**Luke 11:1-13**

I. Theological Foundation for calling God “Father”

A. Jesus alone is God’s son by nature of who he is (Mk 1:11)

B. On the cross Jesus experiences the holy wrath of God for our sin

Mk 14:34 is the only place in the gospels where Jesus addresses God and does not say “Father”

C. His sacrifice for us enables us to be adopted into God’s family through faith in him

See John 20:17 and Gal 4:6

D. It’s a marvelous privilege to call God “Abba Father” (see 1 John 3:1)

II. “Father” says something about God’s posture towards us in prayer

A. He has affection for us

1. Mk 1:11: “well pleased” (there is a pleasure)

2. Human parents have a deep affection for and delight and enjoyment in their children

3. When you set aside time to be alone with God remember that he has been looking forward to that time.

B. His favor rests on us and he has a desire to bless us

1. He is eager to give us the good things that will lead to our joy and fulfilment

2. Of course discipline and saying no to some things are part of being loving parents, but the purpose is always ultimately to bless

3. This is the quality of God that comes through most in Jesus’ teaching on prayer

a. Lk 11:11-13: just as human fathers want to give good gifts, so even more our heavenly father

b. Lk 11:5-8: the cranky neighbor eventually gives the man what he wants. How much more God who is not a reluctant giver!

c. Lk 18:1-8: the unjust judge eventually gives the persistent women what she wants. How much more God who is not a reluctant giver!

4. Since God is a willing giver, the invitation is to keep asking, seeking, knocking (Lk 11:9-10)

III. “Father” says something about how we can approach God in prayer

A. We come totally dependent

1. Children regularly come to their parents because they know there are so many things they can’t do for themselves

2. Jesus came to God that way. He was the most dependent person who ever lived (see John 5:19-20, 30).

3. The main reason we don’t pray more is we don’t realize how desperately dependent we are on God.

B. We come trusting

1. Children live with the assumption that their parents love them and want to bless them.

2. Ex: A child walking up, sitting on dad’s lap and eating his breakfast.

3. There’s a presumption of favor that is totally appropriate in a child-parent relationship

 4. Jesus’ assumed this same favor from his Father (see Jn 11: 41-42)

5. We are invited to approach God with confidence (Hb 4:16)

6. Our persistence in prayer should be fueled by that same confidence that God will give us good things if we keep pressing in (sometimes the good thing he’ll give is more of himself, even if we don’t get the specific request we asked for)

C. We come as we are, we come messy

 1. Children come to their parents with whatever is on their heart and mind

2. The Psalms are examples of prayers where people came to God with whatever was on their heart and mind

3. Many of us don’t pray more (or more honestly) because we feel all the messiness inside and thing we have to figure that out first before we can do something “spiritual” like prayer.

4. Instead of letting the messiness inside keep us from prayer, we should bring that to God in prayer and let that messiness be the starting point for our requests. God will shape our hearts in time; our role is simply to come to him as children.

5. Consider Mark 2:17 as an invitation to pray as a sinner

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday we talked about the theological foundation for being able to call God “Father.” The following statement was made: “Not all humans can call God ‘Father’ simply by virtue of being born into this world.” Is that the perspective you have? Do you agree with that? What would you want to add to that if anything?

2. Regarding God’s posture towards us in prayer, we talked about his affection for and favor towards us. How did you respond to the statement made on Sunday: “When you set aside time to be alone with God, remember that he has been looking forward to that time.” Does that resonate with you or do you have a hard time believing that? Why do you think you answer the way you do?

3. Consider the three postures we were invited to have with God in prayer (point III above). Which of those struck you most significantly on Sunday? Which of those postures do you hope to engage in more fully in the coming weeks?

4. How do we reconcile Jesus’ frequent promises that our prayers will be answered with the human experience of having many desperate prayers go unanswered? (see Lk 11:9, Mt 21:22, Jn 14:13 for examples)