
TRUE SPIRITUAL POWER
LUKE 11:1-54

Jesus taught His followers to keep in touch with God's power through prayer. Some of the people accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, prince of demons. He answered this accusation affirming the true source of His spiritual power. He exposed them as an evil, sign-seeking generation.

While dining in a Pharisee's home He discussed the evils of hypocrisy in contrast to godliness.

Teaching on Prayer — Luke 11:1-13

As Shakespeare's *Hamlet* rises to its climax, the king who had murdered his brother, weary of the terrifying torture of a guilty conscience, sought relief in an unaccustomed manner. He attempted to pray. His effort was futile. He rose from his knees in despair and cried out,

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go

(*Hamlet*, III, iii, 97).

The negro spiritual well stated our need:

Not my brother, not my sister,
But it's me, O Lord,
Standin' in the need of prayer.

It is often true, "We do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom. 8:26).

11 He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread; ⁴and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation.' "

⁵And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are 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!"

11:1-4. Since the disciples were subject to the same human weaknesses as we, it should be no surprise that one day when Jesus had finished praying, one of the disciples asked, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." We do not know how John the Baptist taught his disciples concerning prayer.

This prayer may appropriately be called "The Lord's Prayer" because our Lord taught it. It may also be called "The Model Prayer" because it is a pattern to guide our prayers. It has also been called "The Disciple's Prayer" because Jesus taught it to His disciples and

only a disciple of Christ can truly pray this prayer. In Matthew's record of this prayer Jesus introduced it, "Pray then like this" (Matt. 6:9). Here in Luke 11:2, our Lord introduced it, "When you pray, say." Often the prayer is quoted in unison in church worship. This is not wrong as long as minds and hearts are praying the prayer, not just mindlessly mouthing words. The pronouns are all plural suggesting a group prayer. The prayer is valuable in teaching us how to pray by providing a pattern of elements that should be in our prayers. The prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 should be studied as a parallel to Luke's text of the prayer.

Christians can approach God as our personal father in heaven. God is approachable but He also is to be hallowed. *Hallowed* means revered, honored and respected as the Lord of the Universe. Honoring His name means honoring all He is and has revealed of Himself. *Name* represents the person. God is not a vague, abstract ideal. He is a real, existing, divine person. We can know Him and have fellowship with Him.

The request that God's kingdom come is defined by the parallel expression in Matthew's text, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). The kingdom of God is the rule of God in the lives of His people (Wilson, p. 176). In one sense the kingdom came when the church was established on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Yet God's rule has not been accepted by the majority of people alive today. Those who have accepted Christ need to pray that His will may be their will increasingly as they surrender and submit more fully to the lordship of Christ.

We are to look continually to God for the provision of our daily needs. We must acknowledge our total dependence upon God and trust and pray that He will keep giving us what we need to live for Him in this world.

People in today's world have lost a reverence for God and consequently they have lost a recognition of themselves as sinners. The closer one comes to God, the more conscious he is of his own sin. John wrote to Christians, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:8,9). Following this prayer in Matthew, our Lord added, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15; see 18:22-35; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3-4; Eph. 4:32).

“Lead us not into temptation” is a request for God’s help that we may be victorious over temptation. It is a prayer that we will have the constant desire to flee temptation (I Cor. 6:18; 10:14; I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:22). God does not tempt man to sin (James 1:13). God does not allow us to be tempted beyond our power to resist (I Cor. 10:13). Prayer to God for victory can drive the temptation to sin from one’s heart.

11:5-8. Some may have been thinking “I have prayed many times for the same thing, but received no answer.” Jesus told “this simple story to encourage them to continue in humble, fervent, believing, and patient prayer” (Taylor, p. 243). This parable of The Friend at Midnight and the parable of The Unrighteous Judge (18:1-8) both teach persistence in prayer.

A traveler arrived late at a friend’s house. Sometimes people traveled at night to avoid the heat. The friend had no food in the cupboard. No 24-hour convenience store was available for securing a snack. At midnight he went to his neighbor’s home and asked for three loaves (rolls) of bread for his unexpected guest. The man of the house asked not to be bothered. The door was shut. The whole household was asleep on a mat on the floor. Evidently it was a one-room house. To get up would disturb everybody. Those who have slept with restless children can sympathize with the man. He said that he could not get up and grant the request.

The man would not take “No” for an answer. The man of the house finally got up and gave him what he needed. He did not do it because of friendship. He did it because of the friend’s *importunity*, literally shamelessness.

In interpreting the parable we must not make the man of the house represent God or the friend’s type of request represent the method of prayer. We are to wait on God in reverence and faith, trusting that in His wisdom and mercy He will answer our prayer at the right time and in the best way. If a surly man ultimately yields to the shameless insistence of the friend at midnight, much more will our gracious God grant the request of His humble child (Taylor, p. 246). Our heavenly Father, perfect in wisdom and love, will be even more attentive to the request of His children who are really in need. Persistence and patience in prayer is to help us become more holy and submitted to the will of God. It is not to badger an unwilling God into helping us. The text is clear that God is willing to help. The following verses give more understanding of what is involved in prayer.

11:9-13. Jesus made application of the truth illustrated in the

parable by exhorting to persistence. The three commands have increasing intensity and all stress continued activity. Continue to ask, to seek, to find. Asking implies consciousness of need and continuing to make specific requests. Seeking adds action to asking. When we pray we must do our part to bring about the fulfillment of our request. Knocking indicates perseverance. Paul said, "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance" (Eph. 6:18). "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). "Pray constantly" (I Thess. 5:17).

Persistence in prayer does not indicate a lack of faith that God can grant our request. It helps us purify our motives and desires. An important aspect of prayer is the bringing of our will into harmony with the will of God. "True prayer is neither unheard nor unheeded. It is always answered in the way God sees is best" (Morris, p. 196). Our gracious heavenly Father grants fulfillment of our needs as we are patient and persevering in prayer.

The questions in Luke 11:11-12 expect negative answers. "A stone for a loaf" and "A scorpion for a fish" were proverbs. Plummer said, "The meaning here is, that in answer to prayer God gives neither what is useless (a stone) nor what is harmful (a serpent or scorpion)" (p. 300). If fathers who are evil give good gifts to their children, how much more will a good God give what is best for His children. Even some Christians do not trust the goodness of God as they should.

God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask for Him to come into their lives. One asks for the Holy Spirit by loving and believing in Jesus (John 7:37-39; 14:23), by repenting of sin and by being baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; 5:32; John 3:3-5). What a wonderful privilege to have the Spirit of God to dwell in us personally, helping us turn away from selfish and sinful attitudes and actions and creating the mind and spirit of Christ in our personalities! (Rom. 8:11-17; I Cor. 6:19; Gal. 2:20; 5:16-25; Eph. 3:16-21; Phil. 2:5; Titus 3:4-7).

The Holy Spirit is not a power to be manipulated or used to one's advantage. He is a divine person who wants to make us into new creatures (II Cor. 5:17). As we surrender to the Holy Spirit, Christ's way of thinking becomes our way of thinking. Increasingly His motives, will and goals will be our motives, will and goals. His values and priorities are ours. Peter said, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these

you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1:3-4).

A Charge of Blasphemy — Luke 11:14-26

The enemies of Jesus acknowledged that He expelled demons but they said He did it by Satan’s power not God’s. Their charge was an effort to discredit Jesus.

¹⁴Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marveled. ¹⁵But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons”; ¹⁶while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. ¹⁷But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. ¹⁸And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. ¹⁹And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁰But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²¹When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; ²²but when one stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil. ²³He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

²⁴“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he said, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ ²⁵And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. ²⁶Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

11:14-16. Jesus cast a demon out of a man. The evil spirit had caused the man to be unable to speak. After the demon was gone, the man spoke again. While the people marvelled, some criticized. Luke does not identify the attackers. Matthew 12:22-30 and Mark 3:22-27 may be parallel accounts of the same event. Matthew said the charge of blasphemy was made by Pharisees. Mark identified them as scribes from Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles His enemies said to Jesus, “You have a demon” (John 7:20); “You are a Samaritan and have a

demon" (John 8:48). At the Feast of Dedication, they accused, "He has a demon and is mad" (John 10:20).

The best reading of the text is Beelzebul. The Latin Vulgate had Beelzebub. Morris said, "Our best understanding of the evidence seems to be that the Jews took this name of a heathen god and understood it in terms of the similar sounding Hebrew, 'lord of dung.' They applied it to a prominent demon, perhaps to Satan himself. Jesus clearly understood it as referring to Satan." (p. 197).

Others, who are not identified, tested Him, asking for a sign from heaven. They were challenging His credentials for ministry. They wanted an indisputable evidence of God's approval. After Jesus had fed the 5000, when the people asked for a sign so they could believe, they mentioned that their fathers received manna "from heaven" (John 6:30-31). It was characteristic of the Jews to demand signs (I Cor. 1:22). Unbelievers are often unimpressed by the miracles presented by Christ. They say they will not believe unless their kind of miracle is presented. Jesus responded to this request in 11:29-32.

11:17-19. Jesus supernaturally knew their thinking (Luke 5:22; 6:8; John 2:25; 21:17). Jesus began His response by stating that a kingdom or house divided against itself falls. Internal division brings defeat. If Satan is fighting against his emissaries, the demons, then Satan is opposing himself. He exposed the absurdity of their accusation.

Some of the Pharisees claimed to be able to cast out demons (Acts 19:13,14). Foster said, "Jesus did not say they were successful in what they were doing, but they claimed to be driving out demons and doing it in the name of God — not Satan. This made them stand as judges condemning the Pharisees for their accusation against Jesus, because Jesus was successful in just what they were claiming to do, and God, not Satan, was the authority for such a warfare" (pp. 182-183). *Sons* may refer to actual sons or it may refer to their followers or disciples.

11:20-23. "The Finger of God" (Exod. 8:19; Psa. 8:3) means the power of God. Matthew has "the Spirit of God" (Matt. 12:28). If Jesus actually cast demons out by the power of God then this was indisputable that God's kingdom had arrived. Their charges were absolutely false. Jesus' power over Satan demonstrated the reality of His kingdom and messiahship.

Jesus said a strong man secures his house and possessions. These are safe until a stronger one overpowers him. Then he is defenseless and his possessions are taken away. Jesus is the Stronger One who had overpowered Satan. Jesus pictured "the complete inability of Satan to

stand in the face of God" (Morris, p. 198). Marshall observed that Luke's picture involved a battle and Mark's a burglary (p. 478).

In regard to allegiance to God or Satan, neutrality and compromise are impossible. You are on one side or the other. Those who choose not to follow Christ are really on Satan's side. One either submits to or rejects the rule of Christ. (See Matt. 12:30; Mark 3:28. See notes on Luke 9:50.)

11:24-26. Plummer commented, "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 Christ, and thus falls more hopelessly into the power of Satan again" (p. 304). Demons "dreaded to be without a body to occupy, and they dreaded the confinement of the abyss (Luke 8:31)" (Foster, p. 183). The person who makes moral reforms in his life but does not invite the Spirit of God into his heart, leaves himself open to even greater evil than he had before.

Barclay drew three conclusions: "You cannot leave a man's soul empty." "You can never erect a real religion on negatives." "The best way to avoid the evil is to do the good" (pp. 152-153). Hendriksen made this application, " 'I don't smoke; I don't drink; I don't swear. Hallelujah, I'm a Christian.' If a telephone pole could talk, it might say the same thing. But a series of zeros does not make a Christian. A million negatives do not produce even one positive. We pity the man with an empty *mind*. But what about the person with an empty *heart* . . . and an empty *life*?" (p. 632).

True Blessedness — Luke 11:27-28

²⁷As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" ²⁸But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

11:27-28. A woman interrupted His teaching by pronouncing a blessing on Jesus' mother. It is true that Mary was highly favored (Luke 1:42,48). But it is also true that the mother of Jesus needed Him as Savior as much as any one else. See Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 3:34-35; Luke 8:19-21.

Rather in Jesus' response "does not question the truth of the

preceding statement, but emphasizes the greater relevance of what follows" (Reiling and Swellengrebel as quoted by Morris, p. 200). Her statement was inadequate because it failed to put things in the true perspective. What really matters is what God has said. Jesus spoke the Word of God (John 3:34; 14:10). The Bible is the Word of God (II Tim. 3:16).

While never disrespectful of His mother, Jesus always emphasized that spiritual kinship took precedence over physical kinship. "His answer points out that there is something far more important than to be His mother — something within the reach of all, to be instructed by Him and to be obedient to the word of God preached by Him. Spiritual relationship to Him is of much greater importance than natural relationship" (Geldenhuys, p. 331).

We are tempted to be more impressed by and trust more in the words and wisdom of men than we are to fix our attention and trust in the word and wisdom of God. Study these passages on the importance of knowing and keeping the Word of God: Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49; John 12:47-50; 14:23-24; 15:3,10; 17:17; Romans 1:16; 10:17; 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11; Ephesians 5:25-26; Colossians 3:16-17; II Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12; 5:12-14; James 1:21-22; I Peter 1:22-25; I John 5:2-3; Revelation 1:3.

The Sign of Jonah — Luke 11:29-32

²⁹When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation. ³¹The queen of the South will arise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. ³²The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

11:29-32. Jesus responded to those who asked for "a sign from heaven" (11:15). They were evil in their sign-seeking because they would not accept the miracles Jesus performed as signs of His deity. They insisted on seeing another miracle or they wanted Him to work a miracle of their own choice. Jesus did not do miracles on demand. His miracles were adequate evidences of His deity. They did not need

more signs. They needed to believe and repent.

“No sign shall be given except the sign of Jonah” emphasizes the importance of the sign of Jesus’ resurrection. The statement is not to be pressed into meaning Jesus did no other signs. See Mark 2:10; John 10:37-38; 14:11; Acts 2:22. The greatest evidence of Jesus’ deity is that after they crucified and buried Him, He arose on the third day.

Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites because he emerged alive after three days inside a large fish (Jonah 1). Jesus will be a sign to His generation because God will raise Him from the dead. The view that the sign was the preaching of Jesus is a doubtful position.

The Queen of Sheba (Southern Arabia, modern Yemen) made a long journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon (I Kgs. 10:1-10). Her example condemned the men of Jesus’ generation who refused to listen to the wisdom of Jesus. Jesus was greater than Solomon.

The men of Nineveh will also condemn those who rejected Jesus for they repented at Jonah’s preaching. Many were bypassing the privilege of learning the Word of God from Jesus. The gospel of Christ is greater than the preaching of Jonah.

Light and Darkness — Luke 11:33-36

³³“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. ³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. ³⁶If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”

11:33-36. Jesus often used light and darkness to illustrate His teaching (Matt. 5:15-16; 6:21-22; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16-18; John 3:19-21). Jesus did not hide the light of His gospel but declared it freely.

When one’s attitude is right and pure then he will accept the light of Christ. A wrong attitude and spirit will keep one from accepting the light of Christ. Rejection of spiritual light brings one into greater darkness. When the gospel is preached and people refuse to trust, repent and obey — how great is the darkness.

When the eye is healthy and functioning properly the whole body benefits. A person with an honest and sincere heart seeking to know the truth of God will not be disappointed (John 7:17). He will see clearly the truth of God as a person with healthy eyes can see in the light of day.

When a person's eyesight is bad the whole body suffers. Unbelieving, hard and rebellious hearts are dark hearts. God's light is shut out. A heart of trust, repentance and obedience to the Word of God is a healthy heart that can enable one to see the light of God. Foster summarized, "Jesus was, in effect, telling them they did not need more light, they needed good eyes" (p. 185).

The Hypocrisy of the Scribes and the Pharisees Luke 11:37-54

Some people say they quit the church because of the hypocrites in the church. This is not a new problem. Before quitting on Jesus because of hypocrites, one should hear what Jesus said about hypocrites. In this passage and in others Jesus denounced hypocrisy (Matt. 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47).

³⁷While he was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him; so he went in and sat at table. ³⁸The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. ³⁹And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. ⁴⁰You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you.

⁴²"But woe to you Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ⁴³Woe to you Pharisees! for you love the best seat in the synagogues and salutations in the market places. ⁴⁴Woe to you; for you are like graves which are not seen, and men walk over them without knowing it."

⁴⁵One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, in saying this you reproach us also." ⁴⁶And he said, "Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷Woe to you! for you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. ⁴⁸So you are witnesses and consent to the deeds of your fathers; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' ⁵⁰that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it shall be required

of this generation. ⁵²Woe to you lawyers! for you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."

⁵³As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard, and to provoke him to speak of many things, ⁵⁴lying to wait for him, to catch at something he might say.

11:37-41. After Jesus finished teaching he was invited by a Pharisee to come to his home for lunch. Several scribes and Pharisees were invited as well (11:45,53). Did Jesus accept because He wanted to say some serious things to them?

The Pharisee was not concerned about personal hygiene. He was shocked that Jesus did not follow the elaborate ceremonial washing which the rabbis had prescribed in detail (*Mishnah*). See Matthew 15:1-20 and Mark 7:1-23. Jesus did not feel obligated to keep these manmade rules even though the scribes and Pharisees tried to bind them on all (Mark 7:3).

Jesus exposed the external righteousness of the Pharisees. They wanted to appear religious by keeping rules and regulations taught by the rabbis. But at the same time they were full of sin in their attitude and heart. They had missed the Old Testament teaching that God is interested in godliness of the heart as well as in external actions (Isa. 1:10-17; 58:4-8; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8). They had overlooked the more important part of the law "justice and mercy and faith" (Matt. 23:23).

They made a foolish choice. Did not the God who made the world and man's body also make the soul? What a perverted sense of values to be so concerned about outward bodily actions while the soul is filled with wickedness! When one gives alms it must be with the right spirit of true love. When the heart is clean, all else will be clean. One can stand in a "clean" relationship with God, without the observance of rules for ceremonial cleansing.

11:42-44. *Woe* expressed deep sorrow and regret. It is not a minor oversight which is at issue. Motivated by concern for their souls, Jesus expressed these woes to show the terribleness of their hypocritical behavior.

They obeyed the law in their tithing (Lev. 27:30-33; Deut. 14:22-29). They overdid it by meticulously tithing garden vegetables. This was not required by the law. The *Mishnah* excluded rue from the tithe. They were right in giving tithes but they were wrong in neglecting justice and the love of God.

Often the religious leaders were zealous not for God's honor but for their own. They loved the seats of higher honor in the synagogue. Such honored seats were in front of the synagogue facing the people, where they could be seen by all.

If one touched a grave containing a dead body he was ceremonially unclean for seven days (Num. 19:16). The graves were whitewashed to alert those who walked by. As a person could become ceremonially unclean by accidentally walking over a grave, so people became morally unclean through the influence of the Pharisees. Their outward piety did not cancel hearts of pride, contempt and dishonesty.

11:45-48. A *lawyer* was a scholar and teacher of the law. Because most of the lawyers were Pharisees, a lawyer said that Jesus insulted them also. Jesus pronounced a woe on the lawyers for overburdening people with impossible demands which even they did not keep, being "experts in evasion" (Barclay, *Luke* p. 161). "The *burdens hard to bear* were the scribal interpretations of the Law and the traditions of the elders. These were taken with the utmost seriousness. The Mishnah lays it down that it is more important to observe the scribal interpretation than the Law itself (*Sanhedrin* 1:3)" (Morris, p. 205).

He stated a woe on them for building tombs honoring the prophets when in fact they had never condemned their fathers for killing the prophets. With their lives they rejected the message of the prophets so they in reality were consenting to the misdeeds of their fathers.

11:49-52. In citing the Wisdom of God Jesus was quoting no known written source, but He was summarizing God's wisdom on this topic. It was God's purpose and plan to send special messengers, prophets and apostles, through whom He revealed his word and will to man even though He knew some would be persecuted and killed. Jesus' generation bore greater responsibility because they had the opportunity and privilege of seeing the fulfillment of the messianic promises in Jesus yet they shared the same unbelieving attitude as their fathers. Abel was the first man to die (Gen. 4:8). Zechariah was the last recorded prophet killed as the books were arranged in the usual Hebrew order (II Chron. 24:20-22).

Those whose job it was to teach and explain the Word of God had actually taken away the true meaning of Scripture, which is the key to all knowledge. By their complicated methods of interpretation they had convinced the ordinary man he could not understand Scripture. In their hypocrisy they had missed the true meaning of God's Word. How ironic — teachers of God's law who could not themselves enter into a true knowledge and understanding of God's Word but also

hindered those in their day from understanding Scripture.

11:53-54. The scribes and Pharisees stepped up the intensity of their opposition to Jesus. They used provoking questions and comments to try to entrap Him into saying something they could use against Him.

True spiritual power comes from God. Christians have access to God's power through prayer. Jesus demonstrated true spiritual power over the forces of Satan. Jesus predicted His resurrection which would display God's true power. True spiritual power is opposed by hypocritical, legalistic religious leaders. True spiritual power comes to those who submit their minds, wills and lives to the rule of Christ. See Luke 6:11; 19:47-48; 20:19-20; 22:2.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How should Christians use the prayer Jesus taught in 11:2-4?
2. Explain *hallowed*.
3. How can God's kingdom yet come if it came on the Day of Pentecost?
4. How serious is an unforgiving attitude toward one's fellowman?
5. Explain "Lead us not into temptation."
6. What is the lesson in the parable of The Friend at Midnight?
7. Why does persistence in prayer not indicate a lack of faith?
8. What contrast does Jesus make between earthly fathers and the Heavenly Father?
9. How does one ask for the Holy Spirit?
10. Did Beelzebul mean Satan?
11. Does Jesus admit that the sons of the Pharisees actually cast out demons?
12. Explain "the Finger of God."
13. Why is it impossible to be neutral in regard to God and Satan?
14. Why is an empty life dangerous?
15. Why is knowing and keeping the Word of God supremely important?
16. What future event would be "the Sign of Jonah"?
17. Why will the men of Nineveh condemn those in Jesus' generation?
18. What does a single or healthy eye represent?
19. How may we respond to those who say they quit church because of the hypocrites in the church?
20. What is the danger of an external righteousness which is un-

TRUE SPIRITUAL POWER, LUKE 11:1-54

concerned with the heart?

21. Explain the meaning of *woe*.
22. What were the "burdens hard to bear"?
23. What are the serious consequences of being a false teacher?

