

Introduction: Pg. ____ Welcome to Students. New People. Connect Card.

Many of you know my family got away for a vacation week last week. We had an awesome time lounging in the pool and hanging with my parents (who gifted the trip), my sister, and Mickey Mouse for a couple of days. But as magical as it was, the week before was even better.

It was magical because of God's kindness to pursue me through some well-timed conversations, changes in plans, and the time I spent seeking him.

- On Monday night, I had dinner with some new friends who were interested in learning about Redemption Hill. We enjoyed some great food and great conversation, and then they wanted to ask me 3 questions about our church. The first and most important was this: What is the role of prayer in our church?
- Then on Tuesday, though I was supposed to be on a work retreat in New Hampshire, God made sure I got to Rhode Island to do my work and more importantly, so he could work on me. You know what I'm saying?
- It started with a conversation with a new pastor friend I wanted to get to know named Stephen Mook. We enjoyed a life-giving conversation about God and how he was working in his life and church and ended our time praying together.
- Before he took off, he invited me to a Day of Prayer their church was hosting very next day. This work retreat was quickly becoming more of a spiritual retreat, the beauty of getting away and having margin or whitespace.
- I don't have time to tell you all the details this morning but I can tell you that I was overwhelmed by how generous God was to me as we prayed together, and as these people prayed for me.
- On four separate occasions, they took time out of their day of prayer to pray for me, to pray for you, Redemption Hill, and to pray for God's work in Greater Boston. As I think back, I can't remember a time I have been prayed for that much in one day, nor can I remember a time I felt so enriched by prayer.

The whole experience left me with a few conclusions:

- 1) I am a man who values prayer, but I have not been a praying man.
- 2) I help lead a church who values prayer, but has not been a praying church. {What I mean is that when people think of Redemption Hill, one of their first three to five thoughts is probably not - those people seek God in prayer. That's what I mean.}
- 3) I am more convinced than ever that God wants more for us.

**"More."
Luke 11:1-13**

We are going to work through one of the greatest sections on prayer in the Bible. I'm going to give you three encouragements, but first I want you to ask these two questions as we work our way through:

**God, what do you want for me?
God, what do you want from me?**

Will you do that? Ok, let's go. Jesus begins by telling us to...

I. Seek God in prayer for MORE of God. (11:1-4).

The first and greatest reason we pray is NOT to get more stuff, but to get more of God himself. This was the heart of Jesus. He wanted time with his Father.

Don't miss the first four words! *Read 1-4.*

When we look at Jesus, we see a man defined by prayer. To this point Luke has highlighted (in the first 11 chapters):

- Jesus praying after his baptism when the Spirit descended on him like a dove (3:21)
- Jesus fasting (don't miss that) *and* praying in the wilderness when he was tempted for 40 days (4:1-15)
- Jesus regularly withdrew from the crowds to get alone and pray. **"But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray." (Luke 5:16)**
- Before Jesus selected his twelve closest followers, do you know what he did? **"In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12)**

Luke 11.1-13. More

- Before Jesus asked the million dollar to his disciples, “Who do you say I am?” (Oh, yeah) “he was praying alone.” (9:18)
- After that, he took Peter, James and John up on the mountain to pray with them. (Praying alone, praying in community) (9:28)

Is it any wonder the disciples asked Jesus how to pray? If you want to learn to paint, holla at Picasso. If you want to learn to pray, hang out with Jesus.

Let this sink in, if we have a prayer problem, we have a Jesus problem, and if I can be more specific, we have a heart for Jesus problem.

- [• We'd rather scurry about our business than SIT at his feet.
- We'd rather search for solutions than SIT at his feet.
- Just read the end of chapter 10. We are often more like Martha than Mary.]

Here's the madness we discover: just as Jesus, the eternal Son of God, experienced intimacy with God the Father, we too, through faith in him can become sons and daughters of God and address God as our “Father.”

The Creator of every star blazing in every galaxy wants to have a real, vibrant, talking to him like your talking a friend kind of relationship with us! Wow. Staggering.

As we move into the “Lord’s Prayer” or “Disciples’ prayer,” we see that it is a community prayer that can be repeated verbatim but really should serve as a guide to launch us into further prayer. There’s little doubt Jesus taught this many times, which is why we have two different versions, here the shorter one.

Rather, than teaching you line by line, I’m just going to pray a prayer to help you understand what this can look like.

More Glory.

- Father, no one touches you.
- God, there is no one like you. Were there a thousand other gods to rival your name, your name would rise above the rest.
- You alone deserve our highest allegiance, our best attention, and our increasing affection.
- Help us see you as the infinitely perfect one, and we pray that all would see the greatness of your glory!
- “Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.”

More Renewal.

- Father, bring heaven to earth. There is so much brokenness in our world in need of healing.
- We want our workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and government to reflect the values of your kingdom.
- Better than that, we want your gracious rule and reign to flood our hearts and the hearts of those around us.
- Bring your work of kingdom renewal in increasing measures.
- “Your kingdom come.”

More Provision.

- And Father, even though we would rather starve and not pay the bills if we had to choose between your glory and your kingdom and our needs, but...
- Father, would you put some bread on the table again today? Would you meet our needs again?
- Would you help them find an apartment? Would you heal her sick mother, and his addicted son?
- “Give us each day our daily bread.”

More Transformation.

- And Father, you know we’ve blown it. We have trusted in our own wisdom and followed our own selfish desires. Forgive us.
- And help us extend the forgiveness we’ve received from you, lest we be hypocrites.
- And Father, one more thing: don’t just forgive us from our current sin. Protect us from future sin.
- “Lead us not into temptation.”

Luke 11.1-13. More

Whether you quote it verbatim for 20 seconds or allow its flavor to permeate your prayers for two hours, we should pray how Jesus taught us to pray.

[And don't miss this: this prayer reveals the distinction between what some have called "maintenance" prayer (praying for physical and temporal needs - think Provision.) and "frontline" prayer (which is praying for God's presence to be increasingly evident in us and around us - Think Glory. Renewal. Transformation.).

If you do the math, you'll discover this prayer is about 17% maintenance and 83% frontline. About 17% help me with physical needs (which God absolutely cares about - don't hold back!) and 83% make your glory and kingdom known, change us to be more like you, turn our city upside down.

Far too often, our prayers are the complete opposite. Let's be more frontline. Let's be more Glory, Renewal, Transformation, while not neglecting prayers for Provision.]

T: That's what we should pray for, but Jesus is not simply concerned with content. He presses in on how we should pray in 5-13.

Read 5-10

II. Seek God with bold persistence for MORE of God (11:5-10).

Let me ask you two questions in light of these words:

How do you come to God?

- Jesus creates a story to help them understand how we should approach God, but for us to get it, we need to know something about the cultural norms of the day:
 - 1) Hospitality was huge. When someone welcomed a guest into your home, they did not say: "make yourself at home and go to the fridge for some food." You served people and treated them like kings (number one, and number two)
 - 2) There was no fridge to go to. There was no cabinet stocked with artificially preserved food. That's why this guy goes to his friend *at midnight* and asks for 3 loaves of bread. Now, this was not an insane request, but put yourself in the friend's shoes...
 - 3) His house was probably a one room, humble abode. Not much bigger than some of your new dorm rooms, you know what I'm saying? (I remember those days. Great days!) And for this father to get out of bed would have disrupted the whole house, kids and mama, and if mama ain't happy ____ (you got it). AIN'T nobody happy!
- But he eventually gets up - not because of their friendship, but because his friend kept persisting and asking until he walked away with bread.
- So what is Jesus saying? Don't hold back. Be audacious. Be shamelessly bold in prayer. That's what the word "impudence" means. Nothing is stopping me from knocking on that door and walking away with bread.
- Who's praying like that? For far, far, far, far too long, I can't say that characterized my life, but today is a NEW DAY. Anybody with me?

T: Jesus invites us to come boldly *and* frequently.

How frequently do you come to God?

- Not only does the parable of the friends imply frequency.
- But Jesus' three different terms to describe prayer convey the idea of consistent, frequent prayer.
 - Ask. (Making a request)
 - Seek. (Pursuing God and his will)
 - Knock. (Whatever it takes)
- Jesus says: when we ask, we receive. When we seek, we find. When we knock, we discover open doors.
- Now, clearly, what is implied here is that we are praying in accordance with God's will. We are praying with the attitude Jesus modeled, "yet not my will, but yours be done."

But here's the takeaway for Me:

I need to increase the frequency of my prayers. I need to live with the attitude that there is never a bad time to pray. I need to be persuaded ten minutes with God is *more* powerful and *more* satisfying than ten hours doing anything else. [Painful couple of weeks: Massive consequences - leadership as a husband, father, and pastor]

I need to pray more alone and with others.

I need more scheduled and spontaneous prayer.

I need to pray one-sentence prayers and set aside hours to pray. (Remember, Jesus!)

I need to vary my posture when I pray: Standing, sitting, kneeling, on my face ("prostrate"), hands up, hands folded, Eyes closed and Eyes opened (esp. if you're driving). I need more prayer, and...

Redemption Hill:

I am praying we become a praying church, that we would pray like never before. I see so much ahead for us, so much more of God, so much more transformation, provision, glory and renewal, if only we would come boldly to God in prayer.

That's why our focus for the next two months is straightforward and summed up in one word: PRAYER.

2017 Vision - Invitational Life (personal, meaningful, compelling, irresistible invitation). Let's watch prayer drive that and everything else.

- Seek God in prayer like never before for a heart for prayer. (September)
- Seek God in prayer like never before for story-changing steps. (October)

I pray this will happen for you personally and in your Community Groups. (Yes, we should pray about our praying!) I pray husbands and wives will pray together more. I pray fathers, mothers, teachers, and influencers will stop and pray with children. I pray you will offer prayer for your neighbors and co-workers. I pray that your hang out time will also become prayer time. Prayer matters. Prayer changes things and changes us. It's way too important to let a little awkwardness hold us back. Love moves past awkward.

You want to love someone more? Pray for them and pray with them. It's amazing how that works!

I pray that we will prioritize opportunities we provide for church-wide prayer:

September 16th - Mark your calendars: **Morning of Prayer** (8a-Noon)

October 22nd-24th: Community Group Prayer Nights (Groups coming together for ONE REASON - prayer!)

T: Let nothing stop you from approaching God boldly and frequently. And then finally...

III. Seek God with complete confidence for MORE of God (11:11-13).

Read 11-13.

Here's why you can pray with bold persistence and complete confidence.

Because of the Goodness of our Father.

Luke 11.1-13. More

- Any imperfect fathers out there today? Even these imperfect fathers don't give their children bricks when they ask for bananas. Good job dads, keep doing what you do.
- And Jesus says (arguing from the lesser to the greater), *how much MORE* will the heavenly Father give to his children!
- God never says, "Don't bother me." For Nelo (Jerry) to answer the door for Alex (Elijah) is no bother. They would die for their kids!
- Perhaps you don't "approach God's throne of grace with confidence" (Her 4:16) because you don't believe how much he loves you. He'd kick down any wall, climb up any mountain to be with you. He leaves the 99 to come after you!
- Just look at the cross! Jesus died for you. Your name is written in his book of life, graven on his hands.
- Until we feel the fierceness of his love, we will not pray like Jesus prayed or like he invites us to pray.

[Octavius Winslow pinpointed this connection between our view of God and the quality & quantity of our prayers: "*What stunted views, unjust conceptions, and wrong interpretations have we cherished of Him, simply because we overlook His character as the Fountain of living waters. We 'limit the Holy One of Israel.' We judge him by our poor, narrow conception of things. We think He is like us. We forget we are coming to an Infinite Fountain, that the heavier the demand we make upon God, the more we shall receive, and the more often we come, the more we are welcome, that we cannot ask too much, that our sin, and His dishonor, are, that we ask so little. We forget He is glorified in giving; and the more grace He distributes to his people, the richer the revenue of praise He receives in return.*"]

T: God is a Good Father, we can have elite, supernatural confidence to...

Ask for the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the "third person" of the Trinity, and too often the forgotten member of the Trinity, but let me say this - if we do not have the Spirit, we have NOTHING.

- The Spirit makes gives us spiritual life when we were spiritually dead.
- The Spirit dwells in us and empowers us (Eph 1:18), which is why one of the best descriptors of the Holy Spirit is "God's empowering presence."
- The Spirit convicts us, teaches us, and reminds us of truth.
- He comforts, heals, and changes us. The Spirit is the one who enables us to put off sin and put on Christlikeness.
- The Spirit gives us gifts by which we encourage and build one another up.
- He pours God's love into our hearts to bring assurance that we are truly children of God.
- The Spirit brings freedom. (2 Cor. 3:17-18) and causes every good thing in our life to surface (joy, peace, wisdom, kindness, humility, compassion, and the list goes on and on and on. Gal. 5)
- AND The Spirit glorifies Jesus.
- If you remain unmoved, I dare you to search the word Spirit and be in awe of God would give us himself like this!

When we ask God to pour out his Spirit on us (to continue being filled with the Spirit - where the reality of the Spirit in us vibrantly shines through!), we will become...

Conclusion:

History Makers:

- That is *NOT* a platitude, *no* empty phrase. When we pray, we change history. Please don't shrug your shoulders at that. Oh, Tanner's just exaggerating to make a point.

Luke 11.1-13. More

- If we don't believe reveals his glory and accomplishes his kingdom work through our prayers, why are we praying?! So please do not dismiss that, because you might get caught watching on the sidelines, and I do not want that for you.
- God, in his mysterious sovereign ways, has willed to do through our prayers what he would not otherwise do. (HT: Vance Pittman) God uses our feeble words to change lives and turn cities upside-down.
- And I love this, as we pray, what happens? We grow closer to God. And what happens, we become more like him and we find that he uses us to be the answer to our own prayers and the prayers of others. It's amazing! Truly amazing.

This week in our newsletter, I asked you to ask two questions in preparation for today. If you missed, here they are:

God, what do you want for me?
God, what do you want from me?

God, what do you want for me? More. More Spirit, more kingdom, more glory, more of God
God, what do you want from me? More. He wants all of us.

Redemption Hill, let's go after God, like never before. Let's give him all of us, that we might have all of him.