

Luke 11:1-13 - Take it to the Lord in prayer! Pentecost 10 August 15, 18, 2019

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Grace and peace from your loving heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior. Amen.

We read Jesus' words in the gospel lesson of Luke 11:1-13

These are your words heavenly Father to give us confidence to pray for all our needs at all times. Amen.

Dear Christian Friends,

Who do we go to when we need help? Is it a close family member or friend? Is it a person who is an expert, like a mechanic when we have a car problem? Is it a person who has been faithful in helping us in the past? Yes to all these! But, we should first go to God! He is closer to us than family or friends. He knows our problems better than anyone and has an answer for our needs. He has helped us in the past and is willing to help now. So,

Take it to the Lord in prayer!

First, how can we pray to God effectively? The disciples saw Jesus pray effectively to God as He did miracles. As Jesus demanded more from His disciples, they knew that they needed God's blessing, too. They wanted to know how to approach God with requests that He would answer. God is the Creator. He is an awesome God. We all want to approach Him using the right words.

So, Jesus began the Lord's Prayer by addressing God as our Father. He is our Father Creator. But in Christ, He is our Abba, our loving Father ready to hear us. The first petition is to honor God's name in this world as in heaven. Many people misuse God's name, but we want to honor it by being true to His Word and by praising Him with our lives. Second, we pray for God's kingdom to come. His kingdom is Christ's rule in the hearts of believers. It isn't just in this church but in Christians around the world. We pray that God keep us in the faith and give us time to reach others with the Gospel. In the 3rd petition we pray that God's will be done for us here as it is in heaven. We gladly seek to do His will! Fourth, in Jesus' story, a friend provided bread once for a neighbor. As we pray to God for daily bread, He provides us with food, good health, safety, peace in life, a family, and all that we need for our bodies and lives!

Fifth, we continue to pray for forgiveness because we know that we daily sin and deserve God's punishment. We seek forgiveness, knowing that our perfect Savior, took away our sins by His death. We pray to stay focused on Christ's full forgiveness, so that we can forgive others who sin against us.

The 6th words: with the goal of eternal life through Jesus, we pray that we will not fall into the trap of temptations to sin against God or others. We pray that we will overcome temptations and win the victory in Christ. Finally 7th: we pray that God would keep evil from happening to us. By His grace in Christ, we pray that finally He would take us to heaven! So, we can pray the Lord's Prayer knowing Christ gave us these words to effectively reach our Father in heaven and that He will answer.

Second, we are to be bold in Christ. We are not to be bold in ourselves, but in Christ's promises. Remember the Old Testament lesson of the prophets of Baal. They prayed to Baal with boldness but got no fire for their sacrifice. Isaiah tells us why: "*Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear*" (58:2). But, the believer, Elijah, barely got out his "Amen" to His prayer and fire came from heaven. His prayer was based on the promise of God. So, we can boldly pray by faith knowing the promise of Christ. Jesus said, "*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you*" (John 15:7).

Christ came into this world to reunite us with God. He took the responsibility for all sin of all people. It's like He picked up every sin and carried them to the cross where He died to pay for them in full. Paul wrote that our sins were nailed to the cross! (*Colossians 2:14*). With all our sins taken away, there is nothing that separates us from praying to God so that He will hear us!

Jesus compared a human father to our heavenly Father. He said that a human parent would not give his son a stone if he asked for bread. He wouldn't give him a snake or scorpion instead of food. Then He said, "*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?*" (v.12 - 13).

When I read this, I expected Jesus to say "God will give better gifts than fathers." But, He said: God will give the Holy Spirit. He is the greatest gift along with Christ! He works faith in us which saves us in Christ. He gives us boldness and pleads for us when we pray. And, when God the Father doesn't give us exactly what we ask, He reminds us of Jesus' illustration of the human parent compared to God the Father who loves so much more. The Holy Spirit gives us patience and wisdom to trust that God knows what is best for us and we boldly pray: "Your will be done!"

Jesus' lesson was simple. A man went to a neighbor's house at midnight to borrow bread to give to an unexpected guest. He got what he needed because he kept knocking, knowing that his friend would eventually get up and give him the food (v. 5-8). Jesus continued, "*I tell you, keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep seeking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and it will be opened to you*" (v.9). Jesus tells us to not give up because God is so much more than a neighbor! Unlike the grumpy neighbor, God never sleeps or tires of hearing us. He is not limited in how He can help us and often gives us more than we ask or imagine! If Jesus had not promised that God would answer our prayers, we would not be so confident. But Jesus promised, "*For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened*" (v.10). Jesus wants us to storm the throne of God with our requests!

The Bible promises: "*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?* (Romans 8:31-32). God promised in Psalm 91, "*He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble*" (Psalm 91:15).

We've all had times when we had a problem and parents, family, or friends helped us. But, God offers the best help in Christ! Jesus gave His life to make us God's dear children. He opened the door to heaven for us to have eternal life where our prayers of praise will never end. He also tells us to call upon our God now in any need! Today, God will give us more opportunities for us to pray so that we may honor Him and do His will and pray for His kingdom to grow. So, Ask! Seek! Knock! God, our Father, is ready and willing to answer! Amen.