

Written Copy For: Be Bold in Prayer-Luke 11:8-10

Proper 12-7th Sunday @ Pentecost

Sunday July 28th, 2019

Text: Luke 11:8-10

⁸ 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. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

⁸ I say to you that even if he will not get up to give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his unembarrassed boldness (irrespective of the situation and hour) he will, after getting up, give to him as much as he is having need of. ⁹ And to you, I myself am saying to you, Keep asking! And it will be given to you. Keep search and seeking! And you will find/discover. Keep knocking! And it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For each one who continues asking, he is taking hold of/receiving, and the one who continues searching and seeking is finding and discovering. And to the one who is continuing to knock, it will be opened.

Exegetical Statement

The disciples, after witnessing Jesus praying desire that He teach them how to pray just as John the Baptist instructed his disciples. Jesus provides and outline of prayer, not what must be said each time word for word, but guide for them to use. They are to begin acknowledging God-the creator and ruler of all as "Father". They are to ask that for their part as His children they would reflect the holiness that is His. They ask that His reign and rule would come among them. They ask that as He has in the past so He would in the future continue to provide for what they need to survive each day. They ask that He would not hold their sin and guilt against them, while seeking to release others from obligations of indebtedness that they may have incurred against them by thought word or deed. And that the Father would protect them from times of trial, testing, and temptation. Having given them a template Jesus goes about encouraging the disciples to use this gift whenever and wherever and for whatever. Unlike the neighbor of the friend in Jesus parable who is reluctant to help on the basis of friendship our Father loves us and desires to provide for us. We can petition Him at any hour about anything. Such shameless boldness worked on the sinful neighbor so it is most certain that our Father will answer. And He will answer by giving only what is best for us, even more so than sinful earthly fathers do. And we are to persist: keep asking, keep seeking an answer, keep knocking on the Father's door to His throne room in prayer. If we do, He promises He will answer, and we will find His answer because He will always answer in His own good time. And the greatest gift He loves to give to those who ask in faith is the gift of His presence in our hearts and lives through His Spirit, His kingdom reigning in us and with us.

Focus Statement:

God answers our prayers not based on how well we pray or on our asking for the right things. He answers because of who Jesus has made us to be-His precious children. The Father gave the most important thing He had, His Son as our sacrifice for sin. And He has promised us His greatest gift-Eternal Life. He desires to hear from us just as any Father is honored when his child looks to and honors him as his provider of what is needful

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

Because our earthly fathers occasionally may not have had time or patience for our less than important requests, we may feel that the God of the universe is like that as well. We may consider some things not worthy to pray for; that we should deal with them on our own.

What the hearer should do as a result:

According to our relationship with God as our Father and based on Jesus encouragement to ask for whatever is on our hearts we are to be shamelessly bold in praying for our needs, and just as Abraham was bold in petitioning our Father on behalf of the needs of others.

Subject Sentence: Pray with boldness-Your Father desires to hear you

Prayer. Prayer is one of the greatest and most treasured gifts God gives to us through faith in Jesus Christ. It's also one of the most misunderstood of His gifts. Among some of the misunderstandings is that it matters who is leading the prayer. While it is the Pastor's job to lead the prayers in worship, God doesn't hear or respond to me any better than He hears and responds to you when you are praying by yourself or with a friend. Some worry about making sure their prayers sound...prayerful. Some believe that one has to adopt that "prayer voice". And that the prayer itself needs to be poetic, or like a work of literature. One needs to throw in some theological church jargon to impress God and others with their knowledge. And of course, it doesn't hurt to use some King James language, since those are the very words that Jesus used. So, they pray something like: ***"Oh Almighty, everlasting, and omnipotent God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Thou art mighty on thy throne of power and glory. Be for me this day my propitiation for all my trespasses and be my righteousness before the Heavenly Father. Be thou my guard and shield oh eternal one."*** It may sound impressive. And if it is prayed in faith to Jesus, God certainly hears it. But hopefully you don't pray like that on your own; unless that is you really talk that way. And leading others in that kind of prayer can be a cause for people to tune out instead of silently join in.

But already written and prepared prayers are not in themselves a bad thing. They are especially helpful when you're called on to pray with someone who has just heard some tragic news. When you too are caught up in the fear, or sorrow, or emotion of the moment. Something like this is a good tool: "My Prayer Book" It's pocket size and has prayers for personal and public occasions. It sells for \$9-\$12 from CPH or Amazon.

Many are proponents that the best prayers come from the heart spontaneously. And God certainly hears them if they are prayed in faith. But in the heat of the moment, put on the spot, sometimes our brain just can't operate fast enough. You see this when the prayer leader keeps falling back on a repetitive phrase over and over. An example would be: ***"Father God: we just thank you Father God for the many blessings Father God that you have poured out upon us, Father God. Thank you, Father God, for this day Father God, for our lives Father God, and Father God we ask that you would heal our friend Father***

God, from her illness Father God.” God certainly hears this prayer prayed in faith. But others may find themselves unintentionally tuning out from the awkwardness of the repetition. Spontaneous prayer is best seen as you having a conversation with God who is always present with you through the Holy Spirit.

Now I want us to be a praying Church. I want you to be praying for yourselves at home as part of your devotional time in His Word. But also, be praying as you have need, or are moved to throughout the day. I want us to be ready to pray for each other. When friends tell us of something going on in their lives we respond, “I’ll pray for you.” But do we? Do we sometimes say that and then forget? How much more meaningful would it be to not only promise to pray for someone but to stop and actually do it. Pray the theologian’s prayer, or pray from your prayer book, or pray a Father God prayer. In the end, your taking the time to pray with someone in need will be seen as a blessing by them. And anything prayed in faith God promises to hear.

Jesus is so adamant about prayer that He taught a model prayer to His disciples, and to us as well. It’s the Lord’s prayer, which we have in our Gospel Lesson today in an abbreviated form. The fact that Luke records a version different from Matthew’s, from which we draw the prayer used in our liturgy today, tells us that saying the exact words is not what’s important. Jesus gives us an outline. The petitions are like chapter headers. We consider each and fill in after each heading whatever may come to mind relating to our life at the moment.

[**Luke 11:2**] He begins with a short and sweet heading: **“Father”** We know and confess we are praying to God Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth. But because of what Jesus has done for each one of us on the cross He has claimed us as His children. The most powerful person in the whole universe and beyond desires us to boldly address Him as our **“Father”**. No matter what may be going on in your life, that confession is a reason for faith and hope. Next we say, **“hallowed be your name”**. As Luther explains in the Small Catechism the Father’s name is hallowed or kept holy with or without our praying this. But in this petition, we are reminded that as Christians we bear His name, the name of His Son. We are “Little Christs”. We pray that the Father would move us to think, say, and do that which

reflects the holiness that is our God and Father. And that we confess the things we've thought, said, and done which reflect poorly upon our Holy Father. Next we pray "**Your kingdom come**". Here too Luther reminds us that the Father's kingdom comes whether or not we pray for it. But here we ask that it may come where we are. That it would come into our hearts, that God's Spirit would rule there by faith, so that we boldly confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. We also pray that God would use us as His tools to bring His Kingdom into the hearts of those around us who need to hear the Gospel. That we would be a tool of His kingdom coming into the lives of those who need to hear that Jesus loves them, that He died for them, and that all their sins have been forgiven them. We confess that God is ruling right now in the midst of this broken and sinful world. But on Resurrection Day His kingdom will come in all its fullness as we receive the new bodies and new souls that Jesus died and rose again to provide for us.

[**Luke 11:3**] Then, as those who have been declared to be the Father's precious children through Jesus' gift of the kingdom we can boldly pray, "**Give us each day our daily bread**" or in a more literal sense "*give us the bread for tomorrow that we need each and every day for our survival.*" As Luther points out in the Small Catechism this includes more than just bread, more than just food, it's everything we need for our temporal existence each and every day. And this is more than a request, it's a bold request: "Give to us". We can make such a bold request because we confess that Christ gave His life for us on the cross, gave all that He had to redeem our lives. As Paul says in **Romans 8:32** "**He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**"

[**Luke 11:4**] Following this we make another bold request: "**and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us**". Notice there is no "please" that proceeds this petition. We can boldly ask that our sins be forgiven, not because we've earned the right to, but because Jesus did. He has taken care of all of our sins, past, present, and future were taken care of on the cross. All of the ways we have disobeyed God and thereby incurred His anger have been paid for. As Paul states in **Colossians 2:13-14** ¹³ **And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God**

made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” There exists no record of your sins or my sins before God. Not even the devil can accuse us. Jesus final word from the cross to you and to me is “It is finished”. And in His resurrection, He placed the emphatic stamp on this.

So as His forgiven children we are to forgive all those who have incurred a debt toward us. A debt consisting of offenses against us in thought, word, or deed. Offenses that while they may hurt us, they are actually sins against God. Sins that, just like our own, have been forgiven by Jesus blood shed on the cross. If God has forgiven them then so should we.

These are bold petitions. And Jesus wants us to pray with boldness to God the Father. So much so that He gives us an example in the parable that follows the Lord’s prayer in our text. He says [**Luke 11:5-6**]] ⁵**“And he (Jesus) said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him”**” Now understanding the setting of this parable is important. In 1st century Palestine there were no 24-hour Meijer’s, or all-night gas stations where one could go to get bread or milk. And there was an emphasis on hospitality. If someone showed up at your house, especially after a long journey, it was expected that you would feed them. But the man who has received these guests has nothing on hand. So, he has a choice to make, wait until morning or go ask a neighbor. The thing is it’s the middle of the night. So, when Jesus asks the question: “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight...” the answer in the disciples’ minds are: “Not me”.

We can see the reason why in the following verse. [**Luke 11:7**] **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?'**” In 1st century Palestine one would secure their door at night by placing a wooden or iron bar horizontally across the door frame to prevent anyone from trying to force their way in. In order to open the door this must be removed. Keep in mind it’s dark. There were no flashlights or night lights. The children are laying on the mat that served as a bed, sleeping around and against their father. As many of you

know children do not sleep in nice straight lines but roll all over the place. To get up the man would have to carefully navigate around them to light a lamp, by which he might find bread, and then unbolt the door. By this time the whole house would be awake. Waking young children up in the middle of the night is not something you would do on a whim. It's not something you would be willing to do even if a friend came looking for bread that he needs to feed some travelers. This would be beyond a bother. It would be a great inconvenience for something that could be easily obtained in the morning. They wouldn't go to their neighbor, just as you or I wouldn't either out of embarrassment and fear that we would stretch the bonds of friendship beyond the limits.

[**Luke 11:8**] Jesus says: **"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."** Friendship didn't get the man what he needed. Nor did persistence, since we only have him coming to his neighbor's house the one time. It was impudence. Or a better way to say it is "shameless boldness". Boldness: willing to come in the middle of the night and put his friendship on the line out of love for a traveler who showed up in need. Shameless: the man didn't care what others would think about his actions or how they would judge him going to such extremes over such a small thing as bread. And it is these actions that resulted in this reluctant neighbor giving him what he needed.

Now this is a "lesser to a greater" parable. The man who was moved to provide bread was your average sinful selfish person who looks out for himself first and others when it is convenient. Still, shameless boldness moved him to act. How much more will shameless boldness in prayer work when we petition our loving and righteous God? The One who has shared with us His Holy Spirit in Baptism, who daily shows us our sin so that we can repent and be confirmed in faith so that we might not wander away. The One who delights in providing daily bread. The One who became a man to teach us to pray and then went to the cross to earn for us the right to come before God in prayer whenever we choose to? The one to whom we sing about in "What a Friend We Have in Jesus". Our loving Lord and Savior.

We can be shameless and bold in our prayer life and not worry about the consequences. If in our boldness we pray for something we should not have our loving and gracious Father will withhold it from us. As Jesus tells us in **Luke 11:11-13** ¹¹ **What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;** ¹² **or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?** ¹³ **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!"** We can be shameless and bold in all our prayers. As Paul says in **Romans 8:32** **"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"**

No matter how you pray, pray with the confidence and shameless boldness that comes from faith. Whether it's a written prayer out of a prayer book or a spontaneous prayer with all kinds of pauses and repetitive Father God phrases, just pray. Pray for yourself. Pray for your friends who are hurting and in trouble. Pray for Franklin Mission: the workers as well as the dinner guests they host on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Pray for those that God may put in your path this week. Pray that they might know the God of the Universe as Father. That in your thoughts, words, and actions you would reflect His holiness. That He would use you to bring His kingdom to bear on those around you as well as refresh His presence within you. That you might honor Him as the One who supplies all your daily needs. And His Spirit would move you to boldly confess all your sins, knowing by faith they have been forgiven. And with equal boldness forgive the sins of others in your life. No matter how big or how small the petition, your Lord and Savior is waiting to hear from you and to respond with love and mercy. Pray boldly in His name. Amen.

