

Pentecost 7 7/28/19
St. Luke 11:1-13 12C

APPOINTED GOSPEL FOR THIS SUNDAY, FROM THE 11TH CHAPTER OF LUKE'S GOSPEL

One day, Jesus was praying in a certain place and, when He had finished praying, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples (v. 1)." And in the course of teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus told this story,

Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him"; and 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"? I 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 (vv. 5-8).

Do you understand what Jesus is trying to teach you about prayer? What's that old saying, "One picture is worth a 1,000 words." Our bulletin cover this Sunday is worth a 1,000 words. Who is that man standing at the door? Take a good look. There he is at midnight, asking, seeking, knocking. There he is, having no regard for the time; no regard for the fact that his neighbor may be sleeping; no regard that he may receive "no" for an answer to his request. There he is having no bread and in need. Now, you understand what Jesus is teaching you about prayer.

You, Dear Child of God, are that man standing at the door in need of bread. That is what sin has done to us. You are by nature sinful and unclean; you have sinned against God in your thoughts, words, and deeds. You confessed that truth once again this morning. And the truly sad thing is that in the death of your sin and the folly of your human reason, you

would never think to ask God what you need the most: a Savior to save you from your sin and the eternal death that sin brings upon you.

We need daily bread, we want daily bread; these are the things that we need for our bodies and life here and now today. But the great tragedy is that we become so absorbed with the here and now, that we forget the wages of sin is death.

Remember that parable Jesus told?

“The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ (Lk 12:16-20).

In the parable before us this morning, the man in need goes to his neighbor because his neighbor has bread. The Good News of the Gospel is that God has bread for you, Dear Child of God. You will recall that when God led the Israelites through the Red Sea waters to freedom, what did His children do? They grumbled, against Moses and Aaron and God, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out in this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger (Ex 16:3).” And, God, who has bread – despite their grumblings -- gave them manna, the bread from heaven, which kept them alive.

God has bread, the bread that you need, so He opened His Fatherly hand and gave it to you. And He gave it to you in ... where? Bethlehem -- Bethlehem, which means “House of Bread.” The Bread God gave you was His only begotten Son. And that Son Himself said, “I am the bread of life ...

This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die (Jn 6:48, 50).”

“Impudence.” “Boldness.” God is bold – bold to save you. When you read chapter 3 of Genesis, that is the account of the fall into sin, one thing stands out. Adam and Eve fall for the lies of Satan, they sin, God confronts them, they make excuses, and – and – God promises to send them a Savior, the offspring of a woman who will crush the head of Satan and save us from the death of our sin. What really stands out in all of that? It’s so obvious; we miss it. God promised He would send a Savior, even when no one asked Him for a Savior. Adam and Eve did not beg Him, plead with God to send them a Savior. He just sent the Lord Jesus Christ to be born of the Virgin Mary without anyone asking for it.

And Jesus went around in His earthly ministry – in boldness. He went around healing the sick, on the Sabbath Day. He went around correcting the false teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees, and He didn’t care if they liked Him or not. When people tried to stop Him; when people said He was wrong; when they said He had a demon; when they tried to be rid of Him by throwing Him off a cliff; when they picked up stones to stone Him; even when His own family thought He was out of his mind; what did He do? He was bold and resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem.

When He got to Jerusalem, there He was carrying the sin of all the world, yours included, and He carried them to the tree of Calvary, where He bleed all over that tree and died nailed to that tree. No one demanded, asked, begged Him to do that, He just did it for you. In fact, the crowd mocked and jeered Him to come down from that cross. But, because He stayed nailed to the cross, and died upon it as the wages of your sin, you

have forgiveness for all your sins, all your sins of thought, word, and deed; you have life and salvation.

You have that because Jesus takes the forgiveness he won on that tree of Calvary and wraps it up in His Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and His Holy Supper and He gives you all the forgiveness and life and salvation and all that you need for your body and life today. And through those means of Grace, God the Holy Spirit works faith in you.

Prayer is the cry of that faith. In our Small Catechism, we learn, “[God] Himself has commanded us to pray ... and has promised to hear us.” Jesus does not suggest, He commands us, "Ask. seek. knock." Simply stated, We must pray! It is our duty to pray because God has commanded it. Asking, seeking, and knocking are what the 2nd Commandment is all about. When God commands, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God," He means that we must "call upon [His Name] in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks."

One picture is worth a 1,000 words. That man standing outside in need at midnight, put yourself in his sandals, because that's you standing before God. In faith, we go to God, knowing that He has all that we need, and trusting that He will give us what we need and even more. The hymnwriter of old perhaps said it the best,

“Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged -- Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness -- Take it to the Lord in prayer.”

Having lived on this earth as a man, Jesus knows the needs of our body and soul; Jesus understands our troubles, our tears. So, He gives to us the privilege of prayer, speaking to God in our words and thoughts, going boldly to God's throne of grace in our need. Luther writes in his

Large Catechism,

“Therefore, God also requires that you weep and ask for such needs and wants, not because He does not know about them, but so that may kindle your heart to stronger and greater desires and make wide and open your cloak to **receive much** [LC].”

Please hear me and understand this correctly, God hears and answers your prayer in the way and at the time He knows best for you. He will answer your prayer – not because you are bold to ask again and again; not because you don’t eat meat on Friday; not because you pray to Mecca 5x/day; not because you wear the right undergarments and don’t drink coffee -- no, no, no. God will give you what you need for your body and life because He loved you so much He sent you His Son Jesus to be your Savior, even when you didn’t so much as ask God for it. And Jesus is that intercessor, your High Priest, who lives to plead with His Heavenly Father for you, Dear Child.