

Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of July 25, 2010

How to Guide to Prayer (Luke 11:1-13)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Our text is from the 11th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke:

Jesus said, "I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

This is the text.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, How many of us conversation is one of the great pleasures in life. speaks at least a few thousand words each day, even adult each day. We take the ability to talk for granted though don't we? It's just something people do. It comes naturally. But does it look at babies, for example, they have to learn how to talk and communicate. It's a process that takes months and develops within the first few years of life.

Perhapsthat is why the average adult tensof thousandsof some anted though don't we? It's just treally comethat naturally. If we totalk and communicate. It's a irst few yearsof life.

Well, the same is true with talking in our spiritual life. In order to communicate with our Heavenly Father we need to learn how to talk to Him. We need to learn His language. This is what we call prayer. Prayer that pleases God does not come naturally. As it says in Romans 8:26, "We do not know how to pray as we should."

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With Jesus, the disciples saw first hand the best example of a life of prayer. They noticed that when He got up in the morning the first thing He did was pray and went to sleep at night the last thing He did was pray. They also noticed that He had a constant communion with His Heavenly Father and they wanted that too. They realized they didn't know how to pray like Him. They sensed the shallowness of their prayer life and they wanted more. They sensed that like ourselves, prayer was often just mouthing the words. And they realized that like us, only in times of crisis. But they wanted a prayer life that was deeper and more meaningful. So they said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray."

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Prayer that pleases God is a daily response to His Word. Our devotion should consist of essentially two things: God's Word through which He speaks to us; and our prayers through which we respond to Him. In our worship service each Sunday we follow this pattern: First we hear His Word in the introit and then we respond by offering our prayers in what is called the Church's prayer.

Word. Our devotion should consist Hespeakstous; and our prayers viceeach Sunday we follow this ngs and the sermon and then we ntheliturgy, "The Prayer of the

The closer to God's Word we cling, the more we learn how to pray and what to pray for. In Romans 8 it says that in our weakness the Spirit helps us pray, He intercedes for us. And the more we can be filled with God's Word the more we will be filled with the Holy Spirit and, hence, the deeper our prayer life will be as a result.

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Friends, God is our strength. As Jesus has said, "A gift of prayer is for all of life and not reserved in Philippians 4, "Be anxious for nothing, but in every thanksgiving, present your requests to God." For that will never crumble.

Once upon a time a certain country prepared to crown a street to see the new king pass in procession. A 12-year-old boy wanted desperately to come close to the new king. He went through the crowd. He was able to get as far as the guards too. But the guards stopped the boy and said, "You know this man is the king?" The young boy replied, "My dad!"

What a privilege that we can come to God's heavenly throne as this 12-year-old boy who went directly to his father in chapter 4 that through Jesus Christ we are adopted children. We need courage to pray with boldness in faith that Romans 8, "You have not received a spirit of slavery but of adoption as sons. And by His Spirit we

Near the end of Luther's life his dear wife, Katie, so Luther wrote a letter while away from home that told her not to worry but instead to "pray, and let the Lord certainly not be commanded to worry about me or a passage on the Lord, and He will sustain you," as is written in passages."

God wants to help us and He invites us to take our share. He says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will answer you, and in your distress I will hear you. And in His love God desires that we speak to Him not only about everything that is on our minds, especially

When children talk about their concerns and their parents are generally pleased to welcome their child. In the same way God is greatly pleased when we talk about everything that is on our minds and hearts. We should pray daily in prayer and tell Him everything. He wants to know. He can carry the load better than we can.

The reason God hears our prayer is not because we are good people and it is not because we have a feeling that He hears us. The reason is because Jesus Christ has reconciled us to God by His sacrifice. He forgives our sins and answers our prayers and answers them. But if someone does not trust in Jesus Christ that person should not expect to receive anything from God. As it says in Hebrews 11, "Without faith it is impossible to please

But because of Christ God opens the kingdom of heaven to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

For all things are possible with God." His prayer is not reserved for only special occasions. St. Paul wrote in Philippians 4, "Be anxious for nothing, but in every thanksgiving, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock that

crowded the street. A 12-year-old boy was in the crowd. He went through the guards and he tried to get past them. He could not get through here; don't you know this man is the king, but he is also my dad!"

throne with the same confidence as the king. It says in Galatians 4 that we are adopted children of God and this gives us the confidence to pray. For it says in Romans 8, "You have not received a spirit of fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption, by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'"

He became very worried for his health. And Luther wrote a letter to comfort his wife Katie. He told her not to worry. He said, "You have not worried about yourself. Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain you, as is written in Psalm 55:22 and many more

we need to Him: In Psalm 50 He says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will answer you, and you will honour Me." He does not want us to worry only about the things we need but about the things that worry us.

For those who are good and loving, God will help them however they talk with Him through prayer. We can pour out our hearts to God and unload our burdens on Him. He

is a good person and it is not because we are good people and it is not because we have a feeling that He hears us. The reason is because Jesus Christ has reconciled us to God by His sacrifice. Faith in Him moves God to hear our prayers and answer them. But if someone does not trust in Jesus Christ that person should not expect to receive anything from God. As it says in Hebrews 11, "Without faith it is impossible to please

God. But because of Christ God opens the kingdom of heaven to you. He says, "Ask, and it will be opened to you." He

says in First John chapter 5, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Now this is a great promise but there seem to be a question that arises. What is God's will? In general, God's will for our life is to live according to the Ten Commandments. And the summary of the Ten Commandments is to love God and trust in Him through Jesus and to love our neighbour as ourselves. God does prayer as a way to include us in doing His will. Being in communion with Christ God moves us to pray answers our prayers offered according to His will. And what is God's will for this world but to save it through Christ... And so the very best thing we can pray for someone is for their salvation.

God will give what is the very best for you but it might not be what you expect. Maybe you want a new Mercedes Benz. But that might not be good for your soul if it comes from an impure motive. God has your eternal salvation in mind and He gives what we need most. The golden rule that should regulate all of our prayers is this, "Not as I will, but as You will." Jesus gives us this model in the Lord's Prayer, which is the perfect, most complete prayer, which He graciously places upon our lips. In this prayer we say, "Our Father, who art in heaven, Thy will be done..."

When we begin each prayer conversation with God by seeing His love and grace in Jesus, we can then pray with thanksgiving and we can begin to speak to God in His language. And we can pray in faith and expectant hope. As St. Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4).

*As we sang earlier in the hymn of the day, indeed,
"Amen, that is, so shall it be.
Make strong our faith in You, that we
May doubt not but with trust believe
That what we ask we shall receive.
This in Your name and at Your Word
We say, "Amen, O hear us, Lord!"*

Amen. The peace of God that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.