Bible Study 68

March 1, 2023

 Luke’s Gospel (Continued)

In Chapter 11 the disciples ask Jesus to ‘teach them to pray.’ Perhaps because they themselves saw Christ leave and go to a quiet place and spend time in prayer.

We know that Jesus’ response is to teach them the ‘Our Father’, but we rarely examine the words of that prayer.

It is addressed to the ‘Father’ and begins by praising his name. Yet the very next phrase is “Thy Kingdom come!” Jews would have interpreted this as a return of the mighty ‘kingdom of David’. However, Jesus teaches another kind of kingdom.

The kingdom is exemplified in ‘The Sermon on the Plain’ earlier in Luke. The kingdom is not geographical or empirical. It has little to do with power but everything to do with goodness.

“Give us each day our daily bread.” Harps back to the ‘wilderness experience of Israel in the desert feeding from manna sent from heaven.

“Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.”—Israel was obsessed with the guilt of sin because they knew all too well from the Commandments what was and was not a sin. Jews would do any kind of penance in order to be ‘right with God’.----Ultimately, it will be his sacrificial death that brings forgiveness.

Then Jesus illustrates the prayer with a series of example stories. They all teach that we will not receive from God unless we ask.

The friend and the loaves. Persistence.

“Ask and it will be given to you.”

“Which of you fathers if asked by your son for a fish will give him a snake?”

How much more will our heavenly father give to those who love him?

It is perhaps the greatest failing of Christians that they do not ask; they do not receive. It is a failure of faith.

Note it is the Holy Spirit who brings gifts of grace.

Chapter 11 v 14.

There is a return to the argument that Jesus uses the power of the devil to drive out demons. Jesus confronts this by saying:

“No kingdom divided against itself can stand.” Instead, he tries to make them understand, that only goodness and light can overcome darkness and evil. It is the hand of God and not Satan. The kingdom has begun and is here now among you.

“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it.

Again, Luke emphasizes that the kingdom is ruled by obedience to the will of God.

Read Chapter 11