

Sermon on **Luke 11.1-13** for the 7th Sunday after Pentecost 7.24.22

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Children often show they are learning when they imitate. They imitate their sibling, parent, or teacher. They see something they like and the benefit it brings, and they imitate it. It's what we want to do as Christians. Jesus always took time to pray to his Father in heaven, sometimes privately, sometimes out loud for others to hear. The disciples picked up that prayer is valuable, helpful, and it says something about the real relationship man can have with God. The disciples ask Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." And Jesus does.

Learn alongside the disciples about prayer, and pray!

1) Prayer says something about God.

2) Prayer says something about Man.

3) Pray because your Father has a real relationship with you.

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation." Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (NIV 2011)

*"Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." When you notice the neighbors got a new pool and set it up, what can you bet your kids are going to be asking for in a day or two? A pool. They're going to ask for a pool. John taught his disciples to pray. Jesus isn't jealous. He's happy to teach his disciples to pray as well. **Learn alongside the disciples.***

"He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread." The thing that should shock us most is that of all the names we could use for the Almighty Creator, the just and holy God, Jesus tells us to call him, "Father," the same name Jesus uses for God. It almost doesn't seem right for sinful human messes like us to address the holy creator as "Father." It isn't, but Jesus made it right for us to do so.

"Hallowed be your name." When you mention a name – everything about that person comes to mind. "Bill Gates" – you think Microsoft, philanthropist, rich, and you might even call to mind his family life, etc. "Kirk Cousins" – quarterback, Vikings, Christian, married, on a cereal box, etc. Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, LeBron James, and we could do this all day. With "hallowed by your name," we are asking that God help us keep his name holy in our lives – to bring him glory as he helps us imitate him and his will for us, to pass along his Word without cutting parts out or subtracting anything that the sinful world might find offensive, or that we don't like. We hold to his teachings. We bear the crosses. We can't make him any holier or any less holy, but you and I want to keep his name holy.

"Your kingdom come." The Pharisees and even his disciples had misconceptions of the kingdom of God, so Jesus said in Luke 17, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst" (20-21), or rather, "within you." Jesus' kingdom is found in his rule in the hearts of those who hold to him in faith, in whom the Holy Spirit has done his work through the Word and Sacrament to bring faith, hope and eternal life to sinners such as you and me. This petition (something we ask God for) is called the "missionary petition" because we want Jesus' kingdom to come not only in our hearts, but in the hearts of all people, and so we pray this petition and share his Word with all.

The order of the Lord's prayer is important, as we first ask that God is kept holy above all things in our lives and his kingdom and will come first before even our will, wants and desires. May his will always come before ours. He is merciful enough to then tell us to ask for everything we need.

"Give us each day our daily bread." What are you having for dinner? Is it just bread? Maybe, but I am guessing you'll have some sort of meat, a side, a salad, and some drink to pair nicely with it. We realize just how gracious God is to give us so much more than the bare necessities. This extends beyond bread, water, clothing, and shelter. This petition is about all our physical needs, health, and everything which contributes to it – a godly family, godly spouse,

godly children, clothing and shoes, house, home, godly leaders and government, all of it. **Prayer says something about God** – his mercy to us, his willingness to call us his children.

Prayer says something about Man. *“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.”* As we look at who God is and understand bit by bit more of his grace, we get a painful picture of who we are by nature, and the sinful nature that sticks around even after our conversion to faith. *“Forgive us our sins.”* We need forgiveness. Our sins are many. God’s forgiveness is the only reason we can approach God as our *Father*. The one who teaches us to pray is the one who earned the right for us to pray to God and to address him as our *Father*.

Jesus, true God and true Man, lived according to the strict laws given at Sinai in thought, word and deed. He passed every test, made the Father proud – *“with him I am well pleased,”* and then gave us his 4.0, A+ average, and took our F’s, withdrawals, our incompletes that we got for our sins of thought, word and deed, for our not showing up and living for Him, but instead shrugged off the cross of self-denial and lived for ourselves in selfishness, desire, distrust, and doubt, and for all the times we left his work half done, left his Word on the shelf, or our seat in the pew empty, or the kind word, encouraging word, forgiving word unspoken. Jesus paid the detention of eternal hell we deserved. He paid our ransom, our fine. Jesus won our forgiveness and release completely. By his resurrection from the dead three days later, we have complete confidence to call upon God as our Father, and by his Grace recognize that we are his true children. And we forgive as we have been forgiven – showing others and helping them experience just a little of the full and free forgiveness we find in Christ.

“And lead us not into temptation.” God tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that he would rescue us from temptations that the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh throw in our way. We pray he strengthen us against them and defeat their plans, and by his grace he does. **Prayer says something about Man** and God’s grace to us and how much he loves us, and provides forgiveness and all we need.

Pray because your Father has a real relationship with you. Be persistent. Even though a man might try to refuse help to his friend because it is very inconvenient, later he’ll relent and help, not because of his friendship, but because he wants him to stop bothering him. God is never bothered by you, but he wants you to try. Trust him and keep coming to him to fulfill his promises to you. He wants you to ask with persistence and confidence in your relationship with him.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Bother him. Note the progression. Ask, and if it seems God isn’t giving, Seek. If it seems you can’t find, Knock. Bang on the door of heaven. And you will find your gracious Savior ruling and reigning over all things and an open door so you can see that he has listened to every prayer, and brought them to the Father. And the Father has done more than we can ask or imagine. Think of it – Trust your *Father*.

If a kid asks for a fish, you wouldn’t give a snake. If he asks for an egg, you are not going to give him a scorpion. Even a sinful parent knows how to give what is good to his children. Now what about our perfect Father? He not only knows, but wants to give you everything that you need, that will help you, grow you, prepare you, save you. And your Father does. *“How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”* The Holy Spirit is known not only as true God and a person of the Holy Trinity, one God in three persons, but he is called the *“Advocate, Encourager”* and more. He helps us in our weakness to pray with boldness and without fear. He intercedes for us in the depths of our hurt with groans to God that words cannot express (Ro 8). God hears and knows and acts.

I’m so glad for all that Scripture says about prayer. God hasn’t guaranteed that he is going to talk to us when we pray, nor has he told us to look for that. He has given us his sure and certain promises recorded for us in Holy Scripture. He gives us reason to approach him and hold him to his promises and know without doubting that what we ask of him according to his will, he hears and grants. And take comfort in the fact that he is your perfect Father in heaven. Sometimes he makes you wait – asking, seeking, knocking, pounding on the door like he did with the Canaanite woman until he healed her daughter (Matthew 15). Always his will is better than ours, and how wonderful when they align. But we want his will over ours as Paul learned when the Lord didn’t take away his thorn, but told him, *“My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.”* (2 Cor. 12). Or as our dear Savior showed when he took the cup and drank it because it was the Father’s will that he would redeem us by a cross and empty tomb.

He hears you. He understands you even if you don’t. As our Father he reserves the right to grant you exactly what you want, or to give you something better, and at the right time. How many times hasn’t God done this in our lives, even while we thought he wasn’t listening, or was letting us suffer for no good reason, wrestling with him like Jacob at the Jabbok river. No, we are his true children, and he our true Father. Jesus paid to make it happen. He loves you and listens to you and acts for you. **Pray with boldness because your Father has a real relationship with you.** Amen.