

# Luke 11:1-5

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 04 May 2014

Preacher: Tim Manson

[ 0 : 00 ] I was at a recent meeting with some teachers and governors in a local school to me and one thing! a nursery teacher said at one point was this, we're getting worse, worse and worse at listening! and speaking because children are being child minded with iPads and things of course she was speaking as a nursery teacher coping with children coming in and recent studies do show that in the opinion of teachers at least half of all children starting school lack some of those very basic skills but what about our listening and speaking to God? what would those statistics be like if we could see them?

Jesus says that they are our priorities if you know this part of Luke as you've been going through it so think about what's been going on and you might want to look at the passage just before it of course it's Mary and Martha Mary listening at Jesus' feet, intently listening to him and the message there is that our first priority is to listen to God's word you've got this picture of Mary intently kneeling, sitting at Jesus' feet Jesus says only one thing is needed and that's what Mary is doing, listening to God's word and if that is our first priority to listen to Jesus, to listen to God's word then close behind that comes speaking back to him in prayer so no surprise that it's then that Jesus introduces how we are to pray and of course it's essential that our prayers are guided first of all by what he says to us I remember a school, no university, having a bit of an argument with one friend who said he thought prayer was more important than hearing God's word we had this sort of debate back and forth

I think looking back 20 years or so I was right, you were glad to know but actually I think it's important first to listen to God's word because if we talk to God without first hearing from him if you're anything like me you'll talk all sorts of nonsense you'll miss the point actually when we first hear him in his word as Mary did we can then start to speak back to him intelligently because we know who he is hence the Lord's Prayer in these verses Jesus first gives us a model for prayer verses 1 to 4 and then as we'll see this evening we'll look at Jesus' motivations for prayer verses 5 to 13 just before we look at the model what we commonly refer to as the Lord's Prayer let's bear in mind a few things we're meant to understand the spirit of the prayer of course it's not just a form of words that we're meant to answer you know, we're meant to imbibe to take on the spirit of it and learn the meaning behind it that's important and yet repeating the letter of it and saying it regularly as we did this morning is important because it keeps those important things in our minds so if we're forgetting to think about provision

God's provision in our daily bread we're reminded by reading the Lord's Prayer together another point we need to bear in mind is that this is different from Matthew's version it's likely that they were two separate events and we should treat each one on their own terms perhaps a bit of a comparison could be made between the Ten Commandments which is given twice and then the Lord's Prayer is also given twice two very important things that God wants us to hear and like the Ten Commandments as well this prayer puts the concern first of all for God and His honour before requests for ourselves so think of the Table of the Ten Commandments and the first six commandments really to do with God and His honour sorry, the first four and then the second six being to do with our horizontal relationships but also notice in this prayer it's about us and not just me it's us and we it's a corporate prayer where I'm not just praying for myself but I'm praying for my brothers and sisters as well we're saying

Matthew's version of course it says our Father also notice this disciple in verse 1 he wanted to learn to pray and I want to throw that question out to you do you does this request chime with your heart?

[ 4 : 44 ] do you can you say that you want to learn to pray? if not why not? if that's a struggle with you at the moment if prayer seems like something you just can't seem to get to grips with then listen on because Jesus knows that he empathises and that's why he gives us this prayer I do encourage

you to perhaps this week to discipline yourself to pray and ask that he would stir your heart to want to pray indeed I hope that some of that would happen this morning as we look at this true prayer is of course deeply trustful at the most basic level it says I'm not going to do something now I'm going to pray that you would do something Lord and then a final thought before we look at the model of prayer the real question I want to throw out to you this morning is this which of these elements might be missing from my prayers at the moment if I have a title for this morning it's six things that should shape my prayers six things to shape my prayers which of the six as we look at them is missing from my own prayer it's hard isn't it to go away from a sermon and take all the six points take one that you know is missing from your prayer and ask that

God would help you this week so let's look at the six things that should shape our prayers first of all in verse 2 Jesus says to them when you pray say Father the first thing that should shape our prayers is simply this the Father's nature the Father's nature now we've heard this prayer so often we almost forget that the very first words of it is probably the most mind-blowing of the whole prayer isn't it the fact that you can call God Father arguably more remarkable than anything else that comes after it carries a sense of authority of speaking to God with respect but it also is coupled with a personal intimacy a love and a care that we get a glimpse of in our own relationships in this world it wasn't the way the Father-Son relationship was not the way that the Jews traditionally thought of God but it's the Gospel of course that makes this possible one of my favourite verses in the Bible is John chapter 20 verse 17 where Jesus appears to Mary after his death and resurrection he says don't hold on to me go instead to my brothers and tell them

I'm returning to my Father and to your Father to my God and your God you see how actually at this point in the Gospel because of what he's done he can now say that God is your Father as well it's the Gospel that makes this possible and it's an indication that with the coming of Christ the curse is completely undone our alienation from God as our Father is now reversed is now undone we can now communicate with our Creator on this level so for every child of Christ and if you're not yet a Christian here this morning this is for you as well for every single person the Gospel offer is that you can be a child of God John chapter 1 verse 12 for everyone who believes in his name he gives the right to become children of God and legitimately refer to the maker of the universe as Father with all the tenderness and the care and the intimacy that that word carries we need to move on but can I just ask you is it possible that this aspect of Jesus' prayer is missing from your prayers when you come to him in prayer there's perhaps a bit of a coldness you just want to move on quickly to something else you're not treasuring the relationship if you love someone think of perhaps the person you love to be within this world the most you don't rush on from being with them but is it possible that in your prayers with God you're not feeling the warmth of a son or a daughter towards him maybe you feel guilty maybe you feel ashamed in his presence of course we do need to confess sin but we also need to know when we're forgiven and if this is missing from your prayers then it's not surprising that our prayers will be cold and formal impersonal a child with his father is confident confident of access can ask with trust we'll think more about this this evening and ask with that simplicity that a child will ask something of their father it's not just a part of our prayer actually all of our communication with our heavenly father is to be based on the knowledge of his fatherly care for us so could that be missing from your prayers what should shape my prayers first of all the father's nature secondly what should shape my prayers is the father's name the father's name when you pray say father hallowed be your name in other words may your name be set apart may your name be made holy may it have the honour that it deserves this is the first thing that we should pray for it's our priority in terms of the content of our prayers of course it doesn't mean that our prayers can make him more holy it's a prayer that more and more his name would be recognised for what it is

I am to care about his honour his status and his reputation and we talk about so and so really making a name for himself it's a phrase we use a lot but Jesus is saying that I am to care about my father's name more than I care about my own or anyone else's far more our motives are mixed to say the least aren't they when we come to pray all of those sinful motives come in Philipians 2 verse 4 Paul encourages us that we should look out for the interests of others not just our own because we are constantly thinking about our own interests and our prayers will reflect that they will be self centred and here Jesus is saying to me at least Tim this life is not about you it's not all about you it's actually all about God the father and his name we're looking at the ten commandments at the moment in our evening services and we looked a few weeks ago at this command you shall not

misuse the name of the

Lord your God for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name in the sense that's the negative we thought about the fact that God's word should God's name rather should be on our lips positively to his praise not lightly or insincerely or profanely we thought about hallowing his name and we thought about our actions and how we use his name lightly how we can sing a song say all sorts of great things to do with God's name but actually our thoughts are elsewhere or we're just not engaged doesn't reflect the weight of his glory in the way that we use his name might this be missing from your prayers a concern for his name and his honour John Ruskin famously said that a man who's wrapped up in himself will make a pretty small package and if this prayer doesn't weave its way into the fabric of our prayers then our concerns will remain very small and pretty insignificant so watch your shape in my prayers the father's nature the father's name and then thirdly the father's kingdom father hallowed be your name your kingdom come everyone's trying to make a name for themselves everyone's trying to build their own mini kingdoms maybe you know the story of

[13:32] Michael Hesseltine a politician of previous years who it is said I think by one of his contemporaries at school that at a very early age in his teens I think he set out his goals for life in his twenties he would be a millionaire in his thirties he would be an MP in his forties he'd be on the Tory front bench and his fifties Downing Street unfortunately somebody and their handbag slightly got in the way of that but it's not just politicians it's Christians as well making their own mini kingdoms even pastors we're probably tempted all the more to make our own mini kingdoms in this world but to pray this is to pray at least two things it is to pray first of all lord grow your kingdom lord grow your kingdom and that is a prayer for the present and it's a prayer that is being answered in this world I know we've had bad signs in our country we had the first same sex marriages the end of

March we're in a nation that is largely turning its back on God's law and God's word but that's in a sense that's a local perspective look globally people are becoming Christians in their droves let me quote one statistic evangelical believers are growing at a rate of three and a half times that of the world population so for every one person born three and a half are becoming Christians maybe you know that half now I don't know you could debate the accuracy that's quite a trusted source but one thing is growth is certain God is building his kingdom it is a prayer that is being answered in the present we're also saying as well as God grow your kingdom we're saying Lord bring in your kingdom in its fullness in the future we're saying bring in the many kingdoms of the world and bring them under your one perfect kingdom all of that borrowed authority all of that delegated authority may it come under your absolute authority and be seen to bow the knee to your absolute authority we're saying bring in your kingdom

I'm just flicking through some references in revelation to pray this prayer is to say Lord would you please make it time up for those who are rebels in your kingdom would you bring them to account just as Jesus says to the church in Sardis if you do not wake up I will come like a thief and you will not know at what time I will come to you this prayer is saying Lord come sort out those who are rebels in your kingdom we're also saying come and vindicate your people revelation 17 verse 14 the lamb will overcome them because he's the lord of lords and the king of kings and with him will be his called chosen and faithful followers Lord vindicate your people bring in your kingdom your kingdom come we're also praying that the devil will be destroyed fully and finally we read of the rider on the white horse in chapter 19 and in a sense we're saying come rider on your white horse come and bring in your kingdom and capture the beast verse 20 and throw them into the fiery lake destroy your enemies once and for all that's what we're praying we're praying finally in chapter 22 that your kingdom would become the new creation would be all that you've intended it to be from the start we're praying no wonder at the end of the book come lord

Jesus bring in your kingdom so as we think of those three things first of all that should shape our prayers in the first half of the prayer just have a look at those for a moment Jesus wants your prayers to take in the big picture of his plans the big scope we so often limit our prayers God bless Aunt Molly God bless my dear wife God bless we move on very quickly may it not rain tomorrow when I'm cycling to work or whatever God wants our prayers to encompass really big things the biggest things in fact things to do with his name which there is nothing greater and his kingdom and he wants us to tear ourselves away for a while from my obsession with self and to attach myself to these grander things not just my own goals not just how my health is or how my family are or what my relationships are like or my job situation is but God's agenda you come to

God in prayer maybe you come exhausted maybe you come deeply disappointed about something maybe you come with ongoing pain whether it's physical or something else and first he calls you to say father hallowed be your name your kingdom come because hey it's not about you it's not about me it's about him and he knows actually that the things that will thrill you most more than anything in fact if we begin to understand them are not things to do with us our immediate concerns to things but are to do with his nature his name and his kingdom otherwise we were like chickens scratching around in the dirt not looking up at the glories of the sky that's the message of the first half of the prayer God first then we get ourselves in proper perspective what should shape my prayers the father's nature the father's name and the father's kingdom but wonderfully

[ 19 : 43 ] God does not ignore our own needs he is very concerned about you and me the detail of our lives he wants the best for us as verse 13 makes very clear and the fourth fifth and sixth things that should shape our prayers are there in verse 3 and 4 first of all our own provision our own provision in verse 3 give us each day our daily bread God is not interested in dualism he is not interested in us seeing ourselves as bodies on the one hand and mind and spirit over there and he is only concerned about your mind and spirit now he made you as a physical human being he cares about your body he knows you've got needs and all those sorts of things the bible is full of examples where he feeds his people with manna Elijah being fed with bread wonderfully by the ravens Jesus feeding the 5000 he knows that you need something on your table to eat perhaps you thank God for your food and meal times let me ask you when did you last ask him to provide your next meal when did you last ask him to provide your next meal not just thank him for the one you just had or about to have there are many things that we take for granted but actually we depend on more than just bread maybe it's your next salary check give us each month our salary check that's a good prayer to pray because actually it says that comes not from my boss but from

God ultimately and whether you use these words or not if we take on this attitude it tells our forgetful self-sufficient hearts that actually we rely on him even for the basics this is a prayer of deep trust and notice Jesus says give us each day our daily bread doubly reinforced it's not a year's supply in advance maybe you're concerned at the moment about future provision of one thing or another Jesus would have you to pray and to trust him for every day even when you can't see the whole even when you can't see the future provision and he will say more about that in chapter 12 maybe these are words you need to hear chapter 12 verse 29 I'm just flicking over the page do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink do not worry about it for the pagan world runs after all such things and your father knows that you need them but seek his kingdom and these things will be given to you as well is this an element that could be missing from your prayers this dependence on God for your basic physical needs is missing the danger is we just become wrongly self-sufficient in a way that does not help us understand his good provision for us and our dependence on him as well as our own provision

Jesus tells us to pray for our own pardon so it's the second thing we're to pray for for ourselves our own provision and secondly our own pardon verse 4 forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone who sins against us I think the ESV uses language of debt and indebtedness so if bread is my basic physical need then pardon forgiveness that declaration from God that I am forgiven in his side that's my basic spiritual need isn't it it reminds me that the very fact I can pray to him at all is based on his forgiveness of me you might say well why why do I need to keep his forgiveness in the forefront of my minds regularly well a couple of reasons because we forget the sinfulness of sin don't we we forget just what it costs him the son of God went to the cross because of the sort of thoughts and words and deeds that you have exhibited this week that's why Jesus died we mustn't forget that he gave his life so that you and I can be forgiven that's one reason we need to remember his forgiveness of us and not forget the wonder of it secondly we need to keep forgiveness in the forefront of our minds because we keep on sinning and it's not as though we need to be saved over and over again but it's to maintain that free flowing relationship with our heavenly father that we need to open our mouths acknowledge confess when we've done something that offends him so that our relationship can be free and as it should be David knew all about that when I kept silence my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long of course when he confessed it he found full freedom and praying this prayer of course is also a commitment to forgive other people we make the mistake don't we forgiveness is something that I receive from God and I love it and I let it wash over me and isn't it great and we make the same mistake of the unforgiving servant and we live our lives failing to forgive other people but if I pray this prayer

regularly I'm less likely to do that because I'll be reminded that my forgiveness of others is also linked to God's forgiveness of me what should shape my prayers our own provision our own pardon and lastly our own protection second half of verse four and lead us not into temptation lead us not into temptation now I think it's a verse that raises a few questions firstly what does it mean by temptation sometimes the bible means trial hard things in life sometimes it means temptation where somebody wants me to fall in some way if it's temptation well the bible says that God doesn't tempt me

[ 26 : 08 ] James 1 so why pray that God will not do something that he won't do anyway if it's testing and trial well the bible says we should consider it pure joy when we consider sorry when we undergo trials of many kinds so why should I pray that I don't have that but we also know that Jesus as he approached the cross even he prayed to avoid the trial of the cross think of Gethsemane ultimately the cross was his goal he was committed to doing it and yet he said father take this cup from me something that ultimately was good although terrible but I think it helps us here because our prayers might be lord I know that you use everything that happens to me but I don't welcome those things that could knock me off course I don't invite them God please as far as possible keep those things from me and yet not my will but your will perhaps when it comes to temptation

God please lead me in paths today where I'm not going to be drawn into sin I think that's a perfectly God honouring prayer and response to Jesus words here I don't know exactly why Jesus worded it this way his wisdom is far beyond mine but I do know that if prayed sincerely it should make us think twice about temptation we pray this in the morning when temptation rears its head during the day having prayed this that should prepare us for what we meet and secondly of course it's a stark acknowledgement of our weakness it's basically saying lord I'm I'm weak I acknowledge that I could fall in a million different ways today please sustain me please uphold me do you ever begin your day by doing this by identifying the key points where you know they're danger points for you and praying ahead I think that's the spirit of this prayer here does this attitude shape your prayers if not how ready will you be when trial or temptation come your way as they will do the soldier who gives no thoughts to the dangers and threats is a soldier in serious danger of his life

Jesus has given us this model these six things that should shape our prayers and I encourage you to think about how you can have your prayers shaped by Jesus words here I've found it challenging we all have different ways of praying don't we I've found that having a series of prayer cards and having one that faces me every day with different things on it that really helps me to pray having read through this and thought about it more I've put just one of the lines on each of those prayer cards so each day I'll see one of the lines of Jesus prayers and it will help me to have my prayers shaped by his words I'd encourage you to think about how you're going to not just go away from here!

move on and go back to old ways of praying but just continually increasingly have your prayers shaped by what Jesus says and his priorities is the father's nature missing or the honouring of his name hallowing it setting it aside or his kingdom is it your own provision and dependence on him is it your sin and thankfulness praise of what he's done for you and knowledge that you need to forgive others as well or is it the protection that you need for the day ahead which is it for you I want to encourage you to take a moment just to look with your bibles open and that prayer in front of you so we're not going to go straight into our closing song but look look over that prayer and perhaps identify one of them one of those things that you look at and think actually that hasn't featured in my prayers for the last six months then why not simply identify it take a moment to pray silently and ask for God's help and then in a moment we'll read the prayer all together a Thank you.