

Pentecost 10 [Pr 12] 7/24/16
St. Luke 11:1-13 C

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

Who is that man standing at the door? Take a good look. 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. But, there he is at midnight, knocking, seeking, begging. Who is that man?

A parable is a story to teach a point. In the parable Jesus tells after teaching us to pray the Lord's Prayer, I think we typically see ourselves as that man standing at the door. We are taught to be bold in our prayers, hounding God over and over again, until He gives us what we want. That's what's going on here in the parable, isn't it? Well, before we see ourselves in the parable that way, take a look at the man standing outside at midnight and who do you see? You see Jesus. You see, Dear Friends in Christ, you are that stranger in need. God has what you need. So, Jesus pleads for you, a dear stranger at midnight in need.

Isn't it interesting that in the parable the man knows that his neighbor has bread. God has bread, all that we need for our bodies and life. So, Jesus goes to Him on our behalf, as our High Priest, trusting that He will give you all that you need and more. “Because of His impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.” Impudence – boldness. When we talk about boldness, it makes perfect sense when you consider Jesus.

But first, consider your need. 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. In your sin, you would never

think to ask God for a single thing, especially not that which you need most – a Savior to save you from your sin and the eternal death that sin brings upon you. You would never be bold to ask God for that. You would never, ever think to do it.

But, God is bold – bold to save you. He promised He would send a Savior, even when no one asked Him for it. 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. Because He did that, 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.”

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].”

In the model for all our prayers, the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches us to pray for our daily bread, that is, “everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body.” He teaches us to pray that our Father in heaven would for Christ’s sake graciously forgive our sins. We pray that God would guard and keep us in the faith he began at our baptism “so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice.” And, we pray

that God “would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.”

Having the heart of Christ, we pray for ourselves and for all other people, even our enemies. In our Old Testament lesson, Abraham stands for us as a great example of what it means that we show our love for our neighbor by praying for them. When God visited Abraham, Father Abraham did not pray for himself, for vast wealth and ease, he prayed for his neighbors in Sodom, that they not perish in the judgment of God.

We learn from Jesus to pray for everything that tends to the glory of God and to our own and neighbor’s welfare, both spiritual and bodily blessings. But, when we ask God in prayer, as we are commanded, we must not pray selfishly; we must not pray motivated by our own "evil desire," as St. James puts it (1:14).

So, take a look again at the man standing outside at midnight and you will see Jesus. Because He is our High Priest, pleading and praying for us before the throne of God, we can go boldly to that throne of grace to find help in our every need.

Take your requests, your needs, your thanksgivings to God. Ask Him for whatever it is you need and He will answer in the way and the time that He knows best for you, Dear Child. 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 loves 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.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.