

Pentecost 7 7/24/22
 Luke 11:1-13 12C

AND HE SAID TO THEM, “WHEN YOU PRAY, SAY: ‘FATHER...’”

Page 323: The Lord’s Prayer.

The propers for this Sunday have a consistent theme. In the Introit, we heard, “Call upon me in the day of trouble.” The Old Testament reading is about Abraham pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah. In the Gospel, one of His disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples,” and Jesus does – He teaches us to pray.

Page 323: The Lord’s Prayer. The Introduction.

What is the Introduction to the Lord’s Prayer?

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

Martin Luther packed a lot into these few words. The words that stand out are those words telling us of the special relationship we have with God ... “dear children” ... “dear father.”

When He teaches us to prayer, Jesus teaches us that we should call God “Father,” as it is translated in English. But honestly, in English, I think we should translate Jesus’ word here not as “Father, but as “Daddy.”

Here’s why: Picture in your mind’s eye that beautiful two-year-old seeing her daddy come home from work and she runs and throws herself – leaps, jumps, into his arms. She does not doubt – for even half a heartbeat -- that her daddy would not catch her. She simply trusts that her daddy will catch

her. That is what we are doing in prayer. Just as the man in the parable was confident he would get his bread, we can be confident that our prayers will be answered – we are literally throwing ourselves into the loving arms of God.

We have that confidence because we are children of the heavenly Father. This is what Paul is teaching us in our Epistle lesson. Look at that Paul says. Once, we were not the children of God. Quite the contrary, we were alienated from God; we were His enemies, who deserved only temporal and eternal punishment. But, in love God sent His Son and through the suffering, death, and resurrection of that Son, canceled the record of debt that stood against us. With our sin forgiven, we are in a restored relationship with God – He is our Father and we are His beloved children. And, we can go directly to God with our prayers and be confident that He hears and answers them.

Just as Abraham did in our Old Testament lesson when he persistently pleaded with God on behalf of his nephew Lot and the city of Sodom. Abraham was bold and confident. Like the man asking his friend for bread, he kept asking God and expecting God to hear him.

We can boldly, like Abraham, go to God's throne of grace to find mercy to help us in our hour of need. We can pound on His door like a friend needing bread in the middle of the night. We can go to our Father in heaven with **no fear**, in complete trust, willing to ask for anything, anytime, and we can do it again and again and again.

Which brings us back to our lesson. The man answers his neighbor's plea for bread because of persistence. Jesus is encouraging us to be persistent in our prayers, "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 what he needs.” “Impudence” – there’s a word you don’t hear every day. It means “boldness.” You can come before God with boldness, because you know God will answer your prayer. Our prayers are pleasing to God and ...and... heard by Him. God always answers your prayers, but we must remember He answers in the way and at the time He knows best.

In faith, we know that God is not a vending machine -- insert prayer and receive goody. God is not a magic genie who appears to grant us our every request.

He knows what you need even before you ask. And yes, He may make you wait for that answer. He does this to draw you closer to Himself. As you struggle with God in prayer, you see your helplessness and weakness and your dependence on God, and you grow spiritually. And yes, as you wait, God gives you grace, and strength, and patience.

Think of Paul’s thorn in the flesh. We have no idea what that thorn in the flesh was, but we know it was painful, Paul didn’t like it, and he wanted to be rid of it. So, he tells us that he earnestly prayed three times to God to remove it. God answered, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” That thorn was for Paul a reminder that God is good, that God’s grace was all Paul needed.

When you struggle with chronic pain, illness, the loss of a loved one, family strife and upheaval, your struggles -- like Paul’s thorn in the flesh – remind you of God’s great love. No, these are not punishment for our sins. God sent His Son to suffer the punishment for all your sin. With the sin gone that separated us from God, we can go boldly to His throne of grace for mercy in the hour of our trial.

Jesus continues His lesson on prayer: “What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for

an egg, will give him a scorpion? Human fathers, even though they are sinful, give good things to their children. They may not give them what they want, but they always give them the things they need.

So it is with your Heavenly Father blessing you. He gives you His Son. He gives you faith in Baptism and feeds that faith in His Word and with Christ's Body and Blood, so that you may cry to Him in faith. He hears that cry of faith and He answers it by giving you what you need at the exact moment you need it.

There is one thing God gives us to help us in our prayers,

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Remember I said our propers are all about prayer? Even our Collect,

“O Lord, let Your merciful ears be attentive to the prayers of Your servants and by Your Word and Spirit teach us how to pray ...”

In Holy Baptism, God gives us the precious gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit brings us to Jesus, comforts us, keeps us in the faith so that we may be faithful unto death. And, He even helps us in our prayer life. Paul writes in Romans,

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (8:26).

The Spirit intercedes for us in accordance with God's will, so that everything – everything – in your life works for your good, for your salvation.

In our life, we can pray. We can be like the Psalmist and complain to God, we can praise God and thank Him for the many blessings of body and soul He showers upon us; we can ask things for ourselves; we can

intercede on behalf of others. In all our prayers, we can be confident that God will hear and be confident He answers because we ask as dear children ask their dear father.