



APPLYING METHODS: READING IN STEREO JESUS' LAST WORDS CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Session Three
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APPLYING METHODS

1. READING IN STEREO

LUKE 11:1-13 AND MATTHEW 6:9-15; 7:7-12

SYNOPTIC ISSUES – THREE GOSPEL NARRATIVES

Three writers telling the same story, accessing the same as well as different sources, addressing different audiences and pursuing diverse purposes. Yet each is committed to the same gospel, to Jesus as Messiah, and the mission he inaugurated. Two are Jewish (Matthew and Mark) and one is non-Jewish (Luke). Their level of education is unclear, but Luke is described as a physician. Mark's family had a house in Jerusalem, which might suggest some wealth, position, and thus opportunity for education. If Matthew was a tax-collector in Herod's territory, this also is suggestive about his education, connections, and relationship with more nationalistic and conservative Jewish groups in Galilee.

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1. READING IN STEREO

LUKE 11:1-13 AND MATTHEW 6:9-15; 7:7-12

SYNOPTIC ISSUES – THREE GOSPEL NARRATIVES

They each write a composition in Greek. There is some suggestion that Matthew's Gospel is dependent upon a composition written in Hebrew or Aramaic, but the Greek text shows no specific indications of this.

So a key question is this – did Jesus teach in Greek or did he teach in Aramaic (or occasionally Hebrew) and his teachings have been translated into Greek? If it is the second, who did the translating? Were Mark and Matthew bilingual? What about Luke?

When the translation occurred (if Jesus taught in Aramaic), were the apostles responsible? We have no knowledge of this stage of Gospel production. Some use the hypothesis of an Aramaic base to the Gospel tradition to explain some of the more unusual Greek expressions in Jesus' teaching.

Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:7-15

Matthew 6:7–15

⁷“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this: “**Our** Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, **your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.** ¹¹Give us **this day** our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our **debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** ¹³**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Mark 11:25–26

²⁵And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

Luke 11:1–4

¹Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, 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 your name. Your kingdom come. ³Give us **each day** our daily bread, ⁴and forgive us our **sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.** And lead us not into temptation.”

Luke 11:5-8

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 impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

Luke 11:9-13 and Matthew 7:7-11

Matthew 7:7–11

7“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9Or which one of you, if his son asks him **for bread**, will give him **a stone**? 10Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give **good things** to those who ask him!

Luke 11:9–13

9And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one 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!”

Observations re Luke 11:1-13 and Matthew 6:9-15; 7:7-12

1. The sequence of text in Luke's narrative is different from that of Matthew, even though they seem to deal with the same material. How do we explain this?
 - a. Many in your audience will not even notice this. So why be bothered with it?
 - b. Is Luke right and Matthew wrong?
2. This material is part of the so-called "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus' first discourse in Matthew. Luke does not cluster this material in one "discourse." What is Luke's organizational principle in his narrative?
 - a. One of Luke's narrative segments that focus on Jesus' theology of prayer. (cf. Luke 18:1-14;
 - b. Luke has an interest in prayer.
 - c. Jesus responds to a request from his disciples that "he teach them how to pray," but this is not the context in Matthew. What does this difference suggest (Luke 11:1)?
3. Are the contents of the sample prayer that Jesus offers in Luke that same as what he offers in Matthew? What is different and why?
 - a. Some textual questions in Luke's narrative – "may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (v.2) and "but deliver us from evil" (v.4). Marcion's influence on the textual tradition?
 - b. Are these textual issues the result of interference in the textual transmission between Matthew and Luke's presentation of this prayer? How would liturgical usage affect this?
 - c. If Jesus' prayer in Luke is different from that written in Matthew, is this a problem? Why? Why not?

Observations re Luke 11:1-13 and Matthew 6:9-15; 7:7-12

4. What are the implications for exegesis as we deal with these two iterations of the “Lord’s Prayer”?

a. Be upfront with your audience that there are differences and offer cogent explanations for this. Explain why it does not affect our confidence that we have access to Jesus’ words in both cases.

b. If Jesus repeated his teaching about prayer, particularly in response to a request from the disciples, what does this suggest:

- i. About the disciples ability to absorb and understand what Jesus is saying about prayer? What is different in his prayer theology and practice from contemporary Jewish and non-Jewish prayer theology and practice? [Why did John think it necessary to teach his followers how to pray?]
- ii. Luke’s unusual word for “each day” in v. 3.
- iii. What’s does Luke’s formulation about “forgiveness” in v. 4 mean? How does it function as an explanation for v. 4a?
- iv. Why does Matthew’s text emphasize the operation of God’s will both in heaven and on earth? How does this reflect Matthew’s theological understanding?

Observations re Luke 11:1-13 and Matthew 6:9-15; 7:7-12

4. What are the implications for exegesis as we deal with these two iterations of the “Lord’s Prayer”?

v. Luke’s text has a petition that asks God “do not lead us into temptation” (v. 4b). Matthew adds “deliver us from evil or the evil one.” Why does Matthew express Satan’s involvement in evil?

vi. Does Matthew’s version of this prayer have essential points different from Luke’s? What might they be? The structure of the prayer is quite similar in both iterations.

- “your will be done on earth” – expansion of “your kingdom come”?
- the forgiveness motif seems to be formulated quite differently.
- the request for deliverance from evil – why is it not in Luke’s version?

5. Luke adds the parable about the request for help in extending necessary hospitality (vv. 5-8).

- a. Why does Luke add this parable? What aspects of Jesus’ prayer theology does this emphasize and make explicit?
- b. What features of this parable reflect first century realities?

Observations re Luke 11:1-13 and Matthew 6:9-15; 7:7-12

Luke 11: 9-13 and Matthew 7:7-12.

1. We note how closely the wording of Luke 11:9-13 aligns with that of Matthew 7:7-12. The differences are quite small – different comparisons – egg/scorpion (Luke) and bread/serpent (Matthew), and Holy Spirit (Luke) and good things (Matthew).
 - a. What hypotheses might explain these differences, given what you know of the relationship among the Gospels and their respective purposes?
 - b. Why is the respective wording of these sections of Luke and Matthew so similar? Does it have anything to do with the literary style of Jesus' statement?
2. Luke very definitely begins a new segment in 11:14, but Matthew continues with Jesus' discourse with additional teaching, i.e., the golden rule, along with the opposites – broad vs. narrow way, sheep vs. wolves, fruit vs. thorns, wise vs. foolish. Some of this material is located in Luke 6:43-49. Can all of these diverse locations for this material within these two narratives be explained on the assumption that Jesus taught the same material multiple times and in different contexts? If not, what other explanation might there be?

Observations re Luke 11:1-13 and Matthew 6:9-15; 7:7-12

Moving to application:

1. Does the theology of prayer presented by Luke and Matthew differ in any substantive way?
2. Are there factors in their respective audiences that encourage these narrative differences?
3. How can we incorporate these differences into a sermon in a way that encourages a specific response, i.e., so that people see these differences in a positive way, not in a negative way? How do they enrich our understanding of Jesus' teaching about prayer?
4. How do you personally deal with these differences in a way that sustains your trust in these narratives as providing an historically true presentation of Jesus' teaching?