

2019 Summer Study

Prayer in Luke

1. Prayer at Jesus' birth

Luke 1:1-20 and 2:22,36-39

This is Luke's personal introduction (1:1-4). Of the four gospel writers, Luke gives the most attention to Jesus' birth. Note the people, the circumstances, and the surprise for whom Jesus' birth is the answer to their prayers.

How is God already present and working in your life in fulfillment of your deepest prayers?

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us,² just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,³ I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,⁴ **so that you may know the truth** concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

⁵ In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.⁶ Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸ Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty,⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense.¹⁰ Now at the time of the incense offering, **the whole assembly of the people was praying** outside.¹¹ Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him.

¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, **Zechariah, for your prayer** has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.¹⁷ With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years."¹⁹ The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.²⁰ But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

^{2:22} When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ...³⁶ There was also **a prophet, Anna** the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and **prayer** night and day.³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

2. Prayer at Jesus' Baptism and full of the Holy Spirit

Luke 3:21-23a and 3:1-14

Luke is unique in emphasizing all that happens at Jesus' Baptism is when Jesus was praying. But Matthew and Mark join Luke in emphasizing that the Holy Spirit leads or drives Jesus into the wilderness after his Baptism.

How does God challenge you to grow in trust and devotion?

^{3:21} Now when all the people were baptized, and when **Jesus also had been baptized and was praying**, the heaven was opened,²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."²³ Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work. He was the son (as was thought) of Joseph son of Heli, (Lk. 3:21-23 NRS)

^{3:1} **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.

³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread."⁴ Jesus answered him, "It is written, '**One does not live by bread alone.**'"

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.⁶ And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please."⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written, '**Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.**'"

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,¹⁰ for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,'¹¹ and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ¹² Jesus answered him, "It is said, '**Do not put the Lord your God to the test.**'"

¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.¹⁴ Then **Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit**, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country.

3. Prayer in Jesus' Ministry

Luke 5:15-16; 6:9-19; 6:27-28

Luke tells us that Jesus spent regular time in prayer and a long time in prayer in times of crisis and important decisions. Jesus also challenges us to respond in prayer at those times we are most attacked.

What routine and practice of prayer works or might work best for you so that God directs your life?

Prayer in guiding his ministry

Luke. 5:15-16

But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. ¹⁶ But he would withdraw to deserted places and **pray**.

Prayer in Jesus Choosing the Twelve

Luke 6:9-19

Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" ¹⁰ After looking around at all of them, he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was restored. ¹¹ But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

¹² Now during those days he went out to the mountain to **pray**; and he spent the night in **prayer** to God. ¹³ And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: ¹⁴ Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵ and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶ and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

¹⁷ He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹ And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Respond in prayer

²⁷ "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, **pray** for those who abuse you.

4. Prayer in Jesus Announcing His Coming Death

Luke 9:18-36

Prayer is hugely important and significant guide for Jesus in facing, accepting and being faithful in the purpose to which God had called him.

What is God saying to you in your prayers?

Once when **Jesus was praying** alone, with only the disciples near him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"¹⁹ They answered, "John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen."²⁰ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God."

²¹ He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone,²² saying, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

²³ Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."²⁴ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.²⁵ What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?²⁶ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words, of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.²⁷ But truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

²⁸ Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus **took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray**.²⁹ And **while he was praying**, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.

³⁰ Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him.³¹ They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.³² Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

³³ Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"-- not knowing what he said.³⁴ **While [Peter] was saying this**, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.³⁵ Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"³⁶ When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

5. Jesus Teaching us to Pray

Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-14

Jesus teaches us how to pray – in the words of what is most important to ask, the confidence with which to pray, the importance of persistence, the humility with which to approach God and certainty that God hears.

Which of these teachings is most important for you to hear and act on?

Jesus' teaching on prayer

Luke 11:1-13

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."² He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.³ Give us each day our daily bread.⁴ And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."

⁵ And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.'⁷ And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish?¹² Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?¹³ If you then, who 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!"

Jesus emphasizing the need to pray

Luke 18:1-14

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to **pray** always and not to lose heart.² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people.³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.'⁴ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone,⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'"⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says.⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?⁸ I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

⁹ He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt:¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to **pray**, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, was **praying** thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.¹² I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.'¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

6. Jesus' Emphasis on Prayer in Holy Week

Luke 19:37-48; 20:45-47; 21:34-38

Prayer can be misused. Throughout Jesus' last week in Jerusalem He kept emphasizing to those about to crucify Him that prayer is not telling God and using God for our own "good" purpose. All of us need God to direct and form us according to God's purposes.

When and how have you misused prayer for your own purpose?

Jesus on the Purpose of the Temple

Luke 19:37-48

As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen,³⁸ saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." ⁴⁰ He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

⁴¹ As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴² saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

⁴⁵ Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; ⁴⁶ and he said, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of **prayer**'; but you have made it a den of robbers."

⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him; ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

Jesus on the misuse of prayer

20:45-47

^{20:45} In the hearing of all the people he said to the disciples, ⁴⁶ "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁷ They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long **prayers**. They will receive the greater condemnation."

Jesus on the importance and need for prayer at all times

21:34-38

^{21:34} "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ **Be alert at all times, praying** that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." ³⁷ Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. ³⁸ And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple. (Lk. 21:34-38 NRS)

7. Jesus' Prayer at His Death

Luke 22:31-32; 22:39-47; 23:32-46

Remarkably, Jesus' prayer in His last moments are for strength and faithfulness in doing and trusting the Father's will and His also praying for those around Him.

Which prayer of Jesus is most important for you and why?

Jesus prayer for Peter

³¹ "Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, ³² but I have **prayed** for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane

³⁹ He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ When he reached the place, he said to them, "**Pray** that you may not come into the time of trial." ⁴¹ Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and **prayed**, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." ⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. ⁴⁴ In his anguish he **prayed** more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. ⁴⁵ When he got up from **prayer**, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and **pray** that you may not come into the time of trial." ⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him;

Jesus' prayerful words on the cross

Luke 23:32-46

^{23:32} Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³ When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.**" And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" ⁴¹ And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³ He replied, "**Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.**"

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**" Having said this, he breathed his last.