amount of faith. It's not about how much faith, ladies and gentlemen, you can pump into your prayers in order to get God to finally do what you want Him to do. It's not about the faith that we pump into our prayers, it's about the God that we're praying to and trusting in His goodness and His character, His power, His wisdom and His love. Here's the beauty of it, we don't even have to trust in our prayers because we can trust in our God.

Now, on the surface, in a sense that doesn't make sense. "What do you mean we don't have to trust in our prayers, we can trust in our God?" What I'm saying is we don't have to trust in our ability, our certainty is not resting on what we're asking for, our certainty is resting on the fact that the God of the universe is good, He is holy, He is perfect, He is infinite in all of His attributes, and He does what is best 100% of the time. And it doesn't mean that we don't ask Him for specific things and we call out to Him for what we want that's not what that means. But it does mean we ask Him for all the things we ask Him for and we call out to Him for all the things we call out to Him for, and we trust that He is going to do what is best every single time for His glory and our good. And even that in and of itself we wrestle with.

And that leads us to this next truth that Jesus is highlighting here, He is able to answer better than we can even ask. He's able to answer better than we can even ask. We're going to talk in a little bit about the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit helps us in this picture. Some people say that you shouldn't get to the end of your praying and say, "Not my will, but yours be done." That means you're doubting God in prayer or you're just giving yourself an out, you're kind of hedging your bets, that maybe or maybe it won't work and so you should end a prayer like that. And while I know that sometimes that can be expressed flippantly in praying, ladies and gentlemen do not let anyone ever tell you that you should be ashamed or that you are faithless in your praying for praying what Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane before He went to the cross. The depth of prayer is getting to the point where we pour our hearts out to God and we say, "God, these are the things in my heart, but I want what you want more than I want even what's on my heart. And I trust that you're able to answer and to respond in my life even better than I can even ask."

Let me give you a couple of examples, one a little more contemporary than the other. I want to read you a sermon, part of a sermon, that was preached by a pastor named James Montgomery Boyce, incredible pastor, incredible writer, who was taken with cancer. And this is the last time he preached to his congregation before succumbing to cancer, and I want you to hear what he said.

A relevant question, when you pray is, pray for what? Should you pray for a miracle? Well, you're free to do that, of course. My general impression, though, is that the God who is able to do miracles - and he certainly can - is also able to keep you from getting the problem in the first place. So although miracles do happen, they're rare by definition. A miracle is an unusual thing. So pray for wisdom of the doctors and pray also for the effectiveness and the treatment, but above all, I would say pray for the glory of God. If you think of God glorifying himself in history, and you say, "Where in all of history has God most glorified himself?" He did it at the cross of Jesus Christ, and it wasn't by delivering Jesus from the cross, though he could have. Jesus said, "Don't you think I could call down from my Father ten legions of angels for my defense?" But he didn't do that, and yet that's where God is most glorified. When things like this come into our lives, they are not accidental. It's not as if God somehow forgot what was going on and something bad slipped by. God

does everything according to His will. But what I've been impressed with (now listen to this) most is something in addition to that. It's possible, isn't it, for us to begin conceiving of God as sovereign and yet indifferent. God's in charge, but He doesn't care. But it's not that. God is not only the one who is in charge, God is also good and everything He does is good. If God does something in your life would you change it? If you'd change it, you'd make it worse. It wouldn't be as good. So that's the way we want to accept it and move forward, and who knows what God will do. Sing to the Lord all the earth, proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all people, for great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.

Obviously, I don't have cancer, and I can pray that I would be what I would ask for. Now, I know that there are struggles, maybe with cancer, maybe with a variety of things across this room, and I hope maybe that gives us a little perspective, from somebody's who walking through that, of how we pray.

The other example, it's from a guy you've heard me talk about before named George Muller. And George Muller was a guy who built his whole life and ministry on prayer. He took care of thousands and thousands and thousands of orphans during his lifetime, but never once did he ask for money or resources to take care of them, all he did was pray. He didn't even make his needs known publicly, all he did was pray, and he trusted God to provide. During his life, he would deliberately write down prayer requests and then record how God answered them. He recorded during his life over 50,000 specific answers to prayer. He just loved showing the world that God hears and God answers prayers. About 10,000 of those prayers God would answer that very day. He would come back later in the day, "This is what God did." That's what he did throughout his whole life in ministry, just constantly saying, "Here's how God has responded to my prayers."

But here's the thing, this guy who prayed on behalf of orphan children, this guy who was a father to the fatherless in so many ways, in his own family had many struggles. Four children, two of them born stillborn, one of them his only son who lived to be born died at a year old, and then later on in his life, he saw his adult daughter die. In that same timeframe, he saw his first wife pass away and his second wife pass away. This guy who had seen 50,000 answers to prayers and the things that were closest to his life and his heart didn't see God answer or did he? Listen to what he said at his first wife's funeral. This will give you just a picture of their relationship. He said,

Were we happy? Verily we were. With every year, our happiness increased more and more. I never saw my beloved wife at anytime when I met her unexpectedly anywhere in Bristol without being delighted to do so. I never met her in the orphan house without my heart being delighted to do so day by day as we met in our dressing room at the orphan house to wash our hands before dinner and tea. I was delighted to meet her, and she was equally pleased to see me. Thousands of times I told her, "My darling, I never saw you at anytime since you became my wife without my being delighted to see you."

She was diagnosed with rheumatic fever, and he began to pray that she would get well. He said at her funeral,

The last portion of Scripture which I read to my precious wife was this, "The Lord will give grace and glory and no good thing will He withhold from them

that walk uprightly." Now, if we have believed in the Lord, Jesus Christ, we have received grace. We are partakers of grace and to all such, He will give glory also. I said to myself with regards to the latter part of that verse, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." I am in myself a poor worthless sinner, but I have been saved by the blood of Christ; therefore, I walk uprightly before God. So if it is really good for me and for her, my darling wife will be raised up again, sick as she is. God will restore her again. But if she is not restored again then I trust it would not be a good thing for me. And so my heart is at rest. I was satisfied with God, and all this springs from, as I have often said before, taking God at his word and believing what He says. God gives what is good 100% of the time.

And this is the confidence we have in prayer. He is our Father and we are children, and this confidence is utterly crucial to the life of prayer. If this truth, if this picture is not a reality, then we are destined to live defeated prayer lives. You will not sustain a life of prayer, brothers and sisters, if you think that the God of the universe is stonewalling you or if you think that He's angry with you or if you think He's even neutral in your life, we'll never be able to sustain a life of prayer. But you will sustain a life of prayer when you believe that God is able and God is willing and God will always give much more than even the best father would give if he was put in the same situation. He is Father and we're children, and we call out to Him.

And so what I want us to do is I want us to pause right here. Before we get to this second part, I want us to pause and I want us to sing some prayers to God and express our trust in the God we pray to, our trust in Jesus Christ, His Son, who makes the way for us to come to the Father. And whether you sit or stand or if you'd like to even have the freedom to come down here to the front, I just want us to for the next couple of songs, I want us to sing out in prayer to God and say we trust in you. You're Father and we're children. We're evil, but you're good. We have finite wisdom, you have infinite wisdom. We have imperfect love, and you have perfect love. And we trust in you more than we even trust in our prayers. We trust that you can answer better than we can even begin to ask. Father, we're amazed at the privilege and the right of even saying, of even having the privilege of calling you Father. And so I pray across this room - I know that there are an infinite number of scenarios represented in this room and hurts and struggles, frustrations, even in prayer, God, I pray that over the next few minutes that you would bring our hearts and our minds to see that you are trustworthy. And we pray that you would be exalted as we trust today that you are father and we are children, and you as a father always care for us in the best way possible. In Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to invite you to pull out your Bible again and open up the picture of the fact that we're children, He is Father, is the driving constants behind our praying, and it leads us into this next part that is a little different than what we might expect Jesus to say here in Luke 11. And come back with me to Luke 11:13 and it says, *"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children."* So there's the comparison. He says, *"How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him"* (Luke 11:13).

Now, this is one of those parts in Scripture where we see something we didn't quite expect to see. Matthew 7:11, Jesus is giving a very similar teaching. He says, *"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give,"* anybody know? He says, *"good gifts to those who ask Him."* And that kind of makes sense, okay, you know how to give good gifts, so your Father will give good gifts.

But that's now what He says here. Instead of saying good gifts, He actually says, "Your Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

Whenever we see something like this in Scripture, it just kind of makes you wonder, "Okay, what's Jesus saying here?" Because this is a little different than what we would expect, in a sense, a little disappointing if you really think about it because when you pray for things and Jesus says, "Your Father will give you the Holy Spirit," you're like respectful but a little disappointed, "Well, that's nice, but I really want this thing over here. And I really want what I asked for not necessarily the Spirit." And we like to be spiritual enough to think that that would not be the case, but it is the case in most of our lives. And we think, "Well, you know, I really wasn't asking for the Holy Spirit so thanks for that, but what about this deal that I'm praying for that I really would like to see happen in my life?" So what is Jesus saying here?

The Gift He Gives Us ...

The Spirit indwells us.

And it's at this point that we begin to unlock the beauty of why, just why we can be confident with whatever we pray for because the gift that He gives us being the Spirit. And I want you to think about the Holy Spirit of God and how the Holy Spirit of God transforms our confidence in prayer.

First of all, the Spirit indwells us, indwells us. Think about it with me. This is when this verse just begins to open up wide. When we ask God for things, He always gives us the Holy Spirit in response. When we ask God for comfort, He gives us the comforter. When we ask Him for guidance, He gives us the guide. When we ask Him for truth, He gives us the one who teaches all truth. When we ask Him for wisdom, He gives us the Spirit of wisdom. When we ask Him for power or strength, He gives us the Spirit of power. He gives us everything in giving us the Spirit.

He doesn't just give us comfort for a little bit or guidance for a little bit or power in this particular situation. Instead, He gives us Himself, the Spirit indwells us. And that's the beauty of why Jesus would say when you pray, you ask God for good things, as your Father, He won't just give you good things, He'll give you Himself. He'll give you the good thing, the good one who gives all good things.

This is the picture here. We ask for gifts, He gives us the giver. We ask for the supply, He gives us the source. It's like going to God and asking Him for money. "God, I'd like to have some money in this." And He says, "You know, I'm not going to give you money, instead I'm just going to give you the bank. Would that be okay if I give you the bank?" We don't get the gifts, we get the giver of all the good gifts. We don't get the supply of things, we get the source of all of that supply. We don't just get money when we go to God, we get the bank, all that He has.

Now, think about how bold this is to go to the God of the universe and to say, "You know, God, I don't want just comfort in this situation, I don't want just guidance in this situation, I don't want the strength to walk through the situation. If it'd be all right with you, I know you're running the whole universe and everything, but I need you to just come and live in me, okay? Why don't you just come and inhabit me? I know I'm a pretty fouled up human being, but I just want you to come in and live in me, and I want you to stay here forever, just permanently, if you could just come." I mean that's pretty bold. That's kind of pushing

the envelope, isn't it? But that's exactly what Jesus is teaching us about prayer. When we pray to God, He gives us the Holy Spirit, He doesn't just give us things. We are people that are infatuated with things in our materialistic culture. We don't want things when we pray, we get God Himself, the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us and enables us to walk through every single thing we're praying for.

The Spirit empowers us.

This is an incredible truth. The Spirit indwells us, not only indwells us, but the Spirit empowers us.

You think about it, Jesus is talking to these disciples, these disciples knew about the Spirit of God. And you got to put yourself in their shoes with their Old Testament knowledge. They knew about the Spirit who formed creation. They knew Genesis 1:2, they knew Job 33:4, Isaiah 40, all of those places talking about the Spirit forming creation. The Spirit was hovering on the waters. The Spirit is the one who brought creation into being, who brought us into being, Spirit of God, so they know that from the Old Testament.

They know that this is the Spirit who directed the prophets and the king throughout the Old Testament. It was the Spirit that was on David and Solomon. It was the Spirit that was on guys like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, incredible men. It was the Spirit who was giving them everything they needed to prophesy. It was the Spirit who anointed and led Jesus.

Remember Isaiah 61? The Spirit will be on the Messiah and anoint Him to preach good news to the poor. And that's why Jesus quotes from that passage in Luke 4, and He says, "The Spirit is on me." And Luke shows us over and over again chapter 4 especially the Spirit was on Jesus. The Spirit was there when Jesus was baptized. The Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted. It was the Spirit who was leading Jesus Christ Himself. It's the Spirit who inaugurated the Church.

Joel 2:28-32, Ezekiel 36 in the Old Testament talk about how there was coming a day when God was going to put His Spirit in His people called the Church. Acts 2 is the culmination of that when Joel 2 and Ezekiel 36 become a reality, and the Spirit of God comes to dwell on the people of God and empowers them to speak in all kinds of different languages and proclaim the gospel to all the nations that are represented there. It was the Spirit who inaugurated the Church.

Now, what Jesus is saying is that same Spirit that God promised throughout the Old Testament, the Spirit that was hovering on the waters and brought creation to being, the Spirit who was on these men and women who trusted in God and were used mightily by God, that Spirit is yours. That same Spirit that you see throughout the Old Testament, now that we've seen throughout the New Testament, do you realize, ladies and gentlemen, that that Spirit is yours in Jesus Christ? This is the Spirit who gives God's children everything. Everything.

That sounds kind of vague. The Spirit gives God's children, gives us everything, but it's true. You cannot name one thing in your Christian life, you cannot name one thing in your life as a Christ follower that is not a direct result of the activity of the Holy Spirit of God. You can't name one thing. The fact that you are even convicted of your sins and brought to faith in Him, John 16, the Holy Spirit did that. 1 Corinthians 12:3, the only way you can confess Christ is Lord is if the Spirit moves in you. The Spirit enables you to do that. Everything you are gifted with is from the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12. You are filled with the Spirit, Ephesians 5:18. You have the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5. Whenever we ask for love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, all those things, they come from who? They come from the Spirit. The Spirit alone is able to give all of those things.

The fact that we are resisting sin and we're growing in the likeness of Christ is all because of the Spirit, 2 Corinthians 3:18. The fact that we even have power over sin and power over death, Romans 8:1, *"there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death"* (Rom. 8:1-2). Every good thing we have in Christ, everything that affects the way we walk with Christ is all dependent on the Spirit of God. He gives the children of God everything.

The Spirit pleads for us.

Now, we're beginning to see why we would be foolish to ask for anything but the Holy Spirit in our praying, because the Holy Spirit is foundational for everything in our Christian life. It's God saying, "I'm not going to leave you to walk through the struggles in your life this morning alone. I'm going to put my presence inside of you, and I'm going to enable you. I'm going to do it for you. I'm going to give you the strength, the power, the comfort, the guidance, everything you need. I'm going to come dwell in you with my power." He indwells us, He empowers us, and finally the Spirit pleads for us. The Spirit pleads for us.

Now, this is where it just all comes together. If you bottom line praying, when it really comes down to it, praying is really asking God for what we want and for things to work out good for us and for other people that's really what most of our praying comes down to. Is that a bad thing? I don't think it is. Romans 8:28 says that is God's desire for every single one of us in this room. *"In all things God works for the"* what? *"The good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose"* (Rom. 8:28). God is out for your good and His glory, and they don't contradict at all.

But here's the beauty, we know that verse, we always quote Romans 8:28, *"We know that in all things, God works for the good,"* do you realize how important the Spirit is to 8:28? You back up two verses. It says, *"We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express"* (Rom. 8:26). Verse 27 says, *"He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit,"* listen to this, *"the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will"* (Rom. 8:27). What that means is that the Holy Spirit is constantly, constantly pleading on our behalf, "Father, bring about what is good in your children's lives," that's what the Spirit pleads for. Even when we don't know how to express that, the Spirit does.

And so here's where the Spirit just absolutely transforms even what we pray. The Spirit conforms our prayers to the will of God. The Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. How do I pray according to God's will? Ask the Spirit, trust the Spirit, ask the Spirit to transform your praying. Conform it to His will and then in the process of conforming our prayers, the Spirit transforms our lives. And everything that God wants to do in every single one of our lives in this room happens as a result of the Spirit of God's work in our lives.

And so when we pray, Jesus says, "You ask the Father for good things, He'll give you the good One." He gives you the Spirit. And here's the beauty, Ephesians 1:13-14 says for all in this room who have trusted in Christ, the Spirit lives in you right now. You don't have to ask for Him to come for the first time, He lives in us. He dwells in us. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, "Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit." The Spirit dwells in us.

And so if we want to experience the abundance of Christ, if we want to experience the abundance of walking with God our Father that means we need to get our lives in touch with who? With the Holy Spirit. We don't need to see the Spirit as this thing on the side that we're not sure exactly how He relates to God. The Spirit is living inside of us and He is empowering us and He pleads for us.

And all throughout this series, it's been a time where I have just been challenged by this text over and over and over again. I really believe that the greatest void in our church right now is the kind of desperate praying that we see all over the book of Acts, and it's just not been a reality in us corporately. And what God has shown me over and over again in studying through Luke 11 is that the reason that's not done corporately is because it hasn't been in the pastor personally. And this has been a humbling study, and this text has brought me to my knees. It literally brought me to my knees.

I want for the Spirit of God to show Himself in this church in powerful ways, in unusual ways, in fresh ways so that we don't do church business as usual anymore, so that we are doing things that apart from the Spirit of almighty God could not be explained, so that we are a people who are desperate for Him and calling out to Him, for Him to captivate us with His presence, to overwhelm us with His presence, not just in this place, it's not about a building but us as a people that we as a people would be so captivated by the presence of our God in our lives that our lives would look radically different on a day by day by day basis and this church would look radically different. And we would be empowered to walk through the struggles that are represented across this room, and we would be empowered to make the gospel and grace of Jesus Christ known to the ends of the earth, just like the Spirit said He would do in His people.

And so what I want us to do as we close out our time in this study and as we come to the close of our time in this text today is I want us as a faith family to call out for God to show the power of His presence that is here with us in a fresh and unusual ways, not just in these moments but in our lives and in this church. And I want us to set the stage this morning for how we're going to be a people that are desperate for our God in prayer. To have deep desire, we want Him and we want what He wants more than we want anything else. And we've got a boldness, a shameless confidence that comes to Him and says, "We're going to ask you even if it's for three loaves of bread, we're going to trust that you're going to give it to us because we're asking boldly because you've told us to come before you. And we're going to trust that you, our Father in heaven, who does not want to give us a snake, you want to give us fish. You don't want to give us a scorpion, you want to give us an egg. You want to give us what is best for us, and not just for us but what is best for this community and what is best for all nations to know your glory."

Father, as we enter into this time just in prayer, we pray that just as you taught your disciples you would teach us to pray. And we trust that this gift you've given us in your Spirit is able to do immeasurably more than all we could ever even begin to ask or imagine in our praying. And so we confess our need for you and we pray to you to make us a church that is captivated with you, captivated by your presence in us. God, deliver us from any hint of being cold in our devotion or monotonous in our religion; God, we don't want it. We want to know the power of your Spirit on a day-by-day or week-by-week basis. Deliver us from cold monotony that we could sometimes get into even in our praying and make us a people that are captivated by you.

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