

# Bethel

## Prayer Meeting Addresses

### Number 6

#### Praying for the Holy Spirit

**Reading:** Luke 11. 1-13

1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and

say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

### Address

Have you ever noticed that most of the teaching on prayer in the Word of God was given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? He knew all the secrets of His Father's eternal counsels; He also knew the value of prayer. So He gave a wonderful example in His own life, and also most of the teaching on prayer in Scripture was given by Him. A great proportion of the Lord's teaching on any subject was devoted to prayer.

Now here these verses begin with what we usually call *the Lord's prayer*, which perhaps should be called *the disciples' prayer*. And then two passages on the subject of prayer follow. Incidentally, in each case the Lord Jesus teaches by a contrast. He tells us what someone does, and then says if even a sinful man will do it, then how much more so will God do it. Of course, the first one is the person who has a visitor late at night and has no food to set before him, so he goes to a friend's house and begins knocking on the door. It is a nuisance, because he is in bed and does not want to get up. "Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee." But because his friend keeps on knocking and will not go away, even though he will not do it because he is his friend, he will do it to get rid of the nuisance. Let us be very clear, the Lord Jesus is not comparing His heavenly Father to this man in bed; He is rather contrasting Him with him. If this man, this unwilling man, this sinful man, does not want to do it and yet he will, how much more so My Father in heaven, He who loves you so dearly, He who is willing. And the emphasis is this: then do not stop praying if you do not seem to receive answers. Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking. The word used here is *importunity*.

Then the other thing. The Lord Jesus gives a very, very simple example of a little child coming to his father and asking for bread to eat. He says, Do you think that father will give him a stone? Or if again he comes and this time asks for some fish, do you think that father will give him a snake? Or if another time he says, Can I have an egg? do you think it possible that the father will give him a stinging scorpion? It is not a comparison; it is a contrast. The emphasis is on this *how much more*. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children" – now this is it, *how much more* – "how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

The point I specially want to dwell on tonight and leave with you is this: prayer for the Holy Spirit. This is our great need, isn't it? We do need the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit if ever we are going to pray aright. If ever we are to pray without ceasing in urgent, prevailing prayer, it must be by the Holy Spirit. If ever we are to make our requests known unto God in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, it must be by the Holy Spirit. There is no substitute. The power, the ability is not in us. We are sinful. We have a wicked aversion to prayer and all these other things.

Often here the Lord Jesus speaks of God as *your Father*. If ever we are to know that God is our Father, it must be by the Holy Spirit making Him known

and giving the spirit of adoption. There is the point also of a sweet assurance of our interest in Christ. It is only through the Holy Spirit that you and I can ever have it. It touches everything. A soft heart, a melting heart – it is only through the Holy Spirit. That gracious teaching we so much need, “That which I see not teach Thou me” – it is only through the Holy Spirit. That revelation of Christ in His preciousness to our souls – it is only through the Holy Spirit. Now that is the emphasis, our great, vital need of the Holy Spirit. Now may we realise it. There is not any substitute. And here there is this loving, tender, gracious encouragement that if we feel our lack of the Holy Spirit, our vital need of the Holy Spirit, then we are encouraged to ask God the Father in heaven for the gracious bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon us.

Now may it be a word in season. Jesus said, and we use that saying here, “Let these sayings sink down into your ears.” “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”

*This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 18th January, 1982*

