

**LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!** Pentecost 10 – Aug 15/18, 2019

**Luke 11:1-13.** 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." He said to them, "When you pray, say: " 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.' " 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, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' "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.' 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. "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. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 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!"

(Dear Christian Friends)

*[Long period of silence. Read Bible. Drink water. Stare into space. Check phone. Twiddle thumbs.Repeat.]*

Perhaps you are thinking, "There he goes again with another stunt. But this is going too far. His job is to preach, not just stand there and waste time."

That's true. My job—my calling is to speak to you. My calling is to proclaim God's Word to you. If I do not talk to you, then I am not doing my job. And that should make you upset. You have every right to be angry with me if I just stand here and say nothing to you.

Well, how do you think God feels? Your job is to speak to God in prayer. God commands you, "Pray frequently! Pray fervently! **Pray without ceasing.**" God commands you to pray, period. But we do not pray as often or as powerfully as we should. Instead, we keep our faith quiet and say nothing to God in prayer.

So, we need the good Lord to give us what the disciples had. They saw Jesus praying. They had a desire to pray like Jesus prayed. That's why our first prayer needs to be what the disciples prayed for. Our first prayer needs to be: **LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!**

That's what Jesus does. First, he taught the Lord's Prayer. And we know this prayer so well we can—unfortunately—rattle it off without thinking about it. So, let's slow down. Let's listen to a translation different from our familiar version. So, listen again to the Lord's Prayer in different words. Listen at a slower pace. Think about each word.

- **'Father,**
- **hallowed be your name,**
- **your kingdom come.**
- **Give us each day our daily bread.**
- **Forgive us our sins,**
  - **for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.**
- **And lead us not into temptation.'**

Now, you probably noticed some differences. Luke omits two petitions. **Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Deliver us from evil.** Now, a short sermon cannot adequately explain why Luke does this. But do not worry. There is nothing wrong with the Book of Luke. In a similar vein, one sermon cannot adequately explain each petition of the Lord's Prayer.

So, we have to move on from ***what*** Jesus teaches to ***how*** Jesus teaches us to pray. Pretty much, Jesus tells us to pray with complete boldness and confidence because God, our heavenly Father, loves us and wants to bless us. Jesus says, "**Suppose [someone goes to his neighbor] at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'** "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.' 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. "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. ... "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 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!"**

Notice again, *what* Jesus teaches us to pray for—the **Holy Spirit**. So, our prayers imitate the Lord's prayer—mostly spiritual, some physical. So, we pray for stronger faith. We pray for the Gospel to spread all over the world. We pray for forgiveness and the power to forgive others. We pray for strength to resist Satan's temptations.

But again, that's *what* we pray for. But *how* do we pray for it? In a word, Jesus says, **boldness**. Now, a better way to translate **boldness** is, "*a lack of sensitivity to what is proper— audacity, impudence, shamelessness.*"

Here's an example of **boldness**. Let's say you are a sixteen-year old. You are working your first day at a part-time job at McDonald's. After work you say to the manager, "Yeah, this minimum wage thing isn't really doing it for me. So, pay me \$100,000 a year, OK?" That is **boldness**. Asking for \$100,000 a year to flip burgers part-time is, "*a lack of sensitivity to what is proper— audacity, impudence, shamelessness.*"

That is exactly how Jesus teaches us to pray. This is not being rude, sassy, or disrespectful. Just the opposite! It is a huge act of faith to say, "Heavenly Father, so much kindness fills your heart you will bless me far beyond the definition of 'generosity.' Yes, heavenly Father, your heart overflows with unlimited goodwill towards your children. So, you will open up heaven and pour down so many good things on me that I will be totally soaked with blessings." Yes, pray big. Don't insult God by asking for a few, it'sy-bitsy, half-baked blessings. Boldly ask God for lots of enormous blessings.

And why can you be so bold and confident in prayer? Well, God has already proven his amazing generosity. God gave you his one and only Son. And Jesus also showed immeasurable generosity. Jesus gave his life. Jesus poured out his blood to purchase the forgiveness of all your sins. On top of that, Jesus does more than teach you to pray. Jesus also prays for you. Jesus stands before his heavenly Father and asks him to bless you. Saint Paul says all this in Romans. **[God] did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will [God] not also, along with [Jesus] graciously give us all things? ... Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**

So, pray to God through Jesus Christ. Pray boldly. Ask for super-sized blessings. Say to your heavenly Father, “Give me a **heavy-duty faith**. Give me complete holiness of heart. Give me those blessings so I will always tell other people about your love, about your tender kindness, and about your gifts of salvation. And yes, Heavenly Father, bless your Church with **amazing growth**. Fill every sinner with faith and joy. Then bring more and more people to fill the pews until every worship service is jam-packed with people praising you. And, heavenly Father, do not only give me forgiveness. Give me also the **joy of forgiveness**. Give me such joy so that I will never be able to hide it. Give me such joy so that, like Job, I will sing your praises even if I lose my health, lose my money, and lose my friends. And Lord, on top of all that, give me **power over Satan**. Empower me stand up to that roaring lion who wants to devour me. Yes, Lord, give me your wisdom to expose Satan’s underhanded schemes. Give me miraculous spiritual will-power so that I resist all temptation and avoid all sin. And, Lord, give me all these gifts so I can glorify you more and more, right now and for all eternity.”

That, my friends, is a bold prayer. And Jesus teaches you to bang on heaven’s door day and night until God answers those prayers and gives you what you ask for. So, don’t just sit there silently. **ASK** God for more than you have ever asked for before. **SEEK** God’s abundant blessings for body and soul. **KNOCK** on God’s door hard and loud and long. And never give up. Speak up. Pray fervently. Pray continuously. Pray boldly. AMEN.