

Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading  
Worship Service

10:30am 30<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Led by Selina Chan with Simon Bird Preaching

[www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk)

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#### LENT 4: The Prayers of Jesus 4 – Luke 11:1-12

##### CALL TO WORSHIP:

Come, all who seek the presence of the Lord. In this season of Lent, we draw near in repentance and faith, reflecting on Christ's journey to the Cross.

**We come to worship our God, who hears and answers prayer, who calls us into deeper relationship through His Words.**

On this Mother's Day, we honour and give thanks for those who have nurtured and guided us in faith, reflecting the compassionate love of God.

**We rejoice in the love of God, who cares for us as a mother tenderly cares for her children and teaches us to walk in His ways.**

Let us worship God with open hearts, embracing His grace and the lessons Jesus taught us about prayer. **Amen.**

##### Hymn MP 1040

Come, now is the time to worship.  
Come, now is the time to give your heart.  
Come, just as you are, to worship.  
Come, just as you are, before your God, come.

One day every tongue will confess you are God.

One day every knee will bow.

Still the greatest treasure remains for those

Who gladly choose You now.

Brian Doerksen © 1998 Vineyard Songs

##### A PRAYER OF PRAISE:

Our loving God, we lift our hearts in gratitude for Your presence in our lives.

You are the God who calls us to pray, not as a mere ritual, but as a lifeline to Your divine love and guidance.

**We thank You for the gift of prayer, for the assurance that You hear us when we call.**

May our worship bring glory to Your name as we learn to pray with sincerity, faith, and persistence. **Amen.**

#### **A PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

Our merciful Lord, we come before You humbly, acknowledging our weaknesses and failures.

**Too often, we approach prayer with doubt rather than faith, with hurried words instead of deep communion.**

We confess that we have been distracted by the busyness of life and have neglected the sacred moments of connecting with You.

**Forgive us, Lord, for the times we have taken prayer lightly, for the moments when we have relied on our own strength instead of seeking Your wisdom.**

As we journey through this Lenten season, renew our hearts and teach us to pray as Jesus prayed—with honesty, trust, and surrender.

**Remind us about Jesus' assurance: ask and it will be given to us; seek and we will find; knock and the door will be opened to us. Amen.**

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER: YOU ARE INVITED TO PRAY IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,**

**Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins,**

**As we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours.**

**Now and forever and ever. Amen.**

#### **FAMILY TIME: God is good, all the time, God is good**

*An offering will be taken during the following song...If you would prefer to contribute electronically, please either use the card machine at the entrance of the sanctuary or scan the QR code at the end of this sheet.*

#### **Hymn BP&W 357:**

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

And His righteousness,

And all these things shall be added unto you, Allelu-, alleluia.

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, allelu-,alleluia!*

Man shall not live by bread alone,

But by every word,

That proceeds from the mouth of God, Allelu-, alleluia.

Ask and it shall be given unto you,  
Seek and ye shall find.  
Knock and it shall be opened unto you, Allelu-, alleluia.  
Karen Lafferty © 1972 Maranatha! Music/ Adm. by CopyCare.

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**BAPTISM** of Mohammad Amin Afkhami Abolvardi

**GOSPEL READING:** Luke 11:1-13

**NEW TESTAMENT READING:** Hebrews 10:19-25

## **SONG MP 951**

To be in Your presence,  
To sit at Your feet,  
Where Your love surrounds me,  
And makes me complete.

*This is my desire, O Lord, This is my desire.*

*This is my desire, O Lord, This is my desire.*

To rest in Your presence,  
Not rushing away;  
To cherish each moment,  
Here I would stay.

Noel Richards © 1991 Thank you Music

## **SERMON** The Prayers of Jesus 4 (Luke 11: 1-12)

I wonder what memories you have of your teachers, or other authority figures? Good or bad? Was anyone punished? Did you get the point about the drama? The sermon this morning is about the attitude we can have when we come to God in prayer. A word we use in English is approachable. I want us to believe this morning that God is approachable: that he is kind, loving and welcoming. Pauline last week said God enjoys us when we come to him. What is your picture of God this morning? A tyrant or a loving heavenly father? Can you imagine God smiling and enjoying it when you come to him?

We continue a series on prayer. We are looking at the prayers Jesus prayed and what Luke notices about them. In the first week, when Jesus prayed at his baptism, we made the point: let prayer be the first thing we do. Graeme told us that it was as Jesus was praying his appearance changed; he was transfigured: things happen when we pray, and that includes changing us. Last week, Pauline spoke about how important prayer was for Jesus; and so it will be our priority for us too.

In our reading today, we saw that it was after Jesus finished praying, that one of his disciples asked, 'Lord, teach us to pray!' (Luke 11:1). The disciples must have seen something special in the way Jesus prayed, so they asked this. Let us ask the same thing today: Lord, teach us to pray!

How does Jesus answer this? He teaches them the Lord's prayer and then gives some illustrations. I see they are about our attitude he wants to encourage in us when we come in prayer. Jesus wants us to know God is approachable. He wants us to know we can come boldly and in child-like trust to our heavenly father.

Now, the story before our reading (10:38-42) builds up to this. You will remember Jesus came to Martha and Mary's home. Martha was distracted in her serving, while Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to him. Mary told Jesus, 'tell her to help me!' What did Jesus say to Martha? 'You are upset and worried, but Mary has chosen what is better.' What was most important? Our hearts devotion, not serving. Do we sometimes get this the wrong way round, thinking we must achieve something to come to God? That means we are thinking God is like a strict teacher, not a loving Father. Yes, there is a place for service, but one that flows out a place of acceptance and identity.

So let's look at the passage. We say the Lord's prayer (vs2-4) each Sunday. Actually, we use the slightly longer version from Matthew's Gospel (6:9-13).

Notice, what is the first word? Father. Did you know that there are 21 prayers of Jesus recorded in the Gospels; in all but one Jesus uses the word Father. So this tells us our basic attitude when we come to God in prayer. Not to a boss, not to a strict teacher, not to a robot, not to a wooden idol, not to a hard brick wall, but to a living and loving Father.

The prayer continues about God's glory and for his will to be done. We are encouraged pray for the world to be changed. There is more out there than we can see with our eyes – there is a heavenly kingdom. God uses us and our prayers in bringing in his kingdom. He treats us as partners, co-rulers in doing this.

Our Father is concerned too about our basic simple needs: our physical basics, our need for forgiveness and finally we acknowledge our difficulties and the presence of evil in the world.

After this example prayer, Jesus told a parable of going to a friend at midnight because a guest has unexpectedly turned up (vs 5-8). It is like another parable about the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8). Jesus teaches by contrast and exaggeration. The point is that God is not like the grumpy friend or the unjust judge, but we should pray as if he is – persistently and boldly. He wants us to come in prayer, not apologetically, not weakly, but with the attitude expecting our prayers are going to be heard and answered.

Jesus then gives simple instructions about prayer (vs 9-10). In six ways he tells us to ask. The verbs in the original language have the idea of asking and keep on asking. Jesus is making a point. Again, he does not want us to hold back.

Then there are two short illustrations (vs 11-13), around the family meal and what a good father is like.

Think for a moment about children round a family table. They will come to the table, not worrying, but expecting there will be food. They won't ask if the parents have been shopping. They won't be embarrassed asking for ice cream; there may not be ice-cream, but the parents won't mind them asking. Their attitude, and the kind of attitude Jesus is teaching us, is they will come in child-like trust knowing they will be answered.

Notice how Jesus finishes this teaching on prayer. He promises the Holy Spirit to those who ask (vs13). The Holy Spirit is so important for prayer. He helps us to pray, it says he lives in us, he prays with us and for us (Rom 8:26).

This sermon has been about our attitude when we come in prayer. Jesus wants us to know God is approachable. He wants us to know, deep in our hearts, that we can come boldly and in child-like trust to our heavenly father.

This raises the issue of our image of God. For many our experience of our earthly fathers, or authority figures such as teachers distorts our image of God. It is like we wear a pair of coloured or distorting spectacles. I am sure you would say in your head that God is a loving heavenly Father. He is powerful and able to look after you. But in your heart you may believe something different: unapproachable, a task master, cruel, an abuser, a perfectionist. These are lies about God that our experiences of life can give us. We need to surrender our wrong spectacles, ask for healing of our emotions, meditate on who God is, learn to believe he is our loving heavenly father and come like a child into his presence. That is the place of prayer, and that is what the Holy Spirit will do.

I once read a prayer that starts like this, 'I open myself to God's presence with me and love for me.' This sums up the kind of attitude we can have when we pray. We can come as we are. Our hearts can be open: no fear, only expecting to find love.

I want to lead us in a prayer. Our Lord God; thank you that we can come to you as children to our loving father. Maybe our difficult experiences of life have changed how we view you. Thank you that you understand. We ask you to heal our hearts and emotions. Help us to know you in our hearts as you are. We come expecting you to give us good gifts. We ask you to give us your Holy Spirit now. We ask because Jesus told us to ask and keep on asking.

### **PRAISE SONG – [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO2f\\_3FdEoQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO2f_3FdEoQ)**

Hear our prayer,  
We are your children, and we're gathered here today,  
We're gathered here to pray.  
Hear our cry,  
Lord we need your mercy, and we need your grace today,  
Hear us as we pray.

*Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name,  
Our Father hear us from heaven,  
Forgive our sins we pray.*

Hear our song, as it rises to heaven,  
May your glory fill the earth, like waters cover the seas.  
See our hearts and remove anything  
That is standing in your way  
Of coming to You today!

And though we are few,  
We're surrounded by many, who have crossed that river before,  
And this is the song we'll be singing forever,  
Holy is the Lord Holy is the Lord (x4)

Don Moen © Integrity's Hosanna! Music

### **Prayer of Intercession – Lam and Selina**

Dear Father God,

We are grateful to gather once again at Abbey International Baptist Church to worship You. Thank You for Your presence among us and for reminding us of the power of earnest and persistent prayer.

Lord, the world is not at peace. Wars and conflicts continue to bring devastation, leaving many in despair. We lift up those who are suffering—the displaced, the grieving, the wounded. When we feel powerless in the face of such brokenness, **we ask for Your divine intervention. Bring peace where there is war, hope where there is hopelessness, and healing where there is pain.**

Lord, we see the struggles caused by leadership failures. Many suffer under unjust policies, economic hardships, and inadequate care for their mental and physical well-being. As we witness these challenges, **we seek Your wisdom and compassion. Guide those in power to lead with integrity, and stir within us the courage to advocate for justice, kindness and positive change.**

Lord, mother nature itself groans under the weight of our neglect. Natural disasters—earthquakes, wildfires, floods, and storms—seem to come one after another. As we witness the impact of climate change, **we acknowledge our role in caring for Your creation. Help us to be better stewards of the earth, to restore balance and to protect the vulnerable.**

Lord, we trust that Your ways are higher than ours. We confess that sometimes Your answers to our prayers are not what we expect. Sometimes, You respond with a “not yet.” In those moments, **grant us resilience and patience. Strengthen our faith to trust in Your timing and Your plans.**

**In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, Amen.**

### **HYMN BP&W 233**

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God:  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

### THE BLESSING

As we navigate through the ups and downs of life, may we always remember Your invitation to Your children: to ask, to seek, and to knock. We believe that whenever we pray, You hear us, and Your nurturing and steadfast love is with us. Let us be a beacon to others, help us share the joy of answered prayers as a testimony of Your all mightiness. Amen.

### THE GRACE

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**

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**QR Code for Offering:**

#### Events this week:

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|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 10.30 | Renew Wellbeing               |
|                           | 12.15 | Bible Study                   |
|                           | 2.00  | iCaf (last one)               |
| Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 10.30 | Toddlers                      |
|                           | 10.30 | Bible Study                   |
| Friday 4 <sup>th</sup>    | 10.30 | Prayer Meeting                |
|                           | 5.00  | Ping Pong Club                |
|                           | 7.00  | Iranians Meal and Bible Study |

