



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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June 23, 2013

JUMP START # 488

Luke 11:1 *“It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.’”*

The word "disciple" means a "pupil or student." The followers of Jesus were demonstrating that by wanting to learn. They wanted Jesus to teach them to pray. A couple of interesting thoughts come from this.

First, coming to Christ isn't the last step in the journey. After one becomes a Christian, there are things to learn. The mere fact that one becomes a Christian doesn't automatically give them the attitude that they should have, nor does it solve every problem that they face. Communication problems in marriage does not magically disappear if the people involved are Christians. I sense sometimes that Christianity is viewed as a wonder pill that turns miserable lives into bliss. Discipleship is a growing, learning and becoming process. A Christian is constantly shaping and reshaping his heart to become more and more like Jesus.

This is why a person can experience different spirits and attitudes among Christians. Some are learning and growing and becoming more like Jesus and others aren't working so hard at it. Since Christianity is a learning and growing process, we will not all be at the same place at the same time. Maturity levels, knowledge levels, growth levels vary among us, and it shows. Some act very Christ like. Others, not so much. So if a person has quit growing, becoming, even though he's been a Christian for decades and decades, someone much younger and newer in the faith, but who has the heart of a disciple, may indeed be more Christ like than the older person. Growing, becoming, learning should never end...never!

The second thing we see here is that the disciples wanted to know how to pray. They asked this after Jesus finished praying. Understand the disciples were Jewish men who grew up hearing prayers at home and praying in the synagogues and temple. They knew "how" to pray. It wasn't the mechanics that they were asking-such as: Pray reverently...pray in faith...pray to God, not angels or people. They knew those things. But hearing Jesus pray, they wanted to pray like that.

The prayers of Jesus were focused and powerful. He often prayed hours on end and we struggle with five minutes. He prayed first, not last. He prayed before He chose the apostles. He prayed before His arrest and death. He prayed on a mountain top while the disciples endured a storm on the sea. Jesus was a man of prayer. He believed in it. He used it. Even at the very end, while upon the cross, Jesus was praying.

The reaction after Jesus preached the sermon on the mount was "never did a man speak like this." I get the impression that the disciples reaction after Jesus prayed was, "never did a man pray like that." Jesus prayers

were connected directly to His faith. The larger the faith the easier the prayers. Prayers and thankfulness are also connected together. The more thankful a person is, the more they pray.

What follows in Luke is a model or sample prayer. It's short. The words are simple. It covers the common needs both physically and spiritually. It's not the kind of prayer that we'd expect. We'd assume it'd cover about 40 verses instead of three. We assume that the words would be extensive and filled with depth. We'd assume the disciples would be overwhelmed to the point that they'd say, 'there's no way we can remember all that.' But it wasn't. Thirty-seven words-that's all. Easy to memorize. Easy to use.

The prayer connects the disciples to Jesus and to God. Jesus calls God, "Father." A term of affection, relationship and closeness. There are only a few people who get to call me "dad." It's a special term defining a special relationship. In Matthew's account of this prayer, Jesus begins by saying, OUR Father, who art in Heaven... Not MY Father, nor YOUR Father, but OUR. Jesus connects Himself with the disciples. He does that throughout this short prayer. It is "OUR" daily bread. It is lead US not into temptation.

Prayer tends to do that. It connects us with God and the ones we are praying about. There are common needs to all of us-whether we are rich or poor, famous or not. Forgiveness, food, favor are all blessings that all of us need for God.

Jesus shows us that a person doesn't have to be complex or impressive in his prayers. Speak from the heart. Be genuine. Be honest. Be yourself, yet realize that you are talking to God.

Lord, teach us...what a great attitude to have. Each of us would be better if we could say the same. Lord, teach us to be the parents we should be...Lord, teach us to love you...Lord, teach us to long for your book...Lord, teach us to forgive others...Lord, teach us to be patient, as you are...

Lord, teach us...

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