

Sermon for July 27, 2025 – The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 11:1-13 (EHV)

Theme: Talk to your Father -

- 1) With childlike faith.
- 2) With excited anticipation.
- 3) Trusting that He'll give you what's good.

¹ On another occasion, 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 also taught his disciples." ² He said to them, "When you pray, say, 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ³ Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'" ⁵ He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and tell him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶ because a friend of mine who is on a journey has come to me, and I do not have anything to set before him.' ⁷ And the one inside replies, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give it to you.' ⁸ I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his bold persistence, he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹ "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. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹ "What father among you, if your son asks for bread, would give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, would give him a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, would give him a scorpion? ¹³ 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?"

Many years ago, one of my young children asked his mother, "Can I have a soda?" "No," she replied.

An hour later: "Mom, can I have a soda?"

"No."

Another hour later: "Mom, can I have a soda?"

"No."

Finally, after nearly an entire day of repeated requests, I overheard an exasperated mother say, "Child, why do you keep asking me when I've already said no?"

The child responded: "Because you might have changed your mind since the last time I asked."

As frustrating as that moment was for Laura (and amusing for me), it beautifully illustrates the

childlike confidence God wants us to have in prayer—a confidence rooted in His mercy that leads us to pray persistently in hope. Let us reflect on this truth under the theme:

Talk to your Father –

- 1) With childlike faith,
- 2) With excited anticipation,
- 3) Trusting that He'll give you what's good.

Part One: With childlike faith.

Our text begins: ⁱ *On another occasion, 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 also taught his disciples.”*

Jesus had already taught his disciples how to pray earlier in his ministryⁱ, but they wanted a little refresher.

Don't we often feel the same? I know I do. Prayer is simple—and yet, we find ourselves unsure. How should I address God? What can I ask for? Given my sin, can I even expect God to listen to me—let alone answer me?

Jesus was happy to offer His disciples (and us) a little refresher, reminding them of the model prayer He previously taught them. He doesn't repeat every petition but summarizes them – thereby teaching us that it is not the precise words of a prayer that matter, but the meaning behind them.

He said to them, “When you pray, say, ‘Our Father in heaven...’”

Brothers and sisters in Christ, take a moment to appreciate Jesus' words. God wants you to approach Him neither in terror, like a slave trembling before a tyrant, nor with slick negotiation tactics, like a salesperson closing a deal. No, come as a dearly loved child comes to a parent, trusting His goodness, power, and love.

But what gives us the right to approach the all-holy God with such confidence? Certainly not anything in us! By nature, we are sinful and deserve His attention as much as a mosquito deserves ours. Yet, He directs His gracious attention towards us. Why?

Because *God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son* to pay for all the wrongs that all people have thought, spoken or done. Through the preaching of the Gospel, He sent the Holy Spirit to awaken repentance and faith in the hearts of His chosen, so *that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*ⁱⁱ Through Holy Baptism, God has cleansed and adopted you—you now belong to Him!

*How great is the love the Father has lavished on [you], that [you] should be called children of God! And that is what [you] are!*ⁱⁱⁱ *In fact, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*^{iv}

That is why you can approach God with the same boldness and trust as a little child who climbs onto her loving father's lap – trusting that He will give you all the comforting love and protection you need.

Here is a fact about little children to keep in mind: they are almost always listening, even when you think they're not. And they never forget a promise. For example, if I tell my kids in the morning, "Tonight we'll get some ice cream," you can be sure that they will be demanding ice cream in the evening!

The same principle applies to God's children. What is the purpose of the Lord's Prayer, other than reminding God to grant us all the good and gracious blessings He promised us in the Bible regarding His name, kingdom, will, providence, forgiveness, guidance, and protection?

It's beneficial to remind God of these promises in prayer, not because He needs reminding, but because we do. We often live in fear, worry, and doubt about life on earth, forgetting God's promise to take care of us. By asking God for these blessings in prayer, we are reminded of His promises, and our confidence in Him grows.

Part Two: With excited anticipation

After repeating His model prayer, Jesus tells His disciples a little parable:

⁵ He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and tell him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶ because a friend of mine who is on a journey has come to me, and I do not have anything to set before him.' ⁷ And the one inside replies, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give it to you.' ⁸ I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his bold persistence, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

Jesus' point is this: if bold persistence can move a sleepy friend into action, who has no reason to help us, how much more will it move our heavenly Father, who loves us dearly, never sleeps, and always has His ears tuned to the cries of His children!

Therefore, Jesus says: ⁹ "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. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, take Jesus' words to heart! God loves it when you, like a little child, not only ask for mercy, but persistently insist upon it according to His Word. Why? Because it reveals your trust in Him and joy in His Word. Persistent prayer is the expression of confident faith.

But that invites the question: Are you as persistent in your prayers as my children are in asking for ice cream? (Trust me, they are very persistent). Sadly, when we don't immediately get what we prayed for, we often give up. We think, "God must not want me to have it," or "Maybe I've made Him mad."

Those thoughts don't come from faith—they come from the devil. They paint God as cold and distant, rather than as the gracious Father that He is, who showers us with good gifts every day.

Therefore, go to God in prayer - anticipating that He will answer you because He loves you more than any earthly father ever could. Yes, keep asking like a little child who is so excited about her parents' promise to take her to Disney World that she keeps asking them about it until vacation day arrives!

Part Three: Trusting that He'll give you what's good.

And that brings us to the last part of Jesus' discourse, where He says: "*What father among you, if your son asks for bread, would give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, would give him a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, would give him a scorpion?*"

Have you ever prayed for something and then doubted God would give it to you? I have. To my shame, I remember praying for something good only to think that God would withhold it from me because I have been so bad. What do such thoughts reveal? That we sometimes view God as a stern, unmerciful judge instead of the loving Father He truly is. Lord, have mercy on us!

And mercy is exactly what the LORD continues to have towards us. With a father's heart, He forgives all our sins for Christ's sake. He reminds us that He knows how to give excellent gifts, which is why Jesus concludes His instruction by saying:

¹³If 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?"

The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift we can ask for. He is the true God, coequal with the Father and the Son. He created, saved, and sanctified you. He washed you clean from all sin at your baptism, awakening and strengthening faith in your heart through His Gospel. Through that same Gospel, He protects and directs your life on earth. On top of all this, the Bible says that *the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we should pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that are not expressed in words.*^y

How sad it is that we often enthusiastically ask for things that have no lasting value, when God is offering to give us the gift of His Spirit! We are like a child looking for a loonie when God stands ready to give us a \$100 bill.

"Lord, forgive our shortsightedness and teach us to desire the better gifts You long to give!"

Therefore, fellow redeemed children of God, don't be afraid to pray – even if you're unsure what to pray for or how to go about it. Learn from Jesus:

Prayer is simply speaking to your loving heavenly Father—

with childlike faith,
with excited anticipation,
and trusting that He will always give what is good.

Amen.

ⁱ Cf. Matthew 6:9ff

ⁱⁱ John 3:16 EHV

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. 1 John 3:1 NIV84

^{iv} Galatians 3:26-27 EHV

^v Romans 8:26