

Sermon Discussion Questions



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"THE NECESSITY OF DEPENDENT PRAYER"

Discuss

In 1838, Fyodor Dostoevsky entered military school. He wrote home to ask his father for new boots and other furnishings, pleading that without them he would be the laughingstock of the school. Even though cash-strapped, his father said yes to everything Dostoevsky requested. Sadly, his father died soon afterwards under mysterious circumstances. Dostoevsky later came to believe that his father had been murdered by his serfs, the laborers who were bound to work his father's estate. He realized that he had been given the luxuries he desired while the people his father essentially owned were not even supplied with the barest necessities.¹ When Dostoevsky wrote his father from school, however, he undoubtedly believed he was asking for what he truly *needed*, not what he only *wanted*.

- 1) We are told to ask for our daily bread in the Lord's Prayer, but what exactly is our daily bread? What needs may we rightly request from God?
 - Take a look at Proverbs 30:7-9, in which the writer asks God to "give me only my daily bread." What are the dangers of wealth, and what are the dangers of poverty?
 - What can (or should) foster a greater sense of dependence on God for those of us who enjoy the relative safety and prosperity of the Western world? See Deut. 8:17-18.
 - Most of us have heard someone say, "If God already knows everything, why pray?" How would you explain the necessity of dependent prayer to someone who asked that question?
- 2) Let's turn now to considering the 5th petition of the Lord's Prayer: asking God to forgive us. David said after he committed adultery with Bathsheba, "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." (Ps. 51:4) What does his statement tell us about God and our sin?
 - If every sin is an offense against God, is sin against others more or less weighty? (Is David saying he didn't sin against Bathsheba, or that his sin against her didn't matter?)
 - What, ultimately, will make us willing to forgive those who have wronged us, even those who have sinned against us like David sinned against Bathsheba and her husband?
- 3) We know that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness (see Matt. 4:1-11), but in the Lord's Prayer he instructs us to pray for deliverance from temptation.
 - Are we asking God to help us stand firm when we face temptation, or are we asking God to remove temptation altogether? Can we ask for both? Explain your answer. If time, read 1 Cor. 10:13 and James 1:13-15.

DATE: January 19, 2020

SPEAKER: Joe/Frank

SERIES: Prayer

PASSAGE: Luke 11:3-4

Pray

O Lord, the great Giver of life and Redeemer of our souls,

Because you are our Shepherd, we know that we can trust that you will provide everything that we need. You have also instructed us, however, to ask for our daily bread, so we do just that. We ask that you would give us the good things in life that we need in order to live from day to day: food, clothing, shelter, and money to pay our bills.

When we think very long of how we are living each day, we remember the things that we should have done for your sake and failed to do, and the ways that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We repent of these sins and ask for your mercy and forgiveness.

We trust that you will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear. Show us the way out when we face temptation so that we can stand firm and not fall. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS
Teen Challenge

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS
Grace Theological College

¹This story was related in Joshua Rothman's *New Yorker* article entitled "The Equality Conundrum," January 13, 2020.