

## **BIBLE READING DAY 26, THURSDAY: MARCH 24**

### **Jesus Teaches About Prayer**

Luke 11:1–13

*Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”*

*“When you pray,” said Jesus, “say, Father, hallowed be your name. May your kingdom come. Give us each day our necessary bread. Forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone who has wronged us. And do not lead us into temptation.*

*“Suppose,” said Jesus, “one of you goes to a friend at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come to me on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.’ The friend will answer from within, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked for the night, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything just because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.*

*“I say to you therefore, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

*“What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will you give him a scorpion? If you therefore, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”*

### **Woes and Wisdom, Luke 11:37–54 Luke 12:1–9, 13–21, 49–53**

*After this, a Pharisee invited him to dine with him. And he went in and sat down at table. The Pharisee noticed with astonishment that he did not wash before the meal. But the Lord said to him, “You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not the God who made the outside make the inside too? But give alms of those things which are within, and behold, all things will be clean for you.*

*“But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and disregard justice and the love of God. These things ought you to have done, without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! for you love the chief seat in the synagogues and salutations in the marketplaces. Woe to you! for you are like unseen graves, over which men walk without knowing it.”*

*One of the lawyers said to Jesus, “Master, in saying these things you are insulting us also.”*

*“Woe to you doctors of the law, too!” said Jesus, “for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves will not so much as touch those burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! for you build tombs for the prophets whom your fathers murdered. Thus, you testify that you approve of the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build memorials. Therefore the wisdom of God has said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and some of whom they will persecute,’ that the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who died between the altar and the sanctuary, may be required of this generation. Yes, I tell you, it shall be required of this generation!*

*“Woe to you lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter the kingdom yourselves, and you hindered those who were trying to enter. As Jesus left the house, the scribes and Pharisees began to harass him and to try to provoke him to speak of many things, watching craftily for an opportunity to trap him in something he might say.*

While these things were taking place, a large crowd gathered—so large that people were jostling one another. Then Jesus began to speak, first to his disciples:

“Beware the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and whatever you have whispered in private chambers will be shouted from the housetops.

“I tell you—my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that, can do nothing more. I will tell you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has the power to cast you into hell! Yes, I tell you, fear him!

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And yet, not one of them is forgotten before God. Even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, for you are worth more than many sparrows! And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God; but he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.”

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Master, tell my brother to divide his inheritance with me.”

“Man, who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over you?” replied Jesus. “Take heed, and beware of all covetousness, for a man’s life does not consist of the abundance of the things he possesses.”

“The land of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. So, he said to himself, ‘What shall I do? I don’t have room enough to store my harvest!’ Then he said, ‘This will I do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take it easy—eat, drink, and enjoy yourself!”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This night your soul is required of you, and whose will all these things be which you have prepared?’ So it is with the man who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich in the things of God.”

“I have come to bring fire to the earth,” said Jesus, “and how I wish it were already ablaze! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and with what urgency am I driven onward until it is accomplished! Do you think I have come to bring peace on the earth? I tell you, no! I have come to bring division. From now on, five in one house will be divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided—father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

### Bad Things Happen to Everyone Luke 13:1–9

There were some present at that time who told Jesus of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

“Do you suppose that those Galileans suffered these things because they were worse sinners than all the other Galileans?” asked Jesus. “I tell you, no. And unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. And what about those eighteen people on whom the tower in Siloam fell, killing them all? Do you suppose that they were worse offenders than all the other people who lived in Jerusalem? I tell you, no. And unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Then he told this parable: “A certain man had a fig tree in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, but found none. So, he said to his caretaker, ‘Behold, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find no fruit. Chop it down! Why should it waste the ground?’ But the caretaker replied, ‘Sir, leave it one more year till I can dig around it and apply some manure. Then if it bears fruit after that, well and good; and if not, you can chop it down.’”

#### Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 <sup>st</sup> Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	1 <sup>st</sup> Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	2 <sup>nd</sup> Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING
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## DEVOTIONAL DAY 26 (THURSDAY MARCH 24)

### Words Matter

*Based on selected passages from Luke 11-13*

Using our words matters; using our words well matters even more. When my little brother was a toddler, he was silent. No words at all! Mom was troubled by his silence; so we all went to the doctor. After examining my little brother thoroughly, the doctor pronounced that he was completely capable of speaking. The doctor then asked several questions about our family dynamics and concluded, wisely, that my younger brother was not using his words because his two older sisters were using theirs on his behalf, speaking for him. Until now, that had been sufficient. We left the doctor's office with a prescription of sorts: for my sister and I to stop it. We did. Soon afterwards my little brother found his own words.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, knows just how much words matter; they are the currency of communication. They fuel our conversations and our conversations ARE our relationships. No conversation, no relationship. God designed us to live in community, to be in relationship.

So, our Teacher talks to us about prayer, using our words to pray. He knows that, for our own good, we need to remain in conversation with the Lord. Just in case we need it, Jesus provided us with an example in the Model Prayer, Luke 11:1-13. Just in case we need it, He kept it simple: Praise God; confess my sin; ask.

He talks to us about using our words to repent. To apologize to God, to say we are sorry, to turn away from the offending behavior, to re-open the channels of communication. We are to use our words to heal broken relationships, with God and with others. This use of words is a requirement (Luke 13:1-9).

Jesus talks to us about using words wisely as we craft our own warning signs. Beside the main road/path throughout our pasture, we have posted these signs: Slow Deer Crossing. The intent is to request drivers to be mindful of the presence of resident deer who were here first. Words do matter, as does punctuation. You may already be smiling, knowing what I will say next. What we mean to communicate is Slow, Deer Crossing. As Christ followers, we need to word our warning signs clearly. Be aware or beware of these things, referenced in Luke 11: 37-54 and 12:13-15:

Beware of hypocrisy, saying one thing and doing another. Hypocrisy can be sneaky. Caution! Shield up!  
Beware of covetousness, wanting others' stuff instead of their having it. Caution! Shield up!

Jesus also talks to us about using our words mindfully, heartfully, in conversations with others. Aunt Novie always says, "Be careful of the words you speak; make them soft and sweet. You never know which ones you'll have to eat." Jesus had about 8000 words in His Greek dictionary; we have about 300,000 in our English dictionary. We need to choose wisely as He did; find the words that build up, not tear down. We must ask ourselves how we would feel if our words became posted on highway billboards or in social media outlets.

**Dear Heavenly Father, our environment and our hearts are flooded with words. We seek Your guidance in choosing wisely in order to further the Kingdom mission, to praise You, to reinforce Your principles, and to love one another.**

-- Written by Ann Farris

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"Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body."

Proverbs 16:24

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**WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:**

**WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?**

**PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?**

**ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs**

**A**

**C**

**T**

**S**