

**Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – July 28, 2019**  
**Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church**

*Pastor Charles Heup*

**Luke 11:1-13 (NIV)**

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."** (2) **He said to them, "When you pray, say: "** 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. (3) Give us each day our daily bread. (4) Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.' " (5) 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; (6) a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' (7) 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.' (8) 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. (9) "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. (10) For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (11) "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? (12) Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? (13) 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!"

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

How long do you think you can hold your breath? Thirty Seconds? A minute maybe? Most Navy seals can hold their breath for about 2 ½ minutes. After extensive training, a small number of people in the world can hold their breath for over 10 minutes. In 2012, German free diver Tom Sietas held his **breath** underwater for 22 minutes and 22 seconds. Now I wondered what would have happened if Tom Sietas had tried to hold his breath for 25 minutes? Twenty-five minutes is not a very long time in the vast expanse of a person's life, but it *is* a very long time to hold your breath! Even the most skilled and best trained "breath holder" cannot go very long until they need to fill their lungs again with life-giving air. Without air we die.

<https://canyonverdedownloads.wordpress.com/2016/04/17/the-christians-vital-breath-romans-826-34/>

Hymn writer James Montgomery described prayer in this way, "*Prayer is the Christian's vital breath.*" It's no wonder that perhaps the first thing we do in the morning before we get out of bed is to take in a deep breath of fresh air and say a prayer. We take a breath before and after our meals as we ask the blessing and offer our thanks. In times of trouble, we might gasp for air as we cry out to the Lord. The last thing we do at night after our head hits the pillows and we are all tucked under our sheets might be to sigh and close our eyes in prayer.

Prayer is an important part of our lives as Christians. It would seem something as vital as prayer would almost come naturally but that's not the case and that's why at times it may seem as if we end up holding our breath spiritually. It is like we are trying to win a Guinness book of world records prize for the longest time between prayers. By nature you and I would not want to speak with God in prayer. The desire to pray comes as a result of the Lord's working in our hearts to bring us to faith. Prayer is a behavior which must be learned. It's no wonder that after observing how often Jesus took time out from his busy, hectic schedule to pray that Jesus' disciples who came to him with the request: "Lord, teach us to pray."

Jesus did more than teach them some words to say as we see in our text. He began by teaching them what kinds of requests they could bring to their Father in heaven. But then he continued with some valuable lessons about how to pray. As we study this lesson

**Theme:** Jesus Teaches Us to Pray ...

1. for all things
2. with persistence
3. with confidence

Our text begins with an abbreviated version of the Lord's Prayer – a prayer in which Jesus teaches us what to pray for. Jesus teaches us to pray for all things with an emphasis on spiritual concerns. **"When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3) Give us each day our daily bread. 4) Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."**

Jesus teaches us to come to God as children come to their Father. This is a privilege we enjoy as God's children through faith in Christ Jesus. As we come to our Father in heaven we express our desire for his name to be glorified by us and to be kept holy among us by praying, "hallowed be your name." We call these words the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

We fail to give glory to God when we grumble and complain against him and his will. With our complaints we are really second guessing God's wisdom, power and concern for us.

God's name is dishonored when anyone lives contrary to God's word. For example King David dishonored God with his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband. This gave the enemies of God the opportunity to slander God. Our sinful actions may at times cause people to say, "If that's how Christians live or act, why would I want to become one of them." If we don't respect God's word why should others?

With this prayer we are asking that the Lord would enable us to live according to his Word and not to be led astray by our sinful nature or the ungodly ways of the evil age in which we live. Paul reminded Titus: **The grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. (12) It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, (13) while we wait for the blessed hope--the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, (14) who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. (15) These, then, are the things you should teach ...** (Titus 2:12-15 NIV)

God's name is also dishonored when anyone teaches contrary to God's Word, for example, by denying Baptism to infants, by ignoring what the Bible teaches about sexuality and marriage or by saying that we are not saved by faith alone. Jesus warned us about false prophets who claim to be preaching God's Word but teach us their own or somebody else's word instead. Such false teaching dishonors God and may lead people to hell instead of heaven.

With this petition, we are asking that the Lord would enable us to honor (or hallow) his name by living in agreement with his Word and by teaching his Word in its truth and purity. God wants us to be careful to share his Word with others in a way that is correct and true. If we are going to live in agreement with the Word and teach the Word, we need to know his Word thoroughly and share it faithfully as the prophet Jeremiah reminds us: (Jeremiah 23:28) **let the one who has my word speak it faithfully.**

We will want to ask God for his help to live and teach his Word correctly. After all, we bear his name. We are his children because he adopted us by faith in Christ. Because we are part of his family, what we do or say reflects on his name. It's the same with your family. If a child or grandchild does well in school or plays well in a basketball game, it reflects well on your family. On the other hand, if a family members name is

recorded in the paper because they ran afoul of the law, it will reflect negatively on your name and bring dishonor to your family.

And so Jesus teaches us to pray: May God help us do and say what will bring honor to his name.

The next request that Jesus teaches in our text is a prayer that his kingdom would come. God's kingdom comes through the preaching of his word which brings people to faith and enables them to live according to his word. Since God's Word brings us the hope of eternal life in heaven, we certainly want to pray that God will help us grow stronger in his Word. As he helps us grow, we can better put his Word into practice in our lives. We also pray that others may hear his Word and believe it so that they might enjoy heaven along with us. It is for this reason that this petition is often called the "mission petition."

In the third verse of our text Jesus teaches us to pray: **3) Give us each day our daily bread.** One of the lessons we can learn from these words is that we should pray not only for personal needs but also for the needs of others. Another lesson is that we are to look to God with trust and confidence that he will take care of us each day.

God graciously gives us everything we need (daily bread) for our lives. He provides for us one day at a time. Just think of everything that God does for us: he gives us air to breathe, clothes to wear, homes to live in, and we could add many more things to this list. He does this even though we don't always ask for all these things, and he certainly gives them to us even though we do not deserve them. Psalm 145:15,16 reminds us **The eyes of all look to you [O Lord], and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.** (NIV)

Jesus teaches us in this petition that every good thing we receive in our lives from day to day is a gift of God for which we want to thank and praise him. Please note: We are taught to ask for what we need for today. Too often we worry about tomorrow and even far ahead into the future. But we have a loving God who has promised always to take care of us. Jesus teaches us to trust God and not to worry. God will never stop taking care of us that's why Peter reminds us: (1 Peter 5:7) **Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.**

One of the many cares that confront us in our lives is the guilt of our sins. Therefore Jesus teaches us to pray: **Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.** Because of our trespasses (sins), we have built up a huge debt against God. We deserve his punishment--death and hell. God in his mercy sent his Son to pay our debt for us. Jesus did this when he died on the cross. The debt we could never repay, even if we had trillions of dollars, God forgave. Therefore Jesus teaches us to ask God not to look at our sins but, rather, at his grace and for Jesus' sake to give us all the things we pray for.

Because God forgave us a huge debt, we learn from him to forgive the small debts (sins) that any of our fellow human beings might owe us. Ephesians 4:32 **Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** (NIV)

And finally our text reminds us to pray: **And lead us not into temptation.** With this prayer Jesus reminds us of our need for the Lord's help in the face of the many temptations which the devil, the world and sinful flesh bring in our lives. The most dangerous temptation is the one to abandon our faith – to turn away from the word and the blessings it offers.

Even this brief summary of the abbreviated version of the Lord's Prayer helps us to understand that we can take all of our concerns to our Father in prayer. We can pray for anything and for anyone. This is something we should do boldly and persistently as Jesus teaches us with the parable which we find in our text.

**"Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; (6) a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' (7) 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.' (8) 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.**

It would not be unusual for people to travel in the cool of the night and arrive at someone's home after the family was asleep. It's understandable that when we are comfortable in our bed that we don't want to get up – yet when the neighbor boldly persists with his knocking and his request for food – ultimately we would get up and provide him with some food.

Are we so bold and persistent in our prayers? Do we continue to knock on the Lord's door until his answer comes? Do we keep on asking for his help until it comes? Do we keep on seeking his blessings? Our Lord who has the desire and the ability to provide all we need when we need it encourages us to come boldly and persistently to him in prayer with the promise: **"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. (10) For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.** Our asking, seeking and knocking will not be in vain. Every prayer a Christian prays is answered by God. It may not always be the answer we are looking for, and it may not always come when we expect. But the answer is always the answer of a wise and loving Father who gives his answer when it is best.

What the heavenly Father grants in response to our persistent prayer will be good for us. Therefore let us pray with confidence as Jesus teaches us to do with the following example from our text: **"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? (12) Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? (13) 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!"**

No loving earthly Father would give his children something that would be harmful for them. If we can do that even though we are sinful and imperfect...Jesus reminds us that our Father in heaven will most certainly provide only what is good for us. As an example Jesus says that the Father will gladly provide us with the gift of the Holy Spirit – it is the Holy Spirit who enlightens us to see the grace and love of our heavenly Father who sacrificed his Son for us. The Spirit calls us to faith and enables us to desire to call upon the Father in prayer and to desire to live to his glory and to spread his Word among the nations. It is the Holy Spirit who helps us to do good works and to remain firm in the faith unto eternal life.

It's no wonder that Jesus encourages us to confidently ask for the gift of the Spirit who works through the one thing needful – the Gospel of Christ Jesus. With his reference to the Holy Spirit Jesus points out that there is a close connection between the word and prayer.

Prayer is really one part of a Christian's ongoing communication with the Lord. It is our heart-to-heart talking to God. It comes only as a response of his talking to us in his Word. Therefore let us gladly listen to the Word of Lord and then Let Us Pray as Jesus teaches us to in this text.

1. Jesus teaches us to pray for all things
2. Jesus teaches us to pray with persistence
3. Jesus teaches us to pray with confidence.

Amen.

