



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke

Chapter 11

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Introduction

- Jesus offered a public prayer to the Father in Luke 10:21-22, expressing His joy over the success of the first missionary journey of His disciples
- In chapter 11 the disciples ask Him to teach them how to pray just as St. John taught his disciples, 11:1-4
- It was common for the disciples of Rabbis to have a communal prayer to unite them
- Jesus will give three teachings in this chapter defining the Christian's attitude toward God in prayer:
- The Lord's prayer, 11:1-4, Persistency in prayer, 11:5-8, Sayings on the effectiveness of prayer, 11:9-13



Introduction

Chapter Outline:

- The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4
- The Fervent Prayer 11:5-9
- The Effective Prayer 11:10-13
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- An Unclean Spirit Returns 11:24-26
- The Truly Blessed 11:27-28
- Seeking a Sign 11:29-32
- The Lamp of the Body 11:33-36
- Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- Luke has taken notice of our Savior's praying often
- Thus, at His baptism Luke 3:21; in the wilderness Luke 5:16; before the appointment of the apostles, He continued all night in prayer Luke 6:12; He was alone praying Luke 9:18; His transfiguration also took place when He went up to pray Luke 9:28-29
- It seems that some of the disciples heard their Master praying
- There was something about watching Jesus pray that made them want to learn how to pray as Jesus prayed
- Apparently, John the Baptist had taught his disciples something of how to pray; the disciples wanted to learn more from their teacher



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- The Lord's Prayer, in the narrative of St. Luke, contains five petitions
- Two have reference to the love of God, and three to human needs
- In teaching us to pray, Jesus encourages us to humbly address God as "Father"
- Which indicates an entirely new relationship with God based on the gift of a new and eternal covenant in His Son, Jesus Christ
- It is by the grace of God that we can recognize Him as "*Father*"
- It was very unusual for the Jews of that day to call God "*Father*"



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- For the 1st century Jewish authorities, this was blasphemy, an accusation leveled against Jesus and one of the reasons His enemies sought to kill Him, John 5:17-18
- Tertullian, wrote that *... the expression God the Father' had never been revealed to anyone. When Moses himself asked God who He was, he heard another name. The Father's name has been revealed to us in the Son, for the name Son' implies the new name Father.'*
- God is Father to Jesus, and it is Jesus who shares His divine Sonship with us



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- It is through Jesus that we are made "sons in the Son" through our baptism and become partakers of the divine nature, no longer to be called the sons and daughters of Adam but the sons and daughters of God
- He is our *Father*, but He is our Father *in heaven*
- When we say "*in heaven*" we remember God's holiness and glory
- This is a prayer focused on community
- Jesus said, "*Our Father*" and not "My Father"
- The first words of the prayer teach us that we should express our worship and love before we express our supplication



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- *Hallowed be Your name*, The first petition is that God's name be held holy or sanctified
- It is significant that this is the first petition of the Lord's Prayer
- This petition is the primary petition of all petitions
- We should first pray that God's holy name will be sanctified everywhere on earth, in the heavens, throughout creation in both time and space
- But we also need to make it personal and relevant
- Our cry should be: "Let Your name be sanctified in my life today, Father!"



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- This petition for the sanctification of God's "holy name" can be expressed in that:
- We sanctify His holy name by His command to us to live holy lives, through obedience to His will, Matthew 5:48 and by our offering of reverence and praise
- If our lives are not holy, we defile that sacred family name by which we are called
- We remind ourselves that we are called by our Father's most holy name every time we make the sign of the cross: *In the Name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*
- His Name is our name because He is our Father



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- The second petition is ... *Your kingdom come*
- This petition requests that the Father's kingdom be manifested in our lives and among mankind
- Everyone wants to guard their own name and reputation
- But we must resist the tendency to protect and promote ourselves first and instead put God's *name, kingdom* and *will* first
- This shows that prayer is not a tool to get what we want from God
- It is a way to get God's will accomplished in us and all around us



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- In heaven there is no disobedience and there are no obstacles to God's will; on earth there is disobedience and there are at least apparent obstacles to His will
- The citizens of Jesus' kingdom will want to see *His will* done as freely *on earth as it is in heaven*
- One might rightly wonder why God wants us to pray that *His will* would be done, as if He were not able to accomplish it Himself
- God is more than able to do His will without our prayer or cooperation; yet He invites the participation of our prayers, our hearts, and our actions in seeing His *will be done on earth as it is in heaven*



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- *Give us day by day our daily bread*, This is the turning point in the prayer
- The first two petitions were addressed to God
- The second series of petitions concern us: *give us, forgive us, and do not lead us into temptation*
- Generally speaking, the Church Fathers, Origen, Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine, interpret this word saying that the petition prays, not for *the common bread* of everyday life, but for a spiritual food, a reference to the Holy Eucharist



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- St. Augustine says, “The Eucharist is our daily bread. The power belonging to this divine food makes it a bond of union. Its effect is then understood as unity, so that, gathered into His Body and made members of him, we may become what we receive....This also is our daily bread: the readings you hear each day in church and the hymns you hear and sing. All these are necessities for our pilgrimage”
- Do we interpret this petition as the daily nourishment that we need to survive physically or spiritually?
- The Church Fathers do acknowledge that all bread, heavenly and materially, does indeed come from God



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- And we do provide in cooperation with God's creation the bread that is supernaturally transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ
- However, the Fathers warn this interpretation of bread for our physical nourishment must also include the acknowledgement that this petition also refers to the heavenly bread that is Christ our Savior
- Some other scholars have thought *daily bread* referred to Jesus Himself as the bread of life
- Others have thought it speaks of the word of God as our daily bread



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- The next petition is *forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us*, Jesus makes forgiveness the cornerstone of one's relationship with God
- In God's mercy He has forgiven us our sins and therefore we must show the same mercy to those who have hurt us and seek our mercy
- *Temptation* literally means a *test*, not always a solicitation to do evil
- God has promised to keep us from any testing that is greater than what we can handle, 1 Corinthians 10:13
- God, while He does not 'tempt' men to do evil, James 1:13, does allow His children to pass through periods of testing



The Lord's Prayer 11:1-4

- *do not lead us into temptation*, Some claim that this is a poor translation claiming that God does not lead us into evil doing
- They say that the better understanding of this phrase in the original Greek in both Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:5 can mean either: "Do not let us yield to temptation" or "do not allow us to enter into temptation,"
- In this petition we recognize that human efforts alone are not enough to help us cope with temptation, we must turn to God to get the strength we need
- We must turn to God to get the strength we need to resist the temptation to sin, and through the work of the Holy Spirit to fight the battle against sin in order to live the victory of a holy life



The Fervent Prayer 11:5-9

- This is Jesus second teaching on how to pray and the Christian's attitude toward prayer
- “Midnight” is chosen as being the time at which, above all others, men expect to be left to their repose
- The unexpected visitor asks for “three loaves,” one for himself, one for the guest, one as a reserve
- It took a lot of boldness for the man in the story to so shamelessly ask his friend in the middle of the night; he really *wanted* and *needed* the bread



The Fervent Prayer 11:5-9

- Although idle repetitions in prayer are forbidden, persistency in prayer—wrestling with God, and not letting Him go until He has blessed us—are here distinctly taught
- So, the implied lesson is, the man who prays should think that God will care for those who plead, and will give them their “daily bread” in both the higher and the lower senses of the word
- This parable and that of the unjust judge Luke 18:1-8 are teaching the same lesson that men ought always to pray, and not grow faint-hearted when the answer to prayer is long delayed



The Fervent Prayer 11:5-9

- They imply that we have to wait for the fulfilment of spiritual desires, and they teach that it is worth our while to wait; fulfilments will come, God is good to them that wait upon Him
- *yet because of his persistence* or, His importunity
- The word is a strong one, "shamelessness"; persisting in the face of all that seemed reasonable, and refusing to take a denial
- The borrower had only need to keep on knocking to get all he wanted
- God often waits for our passionate persistence in prayer
- It doesn't change God's intentions toward us; instead, our persistence changes us to recognize God's work in us and His will for our lives



The Effective Prayer 11:10-13

- Addressing the effectiveness of prayer to the Father, Jesus does not put any restrictions on prayer
- St. Jerome commenting on this passage notes: *It is written, to everyone who asks it will be given; so, if it is not given to you, it is not given to you because you do not ask; so, ask and you will receive* (Jerome, Commentary of Matthew, 7)
- Jesus has already given us His own model prayer in the Lord's Prayer/Our Father
- Now He encourages His disciples to pray by giving several commands and promises



The Effective Prayer 11:10-13

- In verses 9-10 Jesus gives three direct commands and three promises if one follows these commands in connection to how we should pray, , *ask*, everyone who asks receives; *seek*, the one who seeks finds; *knock*, the one who knocks, the door will be opened
- We are told to keep on *asking, seeking and knocking*
- All three verbs are continuous
- Jesus is not speaking of single activities, but of those that persist
- Some indeed ask and do not receive, because they ask unsuitable, James 4:3



The Effective Prayer 11:10-13

- The Master keeps on presenting instances of the loving Fatherhood of God
- Our Lord illustrates and confirms what He had said before by a common example among men
- The relation between a father and a son is natural, and it is very near; and it is usual for a son, when hungry, and at the proper times of meals, to ask bread of his father: and when he does, *will he give him a stone?*
- If he does, he would show that his heart was as hard, or harder than the stone he gives



The Effective Prayer 11:10-13

- *Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?* Would he try to deceive him? Especially some sort of fish, which would poison or sting him, Would not he restore and nourish him?
- Such inhuman cruel parents are not surely to be found
- Any human father loves to bless his children and would never answer a simple request for something good with something evil
- If that is case with us, *how much more* will God answer us
- God especially loves to give *the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him*
- The problem is in our receiving, not in God's desire to give



The Effective Prayer 11:10-13

- It is not difficult for even a wicked father to determine that one choice is definitely better for a child than the other
- The point is that even the unrighteous know the difference between what is good parenting and what is not good
- Therefore, can you trust your heavenly Father to give you the best gift when you pray?
- It is interesting that the force of this parable lies in the contrast rather than in the comparison between the Father who is God and the human father
- Jesus acknowledges that even the unrighteous can perform good acts when He make this statement in verse 13

A House Divided Cannot Stand

11:14-23



- A crowd has gathered and Jesus heals a demon possessed person
- This is the first of three episodes that Luke recounts where Jesus deals with either demons or signs from heaven (11:14-23, 24-26, and 29-32)
- Most of the people are impressed and amazed, but some showed another accusation against Jesus
- They could not bear that He should be thought to be the Messiah,
- These men could not deny the reality of the work of healing, so they tried to suggest that the great Healer had dealings with some great evil angel, whom they call, from some old Jewish tradition, Beelzebub

A House Divided Cannot Stand

11:14-23



- The accusation seems to have been whispered among the people by the Pharisee representatives from the capital
- The words of the charge were evidently not addressed to Jesus
- In 2 Kings 1:3 we read that this idol-deity was the god of Ekron
- The name signifies "lord of flies"
- *Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven, Some others want another prove that this great work is not derived from the realm of darkness*
- So, they asked Him to show them that their suspicion is baseless by performing more signs

A House Divided Cannot Stand

11:14-23



- Jesus logically answered that if He were an agent of Satan, and worked against Satan, then civil war had come to Satan's kingdom, and Satan's kingdom would therefore not stand
- The point was that Satan would not work *against* himself and His accusers had to answer how *Satan* benefited from the work Jesus had just done
- The argument is perfectly simple
- It is not thinkable that the prince of evil would fight against himself, which he would be doing if he put such mighty weapons into Jesus' hands

A House Divided Cannot Stand

11:14-23



- If their accusation is correct, then even their own Jewish exorcists, who claim to cast out evil spirits, must be in association with Satan
- A question has been raised respecting these professed exorcists of evil spirits whom Jesus here calls "your sons" Who were they?
- Some, have supposed that our Lord here alluded to His own apostles, to whom a measure of this power over unclean spirits was certainly given
- But most Church Fathers refused this thought
- Others say that they were "pupils of the wise" disciples of the great rabbinical schools

A House Divided Cannot Stand

11:14-23



- If Jesus heals by the power of God then He is an agent of God and the coming Kingdom they preached has arrived
- Since in accusing Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan they have implicated their own exorcists, let those exorcists judge the accuracy of their ridiculous slander
- It is hardly likely that they will agree that they also can only cast out demons by Satan's power
- Jesus completes this part of His defense against their accusations by a reference to eschatological judgment in verse 20
- Jesus' meaning is that those who slander Him will face divine judgment

A House Divided Cannot Stand

11:14-23



- In verses 21-22 Jesus speaks of a strong man versus a more powerful man
- The reference to the "strong man" and the "stronger man" is probably an echo of the words of St. John the Baptist in Luke 3:16 and also of Jesus defeat of Satan in the Temptation 4:1-13
- The *strong man* is the devil; *his palace* is the world as he is the ruler of the world; *his goods* especially here with this event the soul of this poor possessed man; *the stronger than he* is Jesus Himself
- Jesus made it clear that He was the *stronger man* who was not captive under the *strong man*

A House Divided Cannot Stand

11:14-23



- His message was, “I’m not under Satan’s power. Instead, I’m proving that I am stronger than he is by casting him out of those he has possessed.”
- *he takes from him all his armor*, Jesus not only defeated Satan on our behalf, He also disarmed him, Colossians 2:15
- *divides his spoils*, Jesus’ victory over the *strong man* is complete
- There are only two sides in God's battle against Satan "those who are for Jesus and belong to God and those who are against Jesus who advance the cause of Satan, bringing violence to *scatters* the people

An Unclean Spirit Returns

11:24-26



- This is the picture of a person delivered from a demon, but not yet filled with Jesus
- It is a picture of a person who tries to be neutral
- They say they are not for Satan, but they are also not for Jesus
- Jesus shows us that this is impossible
- Once being driven out, a demon can return if the delivered person does not repent and get his life right with God
- If we empty our heart from evil without filling it with Jesus and His good, evil will rush in again to fill it – and sometimes worse evil than before
- Therefore, in answering those who accused Him of working by the power of Satan, Jesus told them that He had not merely come to fight against evil, but to bring God's good into our hearts

An Unclean Spirit Returns

11:24-26



- The house was empty and there was no indwelling Presence there of the Holy Spirit of the Lord, and so the old state of possession returned
- The number seven probably symbolizes the full force of evil
- Jesus warning highlights the unfortunate failure of the human condition “often” repentance and the expressed desire to reform doesn't last long
- It is not enough to repent evil and to be made clean again, repentance must be an on-going process in which we must be continually freed from our sins, renewed in turning back to God and sanctified by the Holy Spirit



The Truly Blessed 11:27-28

- A woman in the crowd who is impressed with Jesus' wisdom and healing blesses His mother
- Jesus' response must not be taken as a criticism of His mother
- Rather Jesus echoes the sentiments of Elizabeth's blessing of Mary in Luke 1:45 and Mary's hymn in Luke 1:46-48
- In Elizabeth's blessing of Mary in Luke 1:45 Elizabeth says: *"Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord"* basing Mary's blessing on hearing and believing the angel's announcement of the birth of the Christ



The Truly Blessed 11:27-28

- In the Virgin Mary's hymn, she makes it clear that she is blessed because she has believed and submitted herself to the will of God: *My soul magnifies the Lord; and my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior, for He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*"
- Jesus' beatitude does not reject the woman's blessing for His mother but sets the priority of blessedness in obedience to God
- It has been noticed that this is the first direct fulfillment of St. Mary's hymn - *all generations shall call me blessed*



The Truly Blessed 11:27-28

- St. Chrysostom says on this, “How many women have blessed the Holy Virgin, and desired to be such a mother as she was! What hinders them? Christ has made for us a wide way to this happiness, and not only women, but men may tread it—the way of obedience; this it is which makes such a mother, and not the throes of parturition.”



Seeking a Sign 11:29-32

- The words here spoken are clearly an answer to the demand for a divine sign as proof of His authority from God in Luke 11:16
- Jesus said this to the thick crowd, rebuking their inclination to seek and value signs
- Jesus just mentioned the blessedness of being one who heard and did God's word; the contrast is the one who *seeks a sign*
- Ironically, Jesus had given *many* remarkable signs, just not the kind they wanted to see
- Jesus told us that Jonah *became a sign*, and Jesus would be a similar sign to His generation



Seeking a Sign 11:29-32

- Jonah gave his life to appease the wrath of God coming upon others who were in the boat with him
- But death did not hold him; after three days and nights he was alive and free, Jonah 1-2
- Jesus is that sign, both to His present generation and to ours
- Jesus *Himself* is the sign; we are to believe in Him, not a sign
- In identifying Himself with the prophet Jonah, Jesus affirms Jonah's message of salvation to the Gentiles "God's gift of salvation isn't just for the Jews but for all people"



Seeking a Sign 11:29-32

- The *queen of the South* came to Solomon in 1 Kings 10
- When she saw the great works that God did for and through Solomon, she praised the God of Israel
- She did not say, “Show me more and maybe I will believe”
- She sought after God’s word with a determination that shames us
- The people who asked Jesus for a sign saw His work right there in their own neighborhood, and did not believe
- King Solomon's wisdom attracted from far countries the famous queen



Seeking a Sign 11:29-32

- One wiser than Solomon was in their midst
- On the day of the Last Judgment the Queen of Sheba and the men of Nineveh will stand before God's throne and accuse the faithless generation that rejected Jesus the Messiah
- Jesus is a much greater messenger than either of them
- Jesus repeatedly brought the focus back upon Himself
- He was and is greater than all previous prophets; He should become the focus of faith and trust from His people
- His greater light brought a greater accountability to His hearers



The Lamp of the Body 11:33-36

- Just as a lamp should be displayed out in the open so that all can benefit from its light, so the word and work of God should be displayed
- This section has application to both what went before it (Jesus answers those who thought His miracles were the work of Satan and those who wanted to see more) and what comes after it (Jesus deals with hypocrisy)
- Some saw His brightness, some did not, and others thought the light wasn't bright enough and demanded to see more
- Even as a bad eye will make a person blind, so bad hearts will make one spiritually blind



The Lamp of the Body 11:33-36

- One must be spiritually blind to attribute Jesus' miracles to Satan and to ignore the work of Jesus right before the eyes or to live as a hypocrite
- Evil desires make the "eye" less sensitive to the will of God and the darkness of evil actions can blot out the "light" of Christ's presence
- Those who are like many of the Pharisees and scribes are unable to perceive the work of Christ in the world
- They are blinded by the darkness of their own un-repented sins and are closed to the light of Christ in their lives



The Lamp of the Body 11:33-36

- The warning is one which calls men to self-examination
- They need to examine their primary beliefs, their very intuitions of right and wrong, lest all they do should be blemished at its very source
- The call to do this implies that they must have a Light by which to judge their light, a Standard by which to test their standard, and that Light and Standard are found in the teaching of the Light that lights every man, in the recorded words and acts of the Son of Man
- When one lives in darkness, there are two possible reasons why
- There may be no light source, or the darkness may be within – the inability to *perceive* light



The Lamp of the Body 11:33-36

- When Jesus warned, *take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness*, He warned against the darkness within
- When the light of God's word shines; when the word and work of Jesus is understood, then one does not walk in the darkness of spiritual blindness
- Evil desires make the "eye" less sensitive to the will of God and the darkness of evil actions can blot out the "light" of Christ's presence
- Those who are like many of the Pharisees and scribes are unable to perceive the work of Christ in the world
- They are blinded by the darkness of their own un-repentant sins and are closed to the light of Christ in their lives

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- This is not the first time Jesus was invited to dine in the home of a Pharisee, Luke 7:36
- In this passage Jesus reads the thoughts of His host who is critical of Jesus' failure to observe the custom of the ritual purification of His hands before the meal
- That is not to say Jesus did not have clean hands
- The ritual of dipping one's hands in water was not to cleanse them but to emphasize one's internal righteousness after the blessing of the food and the washing away of any contamination from that is ritually unclean

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- We see that in spite of the increase of conflict that Jesus experienced and opposition from the religious leaders, He didn't hate them in return
- Jesus accepted this invitation to *eat with a certain Pharisee*
- Based on the words Jesus said in his home, it is possible that the Pharisee regretted his invitation to Jesus
- Jesus was not unhygienic when *He had not first washed before dinner*
- He did not follow the extremely technical and rigid requirements of ceremonial washing practiced by many pious Jews

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- Jesus contrasts a clean outer cup and dish that is filthy within, with the condition of the Pharisees who appear to be righteous outwardly but inwardly neglect to purify their souls through repentance of their sins and acts of mercy that would truly cleanse their inner lives
- The meaning of these words is, "In spite of your extreme care for the vessels of your table, your whole moral life is unclean and defiled. Are you not", argues the Master, *Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also?*
- If these religious leaders were as concerned about cleansing their hearts as they were about their hands, they would be more godly men

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- God is the Creator of life and He created man to be holy externally and internally
- *But rather give alms of such things as you have*, This loving activity will then make your entire ceremonial purifications superfluous for you
- Some explain it, Give as alms '*the contents*' of cup and platter, and then they will be *all* clean without washing
- It is love which purifies, not ceremonial acts
- What defiles is selfishness
- What purifies is the unselfishness of love

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- *you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs*, The Master, ever tender and considerate, does not blame this exaggerated perfectionism, if it were done to satisfy even a distorted partial conscience
- What He does find fault with is the substitution of and the clear preference for these infinitely lower duties for the higher
- Jesus spoke harshly here, yet this was not the language of personal irritation but of divine warning and condemnation
- Their tithing was meticulous and noteworthy; but hypocritical because it served to sooth the guilt of their neglect of the *justice and love of God*

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- *you love the best seats in the synagogues*, These seats were in a semicircle round the pulpit of the reader; they faced the congregation
- In verse 43, Jesus condemns them for the sins of pride and arrogance by expecting the best seats during public worship in the Synagogue and to be the first to be greeting in the public marketplace
- For them it is all about the observance of their rank and privilege in Jewish society
- Literally, the word *hypocrites* refers to an actor, someone playing a part

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- Jesus exposed the corruption that was covered by the spiritual image of the *scribes and Pharisees*
- These religious leaders loved giving the impression that they were ever so spiritual, but they actually defiled everyone they came in contact with
- Walking over a grave ceremonially defiled a Jewish person, even if they did not know it was there
- An unmarked grave is not readily discernible as a source of uncleanness, just as the Pharisees are not easily detected as unclean on the outside but like a dead body inside a grave their internal condition is corrupted

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- This Scribe thought that Jesus could not possibly mean to reflect on the honored class who interpreted the Law
- He would have done better to keep quiet, but since he drew attention to himself, Jesus addressed him also
- Because of the way that they interpreted the law, these experts in the Mosaic law laid heavy burdens on people
- They added many more details to the commandments and prohibitions of the Law
- They wrongly used the Scriptures as a tool of control and oppression, all while avoiding one's true responsibility before God

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- Out of pretended respect and honor, they repaired and beautified the *tombs of the prophets*, and with hypocrisy said, *"If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets"* (Matthew 23:30, 31); convicting themselves daily of as exact a resemblance in spirit and character to the very classes over whose deeds they disapproved
- Jesus' accusation is that one generation kills God's holy prophets and the next generation honors the dead prophet by building a tomb in his memory in hopes of making amends for the actions of their ancestors

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- By the *wisdom of God*, here, is undoubtedly meant the Savior Himself
- They are currently conspiring against Jesus and will be successful in their plan
- Jesus prophesied that these leaders would complete the rejection of the prophets their fathers began by persecuting His disciples, whom He would send to them
- Verse 50, This was a remarkable condemnation from Jesus, saying that those who rejected Him and His apostles and prophets would face a greater and unique accountability

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- Jesus here spoke of *all* the righteous martyrs of the Old Testament
- *Abel* was clearly the first, and *Zechariah* was the last
- God's holy prophets have been persecuted and murdered throughout the course of salvation history, but this time they have rejected more than a human prophet
- His generation has rejected the promised Messiah "God Himself" the One to whom all of the sacred writings and the history of Israel has pointed
- Therefore, they will bear the burden of the sins of all the past generations for the persecution and murder of the prophets who came before Him

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- Each scribe or “doctor of the law,” in the full sense of the term, was symbolically admitted to his office by the delivery of a key
- The *lawyers* have obscured and destroyed the true knowledge of the Messiah, which is the key both of the present and the future kingdom of heaven
- Or, by their wrong interpretations of Scripture, they have filled the people with strong prejudices against the gospel, so that they not only reject it themselves, but hinder others from receiving it
- It is bad for someone to not enter into heaven themselves; but it is far worse to hinder another person from entering in

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers 11:37-54



- Instead of accepting Jesus' judgment against them with humility, they prove His accusations by following the example of their forefathers' treatment of God's prophets
- They immediately begin planning Jesus' destruction
- They cannot arrest Him for speaking against them, but they will look for the opportunity to accuse Him officially of blasphemy, heresy and law-breaking
- The religious leaders responded the way many do when they are faced with the correction and the truth of God
- Instead of humbly receiving the correction, they responded with outraged accusations



Discussion

- As Jesus prayed, what did His disciples request?
- With what is God's forgiveness of us linked?
- Why do parents grant their children's requests?
- If a person is not with Jesus, what is his status?
- What lesson should we learn about prayer?

Discussion



- Is God's promise to answer prayer absolute and unconditional? Explain, and prove your answer.
- Explain the illustration of the strong man and the stronger man – 11:21,22. What is the point in context?
- Who is blessed, according to Jesus?
- What did Jesus' generation want?

Discussion



- What made the Queen of the South fit for judging the people of Jesus' generation?
- Why did Jesus choose the illustration of light and darkness?
- What did the Pharisees neglect in favor of tithing herbs?
- What are some ways people today may be like the Pharisees?