

Sunday Sermon 8/19/2019
Sermon Text: Luke 11: 1-13
Sermon Theme: Why Pray?

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 he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶ because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’

⁷ “Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

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; he who seeks finds; and to him 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!”

Have you ever had someone say, “Whatever you need, just let me know.” More often than not, we don’t ask when people make this offer because we realize that it was probably just nice words.

Have you ever taken someone up on that offer? What happened? Maybe you were disappointed because you called them and asked for help but they were just too busy, it was just too big of a request, or maybe they just didn’t want to help.

What is really amazing is when you call someone and they are good to their words. They are never too busy to lend a hand and help us out. There is no task that is too big or too small for them. They will literally drop everything to lend a hand.

If we find a person like that, who is always willing to help, maybe we even start to feel bad because we think we are taking advantage of their kindness and are calling them too often.

How do we treat the promises God which makes to be there in our need and help us? Do we believe that God will do what he says and even more and we ask quite often. Do we believe that they are empty promises, God can’t or won’t do what he says, so we don’t bother asking.

Many times we end up treating God’s promises like they aren’t very good. We end up trying to deal with things ourselves because we think that God doesn’t really care, he won’t help, or our problems aren’t big enough for him to deal with.

Instead of thinking about and using prayer as a great blessing and privilege from God, we think, “Why should I pray? God won’t give me what I want anyway.”

As we look at prayer this morning, we will see that we have very good reason to pray and pray often. We have reason to pray because God invites us to pray and he promises to hear and answer every one of our prayers.

As we read our Gospel a few minutes ago you probably noticed the words of the Lord’s Prayer jump out at you. The reason we call this prayer the Lord’s Prayer is because Jesus who taught his disciples to pray this prayer. This is one of two places where Jesus “taught” his disciples how to pray.

The Jews regarded prayer as something that was structured and formal. They regarded prayer as something that had a form that you had to stick to. The Jewish leaders were especially good at following that

form. They had prayers that followed the proper forms for all of the prayer times. These prayers were often composed in a specific way so that the person would not offend the almighty God with their requests.

If we understand this, we understand what the disciples were really asking. Jesus, show me the way, the form, that we are to use to pray so that we don't make God angry.

Jesus teaches them that they shouldn't be afraid to go to God in prayer. It isn't the form of prayer that is important. They should go to God and offer their prayers because God invites us to pray to him with whatever it is we need. He wants to hear our prayers, whatever they might be.

We see in the Old Testament there are many passages about this great and wonderful blessing of prayer.

Psalm 50:15, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you and you will honor me."

Jeremiah 21:12. Then you will call on me, and pray to me, and I will listen to you..

Psalm 17:6. "I call on you my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer."

Psalm 145:13, The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."

God wants us to pray to him. The New Testament continues to show us that we should pray by giving us the same message.

Philippians 4:6. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:15. Pray continually

1 Peter 5:7. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

God wants us to pray and pray often and even take advantage of him in prayer.

When we pray, he doesn't want us to be afraid and to wonder whether this is something we should pray about. He simply wants us to pray to him. We don't have to come with weak knees and fear in our hearts as if we are approaching the throne of some king. We don't need to address him as God, the great and terrible, the supreme commander of all that is. No we are to approach him, address him and think about him as a loving Father.

Jesus paints a picture of prayer for us in that first line of the Lord's Prayer: our Father. We approach our loving Father, the most loving Father that you can think. There is nothing more that the loving Father wants than for his children to come to him. We crawl into his lap, like a small child, to tell him all about our day. In that lap of the most loving Father, we are free to tell him whatever is on our minds, the good or the bad, what makes us sad or happy, what is stressing us out. We are free to ask him for all of our needs, both physical and spiritual. Our Loving Father, looks on us and smiles and gives us the answers which are the best for us.

Why pray? We should pray because our loving heavenly Father not only tells us to pray, he wants us to pray. He wants us to pray to him so that he can show us his love in the way that he answers.

Jesus teaches his disciples that God wants to show his love to us by answering prayer: ⁵ **Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶ because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'** ⁷ **"Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.'** ⁸ **I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. 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; he who seeks finds; and to him 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? 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!"**

If sinful people know how to be kind and thoughtful and will give out of kindness or even duty, how much more will your God who is 100% loving and kind give to you. If a father who is sinful, knows how to love his son and give his son what he needs, how much more will a loving Father give to his children everything that they need.

God answers every prayer that we offer to him. He answers our prayers in the same way he did, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob's and even Jesus' prayer.

The problem we have is not that God doesn't answer prayer, it that he doesn't always answer the way that we want him to. We often think that God has to run according to our ideas of fair and unfair, good and bad. And when God doesn't do what we want we get upset and angry with him.

Yet, what Jesus is saying is that God is 100% loving in what he gives to us, not because he answers exactly how we want, but because he doesn't.

God shows us his love with any answer he gives to us. What are those three answers to prayer?

God can definitely show us love by answering our prayers with a yes. We might get the very thing we prayed about. This is God's love to us in answering our prayer and giving a good gift.

God can also show his love when he doesn't give us something. Many times when we don't get what we want because we really don't understand what we are asking God for. But he does. When those times happen that we don't even understand that what we are asking for may hurt or injure us, may cause us to walk into sin or away from the faith. God shows his love by saying no and not giving it to us. He says no and keeps us from evil and away from danger.

God also shows his love by building us up in faith when he asks us to wait awhile for what we need. In the time between we get the thing and the time we ask, God wants us to focus on him and be persistent in prayer and patient in our waiting.

In all of the cases, our prayers are the same, we pray in faith. Trusting that God will give us the best answer for our life. We pray knowing that the answer is one that will be a blessing to us all the days of our life because our God is good.

While we often pray for earthly things, God also does not want us to forget about praying for spiritual things like forgiveness and faith as well **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"**

Prayer is an act of worship that flows from a heart of faith. It is part of faith life, but not the only part. Faith does not grow through prayer alone, but through the Word alone. When we are in the Word, that is when our prayer life should also be strong. When we come to our God and ask him to increase our faith and forgive us our sins. When we pray for God's peace, for the Gospel to be spread, for more people to come to faith. We already know the answer. God's good and gracious will is that all these things happen through the power of his Word.

Why pray? God wants us to do it. Why pray? Every prayer we offer is an opportunity for God to show his eternal and complete love for us. Why pray? Because when God offers to give us what we need, he will certainly take care of that and more for us.