

## School of the Word 2018

God has visited his people (Luke 7:16)

Taking another look at Luke's Jesus

Kieran J. O'Mahony, OSA

[www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie)

### (4) Prayer in Luke's Gospel

#### Programme

1. Luke: a (re-)introduction
2. Setting the scene: Luke 4:14-30
3. Teaching in parables: Luke 18:1-8
4. Prayer in Luke's Gospel
5. The death of the Prophet Messiah Luke 23:1-56
6. On the road to Emmaus: Luke 24:13-35
7. *Getting ready for Christmas (Luke 1-2)*
8. *Getting ready for Christmas (Luke 1-2)*

#### Sequence

- Vocabulary
- Luke 1-2
- Jesus at prayer
- Parables
- I bless you, Father
- The Lord's Prayer
- Teaching on prayer
- And so...

#### Vocabulary

- **To pray:** Luke 1:10; 3:21; 5:16; 6:12, 28; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1-2; 18:1, 10-11; 19:46; 20:47; 22:40-41, 44-46; **Acts** 1:14, 24; 2:42; 3:1; 6:4, 6; 8:15; 9:11, 40; 10:4, 9, 30-31; 11:5; 12:5, 12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:13, 16, 25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8
- **Prayer:** Luke 6:12; 19:46; 22:45; **Acts** 1:14; 2:42; 3:1; 6:4; 10:4, 31; 12:5; 16:13, 16
- **To praise:** Luke 2:13, 20; 19:37; **Acts** 2:47; 3:8-9
- **To glorify:** Luke 2:20; 4:15; 5:25-26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47; **Acts** 3:13; 4:21; 11:18; 13:48; 21:20
- **To bless:** Luke 1:42, 64; 2:28, 34; 6:28; 9:16; 13:35; 19:38; 24:30, 50-51, 53; **Acts** 3:26

#### Luke 1-2

- *Zechariah at prayer*
- Elizabeth – basis for the Hail Mary
- Zechariah – the Benedictus (morning prayer)
- Mary – the Magnificat (evening prayer)
- Angels – the basis for the Gloria (Sundays)
- Simeon – the Nunc dimittis (night prayer)
- *Anna at prayer*
  
- **Old:** Luke 1-2 are filled with an atmosphere of genuine Old Testament / Jewish piety.
- **New:** the activity of the Holy Spirit.
  
- These prayers are introduced using special words, which resonate throughout the Gospel
- 
- To **praise:** angels (2:13); shepherds (2:20); crowds welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem (19:37).
- To **glorify:** shepherds (2:20); of the paralysed man (5:25, 26). The people of Nain (7:16), the bent woman (13:13), the grateful beggar (17:15), the blind man (18:43).
- To **bless:** Zechariah (1:64); Simeon (2:22); the disciples in the Temple (24:53). NB: Mary is called blessed by Elizabeth (1:42)

## Jesus at prayer

- Jesus himself a prayer, in Luke's Gospel
- In this Gospel, Jesus prayer more frequently than in both Mark and Matthew combined.
- **Jesus** praying: Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 9:29; 11:1; 22:41, 44-45; 23:46.
- Jesus sometimes prays **alone**: 5:16 and 9:18.
- Jesus was **praying** after His baptism when the heavens opened (3:21).
- After the cure of the leper Jesus withdrew to the wilderness and **prayed** (5:16). The parallel in Mark has Jesus praying only once but in Luke 5:16 it was Jesus' custom.
- Jesus spent all night on the hills in **prayer** before He chose the Twelve (6:12-16).
- Jesus was **praying** alone when He asked the disciples "Who do the people say I am?" (9:18-22).
- Eight days later He took Peter, James and John and went up on the mountain to **pray** (9:28) and while **praying** He was transfigured (9:29).
- Jesus **prayed** for Simon that his faith might not fail (22:32).
- Only Luke tells us that Jesus **prayed** for His crucifiers (23:34) and committed His spirit into the hands of Father (23:46).
- **Prayer** is a common activity done by the main characters in Acts as well (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 3:1; etc.).
- *All the reported prayers of Jesus in Luke begin with "Father"*
- Luke 10:21 On that same occasion Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise you, **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to little children. Yes, **Father**, for this was your gracious will. 22 All things have been given to me by my **Father**. No one knows who the Son is except the **Father**, or who the **Father** is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son decides to reveal him."
- Luke 11:2 So he said to them, "When you pray, say:  
**Father**, may your name be honoured;  
may your kingdom come.
- Luke 22:42 "**Father**, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Yet not my will but yours be done."
- Luke 23:34 But Jesus said, "**Father**, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
- Luke 23:46 Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "**Father**, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And after he said this he breathed his last.

## Parables

- The Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:1:5-8)
- The Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-8)
- The Pharisee and the Publican (8:9-14)

**Luke 18:9** Jesus also told this parable to some who were confident that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else. **10** "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: extortionists, unrighteous people, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.' **13** The tax collector, however, stood far off and would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, sinner that I am!' **14** I tell you that this man went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

## I bless you, Father

- This "exclamation" is also found in Matthew 11:25-27
- It comes from the Q sayings sources
- It feels like something out of John's Gospel
- Luke adds "rejoiced" and "in the Holy Spirit"

**Luke 10:21** On that same occasion Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will. **22** All things have been given to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son decides to reveal him."

Matthew	Q Sayings Source	Luke
Matt 11:25 At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.	Q10:21 At «that time» he said: I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you hid these things from sages and the learned, and disclosed them to children. Yes, Father, for that is what it has pleased you to do.	Luke 10:21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.
27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.	22 Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and to whomever the Son chooses to reveal him.	22 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

**The Lord's Prayer**

- The Lord's Prayer is also found in Mt 6:10-13 and Didachē 8:2.

Luke 11:1 Now Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 So he said to them, "When you pray, say:  
 Father, may your name be honoured;  
 may your kingdom come.  
 3 Give us each day our daily bread,  
 4 and forgive us our sins,  
 for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.  
 And do not lead us into temptation."

Matthew	Q Sayings Source	Luke
Matt 6:10 Our Father in heaven	Q11:2 Father —	Luke 11:2 "Father,
hallowed be your name	— may your name be kept holy!	hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come	let your reign come:	Your kingdom come.
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.		
11 Give us this day our daily bread,	3 Our day's bread give us today;	3 Give us each day our daily bread,
12 and forgive us our debts,	4 and cancel our debts for us,	4 and forgive us our sins,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.	as we too have cancelled for those in debt to us;	for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
13 And lead us not into temptation,	and do not put us to the test!	And lead us not into temptation."
but deliver us from evil.		

- From the Didachē

**Did. 8:2** Nor should you pray like the hypocrites. Instead, pray like this, just as the Lord commanded in his Gospel:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors;  
and do not lead us into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one;  
for yours is the power and the glory forever.”

**Did. 8:3** Pray like this three times a day.

### Commentary

**Luke 11:1** Now Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

- Luke frequently shows Jesus at prayer.
- The request of the disciples could well be the setting for the original teaching on prayer.
- John the Baptist had a prayer for his disciples as well, evidently.
- The disciples are inspired by Jesus’ example of prayer.

**Luke 11:22** So he said to them, “When you pray, say:  
Father, may your name be honoured;  
may your kingdom come.

- “Father”, common in all religions and in Judaism, as well.
- It has a special meaning for Jesus and for those who believe in him.
- All Jesus’ prayers in Luke start with “Father”.
- Cf. Luke 10:21-22.
- “When” indicates a general pattern.
- The “name” means the person.
- Eventually, in the Acts, the writer will insist upon the name of the Lord and the “in the name of Jesus Christ” etc.
- The kingdom is a metaphor for God’s rule or reign.
- In Jesus’ teaching, it points to the end of time, God’ rule fully revealed.

**Luke 11:3** Give us each day our daily bread,

- In Matthew, bread could be a metaphor for all we need to live.
- In Luke, it is much more concrete: the bread for each day.
- “Give” = present imperative, meaning keep on giving.
- Lit. Give us each the bread we need for today.

**Luke 11:4** and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

- Forgiveness of sins: 1:77; 3:3; 5:20-21, 23-24; 7:47-49; 12:10; 23:34; 24:27 etc. in the Acts.
- This is no “tit for tat” exchange. On the contrary!
- Forgiveness is a gift we can receive only if we give it away immediately.

**Luke 11:4** And do not lead us into temptation.”

- God does not lead in to temptation.

- The time of trial is not just any temptation but the temptation, under pressure of persecution or the like, to give up the faith altogether.
- The correct translation should be: do not allow us to come to the time of trial.
- Cf. Luke 22:40, 46 (Gethsemane).

*Three early versions of the Lord's Prayer: Matthew, Luke and The Didachē.*

- Luke places the teaching on the setting of Jesus' own prayer.
- That prayer awakens a desire in the disciples to be able to pray like Jesus.
- The prayer is not "a prayer" but a series of steps to follow while praying.

### **Teaching on prayer**

**Luke 11:9** "So I tell you: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. **10** For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. **11** What father among you, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? **12** Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? **13** If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

### **And so...**

- Prayer is hugely significant for Luke.
  - Jesus himself prays
  - Many others pray
  - Many prayers are given
  - Three parables are devoted to prayer.
  - There is an extended teaching on prayer in Luke 11:1-13 and 18:1-14.
  - Prayer etc. remains vital in the Acts
  - Heart of prayer: the Holy Spirit.
- 
- Prayer is the heart beat of faith
  - In prayer: we call God "Father"
  - In prayer: the Holy Spirit is with us
  - Prayer is joyful
  - We pray: always and insistently
  - We pray: so as not to lose heart
  - In prayer, we ask confidently
  - In prayer, we praise, glorify and bless
  - Prayer: alone and with others

### **Prayer**

Provident Father,  
with the prayer your Son taught us always on our lips,  
we ask, we seek, we knock at your door.

In our every need,  
grant us the first and best of all your gifts,  
the Spirit who makes us your children.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.