

**Grace, mercy and peace are yours in abundance through faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

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.”

<sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Give us each day our daily bread. <sup>4</sup>Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’”

<sup>5</sup>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, <sup>6</sup>because a friend of mine who is on a journey has come to me, and I do not have anything to set before him.’ <sup>7</sup>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.’ <sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>“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. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened.

<sup>11</sup>“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? <sup>12</sup>Or if he asks for an egg, would give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>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?” **This is God’s Word.**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

We have home devotions every day at our house. When our kids were smaller we had devotions with them and one thing we did was to have them take turns praying. When we first started we had to prompt them and help them with ideas but that was part of the learning process. We wanted them to know how to pray and to be comfortable doing it and now, when we visit our grown children, it is comforting to see that they are doing the same thing with their children – having home devotions and teaching their children to pray.

Praying is something I think we sometimes take for granted and assume it is something everyone knows how to do, but we can always learn and so this morning, as a disciple of Christ, let’s ask Jesus, **“Lord Teach Us to Pray.”** **“Help us to pray for the proper things”** and **“Help us to pray with the proper attitude.”**

**I.** The disciples had watched Jesus go off to pray by himself many times and they also knew that John the Baptist had taught his disciples how to pray. Apparently, they felt that there was something lacking in their prayer life and they came to Jesus with a simple request, **“Lord, teach us to pray.”**

Jesus used a prayer that we use in every one of our worship services – the Lord’s Prayer. To put everything in proper perspective, when you pray begin by addressing God as, **“Our Father.”** That makes sense because we are children of God because of our faith in Jesus. It is because of

our relationship with Jesus that we are able to approach God – who loves us and wants to hear our prayers. So we approach God as a child approaches their father with our requests.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> requests are about our relationship with God and so we say, **“Hallowed be your name.”** Another way of putting that is, “May your name be holy among us.” God’s name is holy when we respect and praise it – when we obey God and thank him for the gifts that he gives us.

We also ask God that his kingdom – his rule – may come into our hearts. This is so that as we live our lives, that we do it in the sphere of his influence, i.e. that he is watching over us, helping us, and guiding us through life.

Then we ask that God’s will be done. we know that his will is that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. But we also want his will to be done in our lives. God knows each one of us individually and cares about us and he also knows his plan for us and what we need and so we ask for his will to be done in our lives.

Of course we have physical needs too and so we also ask that our Lord take care of our physical needs and he doesn’t let us down.

Then we move onto our relationship with those around us. God’s great love for us that we see at the cross as he paid for our sins comes to us through faith as he forgives us our sins and we ask that he help us to forgive those who have sinned against us in the same way. That’s not easy but with the love of Christ in our hearts we know that God can help us in this part of our daily living.

Then we ask God to help us with temptation – that is something we face every day and we need God’s help to resist temptations – especially the ones that entice us more than others. Finally, we ask God to deliver us from the evil that surrounds us. The devil creates all kinds of wickedness and evil in this world and we ask the Lord protect us from this evil and its influences in our lives.

Did you notice that the majority of the Lord’s Prayer is about spiritual matters. Sometimes we get more caught up in praying for physical things and yet if we get our spiritual lives in order, the other things seem to work out and then we are able to handle the other parts of our lives as well.

So as we pray, may we always remember to ask the Lord to help us spiritually – to bring us forgiveness for our sins and to help us to love as he has loved us and to ask for the Lord to speak to us and guide us through his Word as we journey through life in this world. But Jesus not only gives us direction on what to pray for but also the manner in which we should pray.

**II. <sup>5</sup>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, <sup>6</sup>because a friend of mine who is on a journey has come to me, and I do not have anything to set before him.’ <sup>7</sup>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.’ <sup>8</sup>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.**

What's the main point of this story? The man was certainly bold in making his request to his friend. It was late and his friend was in bed. It appears that he kept knocking and asking even when his friend said no. God wants us to be bold and persistent in our prayers too.

Sometimes God does say wait or not yet or stays silent but it's not that he doesn't want to be bothered, but rather he knows just the right time and the right way in which to answer our prayers. God's mind and wisdom are so far above ours that we can't know what he is thinking but he loves us and wants only the best for us and so we keep knocking and keep asking.

I think that is what Jesus was getting at as he 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. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened.”** See the persistence and increasing intensity. We won't get unless we ask. We won't find the answer unless we seek it by listening to God, and The door won't open unless we knock and sometimes keep knocking.

We can be bold and persistent as we pray because of the promises God gives us. Jesus reminds us, **“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? <sup>12</sup>Or if he asks for an egg, would give him a scorpion?”** Fathers hear the requests of their children and do not fulfill these requests with something harmful but rather something good. In the same way, our Father in heaven answers our prayers with something good even if it is not what we were asking for.

Jesus then reminds us that if a sinful father knows how to give good gifts to his children how much greater gifts will our heavenly father give to us – his children – the greatest gift being the gift of the Holy Spirit who brings us faith and keeps us in that faith until we are taken home to heaven.

So, What's your prayer life like? Are you persistent and bold in your prayers? Or do you ask once and then forget about it if you don't get an answer? This portion of scripture is a reminder that our God wants us to come to him in prayer and he promises to hear and answer those prayers. Jesus makes this possible because he makes us right with God by paying for our sins and bringing us forgiveness. That gives us access to the Father who wants to graciously answer our prayers by giving us what he knows is best. Our greatest need is the gift of the Holy Spirit for the Holy Spirit is the one who brings us faith and keeps us strong in that faith. The Holy Spirit helps us to keep everything in perspective.

May this portion of scripture help us to evaluate our own prayer life and to make any changes we need to make so that we approach our Lord in a proper way and ask for the proper things. Amen.