

## Opening doors, overcoming devils

### a. Prayer that opens doors (11:5-13)

#### 11:5-8 Another prayer lesson: Persist! (18:1-5)

[1] [11:5-7] Evidently he was a poor man living in a one-roomed house. The whole family would sleep on a raised platform at one end of such a room, possibly with the animals at floor level. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 195

[2] [11:8] From *anaides*, shameless, [connected with] *aidos*, shame, shamelessness, impudence. An old word, but here alone in the N.T. **A.T. Robertson** *Word Pictures in the New Testament* Vol. 2 p.160

[3] [11:8] We must not play at prayer, but must show persistence if we do not receive the answer immediately. It is not that God is unwilling and must be pressed into answering. The whole context makes it clear that He is eager to give. But if we do not want what we are asking for enough to be persistent, we do not want it very much. **L. Morris** *Luke* p. 195

[4] [11:5-13] It is far more easy to begin a habit of prayer than to keep it up. Myriads of professing Christians are regularly taught to pray when they are young, and then gradually leave off the practice as they grow up. Thousands take up a habit of praying for a little season, after some special mercy or special affliction, and then little by little become cold about it, and at last lay it aside. ... let us resolve by God's grace, that however poor and feeble our prayers may seem to be, we will pray on. It is not for nothing that the Bible tells us so frequently, to "watch unto prayer," to "pray without ceasing," to "continue in prayer," to "pray always and not to faint," to be "instant in prayer." ... to remind us of a danger and to quicken us to a duty. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 11

#### 11:9-13 How are the Father's children limited in their application of these promises? (Micah 6:8)

[5] [11:9] The three commands are obviously taken from the parable, and they form a climax

of increasing earnestness. They are all [Greek tense] pres. imperat. "Continue asking, seeking, knocking." **A. Plummer** *Luke* p.299

[6] [11:9,10] The word *ask* probably alludes to the cries of the friend in distress, and the word *seek* to his efforts to find the door in the night, or in endeavoring to open it. The gradation of those figures includes the idea of increasing energy in the face of multiplying obstacles. **Frederic L. Godet** *Luke* p.318

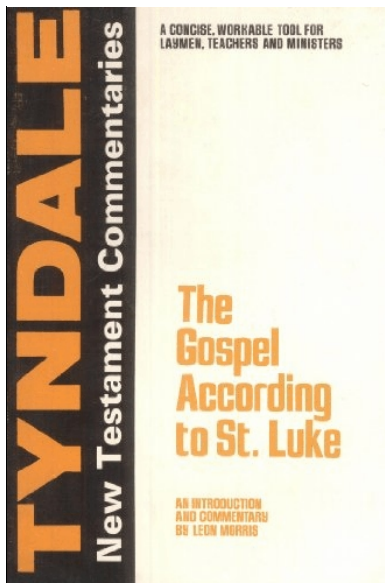
[7] [11:13] Innate human sinfulness is for Jesus a basic presupposition. See on 13:1-9; 18:9-14. **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p.166

[8] [11:13] There are few promises in the Bible so broad and unqualified as those contained in this wonderful passage. The last in particular deserves especial notice. The Holy Spirit is beyond doubt the greatest gift which God can bestow upon man. Having this gift, we have all things, life, light, hope, and heaven. Having this gift, we have God the Father's boundless love, God the Son's atoning blood, and full communion with all three Persons of the blessed Trinity. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 12

[9] [11:9,10] Men ought not to think of God as unwilling to give: He is always ready to give good gifts to His people. But it is important that they do their part by asking. Jesus does not say and does not mean that, if we pray, we shall always get exactly what we ask for. After all, 'No' is just as definite an answer as 'Yes'. He is saying that true prayer is neither unheard nor unheeded. It is always answered in the way God sees is best. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 196

[10] [11:5-13] A man's state before God may always be measured by his prayers. Whenever we begin to feel careless about our private prayers, we may depend upon it, there is something very wrong in the condition of our souls. There are breakers ahead. We are in imminent danger of shipwreck. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 14

"The Holy Spirit is beyond doubt the greatest gift which God can bestow upon man."  
— J.C. Ryle



**Leon Morris on prayer:**  
God always answers prayer. But often His answer is NO!

### Ryle on allegorical method of fathers

[12] I cannot leave the above passage without expressing my own dissent from the allegorical signification which the Fathers and other commentators have thought to fit to place on many of its expressions. I cannot hold, with Augustine, that the three loaves represent the Trinity, man's food and life, or faith, hope and charity, nor yet that the "fish" represents faith, or the "egg" hope. I cannot hold with Bede, that the guest newly arrived is the spirit of man, weary and hungry, the host, natural man unable to satisfy

his soul, and the appeal to the friend, application to God for help. I cannot hold with Vitringa, that the guest is the heathen world, the host who receives him the disciples of Jesus, who must receive bread of life from God for the relief of the heathen, and solicit it with all perseverance. I cannot hold with others, that the children in bed are the angels, or the saints who are already in glory. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 15

## **b. Overcoming the enemy – permanently (11:14-26)**

### **11:14-19 How is this accusation ridiculous? (John 8:44-59)**

[11] The connexion between these verses and those which immediately precede them, is striking and instructive. In the preceding verses, our Lord Jesus Christ had been showing the power and importance of prayer. In the verses before us, he delivers a man from a dumb devil. The miracle is evidently intended to throw fresh light on the lesson. The same Saviour who encourages us to pray, is the Saviour who destroys Satan's power over our members, and restores our tongues to their proper use. **J.C. Ryle** Vol. 2 p. 16

[13] [11:14-20] Do we suppose that there is no such thing as the influence of a "dumb" devil in the present day? If we do, we had better think again. What shall we say of those who never speak to God, who never use their tongues in prayer and praise, who never employ that organ which is a man's "glory," in the service of Him who made it? What shall we say, in a word, of those who can speak to every one but God? What can we say but that Satan has despoiled them of the truest use of a tongue? What ought we to say but that they are possessed with a "dumb devil"? **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 17

[14] [11:15] With the termination [*boub*] the connexion with the Ekronite god of flies must be abandoned. [*Beelzeboul*] may mean either, "Lord of the dwelling," i.e. of the heavenly habitation, or, "Lord of dung," i.e. of idolatrous abomination. "Lord of idols," "Prince of false gods," comes close to "Prince of the demons." **Alfred Plummer** *Luke* p.301

[15] [11:15] This ancient name for the Canaanite *Beel semayin*. "Lord of the Heavens," the rival of Yahweh, "Lord of the Heavens" (*mare semayya*, Dan 5:23), in Hellenistic times, is applied to Satan because of Ps 96:5, "All the gods of the nations are idols," which becomes in the LXX, "... are demons" (*daimonia*). "Beelzebub" of the Latin and Syriac traditions and of the literature that depends on them (e.g. Milton's *Paradise Lost*) is derived from the name of a (Philistine?) god of the town Ekron preserved in 2 Kgs 1:2-3,6,16, *Baal-zebub*. This seems to have been a deliberate caconymic, a (polemical) distortion of the foregoing name to depreciate the pagan god, making it "Lord of the Flies." **Jos. Fitzmyer** *Luke* Vol 2 p.920

[16] [11:17-19] It is true, it might be rejoined that Satan drove out his underlings, the better to accredit Him as his Messiah. Jesus does not seem to have referred to this objection. In any case, the sequel would answer it; the devil can remove the diabolical spirit, but not replace it by the Holy Spirit. **Frederic L. Godet** *Luke* p.321

[17] [11:17] It may be doubted whether the Lord's words in this place are not

meant to refer to the many intestine divisions and dissensions which prevailed among the Jews, even to the very day when Titus took Jerusalem. In this light the verse contained a solemn prophecy. It is notorious that the divisions of the Jews were one cause of the success of the Roman army. **J.C. Ryle** Vol. 2 p. 21

### **11:20-22 Can we find the handle on this difficult saying?**

[18] [11:21] Christ speaks of Satan as a "strong man, armed." Satan is well supplied with defensive armour. He is not to be overcome by slight assaults, and feeble exertions. He that would overcome him must put forth all his strength." **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 23

[19] [11:20-22] The term *finger of God* is admirably in keeping with the context: the arm is the natural seat and emblem of strength; and the finger, the smallest part of the arm, is the symbol of the ease with which this power acts. **Frederic L. Godet** *Luke* p.323

### **11:23 Another hard saying – no neutral ground with Jesus!**

[20] [11:23] One of the most solemn and impressive truths connected with Jesus Christ is that, while men receive Him as a friend or reject Him as an Enemy, they cannot possibly ignore Him. The same sun melts ice and hardens clay, though it merely shines on both. Christ the Sun of righteousness makes some His friends and others His enemies, the difference being due to the varieties of human nature and of attitude towards Him. **W. H. Griffith Thomas** *Outline Studies in the Gospel of Luke* p.202

[21] [11:14-23] The decision Jesus calls for in this text is another feature that is true for every generation. His life and ministry were so unusual that one must assess its roots. The distance between the present and the past has allowed some to claim that Jesus did not really perform these wonders or give this type of evidence of his unique relationship to God. They attempt to relegate Jesus to the level of other greats of religion. But the opponents living in Jesus'

time did not have the luxury of such a claim. They could not deny he had performed deeds of unusual power. The Jewish records we possess that allude to Jesus report the unusual nature of his deeds and try to explain them, not deny them. The corridors of time may dim the reality of his majestic works to an extent that some do deny he did them, but that is not a rational option. If it were, his opponents would have taken that road long ago. Those who opposed Jesus took

"He is not to be overcome by  
slight assaults, and feeble  
exertions."  
– J. C. Ryle

Unlike Christ's modern critics,  
His ancient enemies could not  
deny His miracles ... they  
merely attributed Christ's  
supernatural power to the  
Prince of demons!

## **Division inexcusable if not over essentials**

[24] Division and separation from those who adhere to false and unscriptural doctrine is a duty, and not a sin. But there are divisions of a very different kind, which are deeply to be deplored. Such, for example, are divisions between men who agree on main points, divisions about matters not needful to salvation, divisions about forms and ceremonies, and ecclesiastical arrangements upon which Scripture is silent. Divisions of this kind are to be

avoided and discouraged by all faithful Christians. The existence of them is a melancholy proof of the fallen state of man, and the corruption of his understanding as well as his will. They bring scandal on religion, and weakness on the church. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* Vol. 2 p. 20

the logical option left to them in light of the evidence of his supernatural power: They claimed it was rooted in a diabolical force. Jesus knew the argument and dealt with it here. **Darrell L. Bock** *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke* p.320

**11:24-26 What's wrong with a house 'swept and put in order'? (10:38-42; Rev. 3:14-22 – What is the character of the houses of the rich?)**

**[22]** [11:24-26] The case of a demoniac who is cured and then allows himself to become repossessed is made a parable to illustrate the case of a sinner who repents of his sins, but makes no effort to acquire holiness. Such an one proves the impossibility of being neutral. He flees from Satan without seeking Christ, and thus falls more hopelessly into the power of Satan again. **A. Plummer** p.304

**[23]** [11:14-28] Luke appends two further sayings (24-28) that explain this sober warning. First, the experience of the kingdom powers demands a firm commitment to the kingdom message, i.e. 'the Word of God'. The person who fails to respond to this demand is like a man freed from one demon only later to fall victim to a host of them (cf. Heb. 6:4ff). Second the real blessedness is not the passing joy of a mother whose son is a famous healer but the abiding joy of those who 'hear' his kingdom message and 'keep' it. **E. Earle Ellis** *Luke* p.166