Pentecost 10 Luke 11:1-13
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Jesus Teaches Us to Pray
I. To think as we pray.
II. To be persistent as we pray.
III. To be confident as we pray.

Dear Christian friends,

"Lord, teach us to pray." That's certainly a prayer **we want** to MAKE OUR OWN today.

Let's be clear about **some things** right from the start. Prayer is to be our FIRST RESORT **not the last**. It's NOT all else failed so we MIGHT AS WELL **pray** – it can't hurt any.

Praying is NOT OPTIONAL. Do you remember how the **catechism explained** the 2nd Commandment? We are "NOT TO USE God's name to curse, swear, lie, etc., but CALL UPON God's name in every trouble, PRAY, praise and give thanks."

Yet do we sometimes forget to pray? Do we sometimes pray WITHOUT REALLY THINKING? Are we sometimes content with just a QUICKLY RATTLED OFF "Come, Lord Jesus" or "Now I lay me down to sleep" instead of wrestling with God in prayer? Those aren't just mistakes to **be corrected**. Those are sins we **need to repent** of.

Jesus has already answered our prayer of ***"Lord, teach us to pray."*** **With these verses** JESUS TEACHES us 1)to think as we pray, 2)to be persistent as we pray and 3)to be confident as we pray.

I. To think as we pray.

Jesus teaches us to pray with HIS OWN EXAMPLE. Luke loves to **show us** Jesus praying – Jesus getting up ***"at daybreak"*** to pray – Jesus going off ***"into a solitary place"*** to pray – Jesus ***"spending the night"*** in prayer. IF Jesus so valued and treasured the PRIVILEGE and POWER of prayer how much more shouldn't we?

Jesus teaches us to THINK as we pray. We have here the **Lord's Prayer** but it's different from the one we **regularly use**. That's because Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer on TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS. Matthew records it in the **"Sermon on the Mount."** That's the one we're **used** to. Luke records it this **second time** when on an UNKNOWN DAY in an UNKNOWN PLACE the disciples asked Jesus, ***"Lord, teach us to pray."*** This time Jesus DROPS the ***"who art in heaven – Thy will be done – deliver us from evil."*** He also changes Matthew's ***"debts"*** to ***"sins"*** – ***"forgive us our sins."***

With those changes Jesus teaches us that prayer is **not** a MECHANICAL or MAGICAL RECITATION of **certain** words. The power of prayer is NOT IN THE WORDS **we use** but in the Person **to whom** we are praying – ***"our Father who art in heaven."*** The Lord's Prayer is neither long nor SHOWY but it **certainly** SAYS A LOT with just a **few, simple words**.

We don't have time to **go through** EACH PETITION in detail. For now notice some BASIC, IMPORTANT truths about prayer.

One – prayer is addressed NOT to Mary or the saints but to the one true God. With Jesus as our Savior **we have** DIRECT ACCESS to God. That's what it means to pray ***"in Jesus' name."*** ONLY with our sins washed away in Jesus' blood and clothed by faith with Jesus' perfect life are we PRESENTABLE to God. Paul tells us that ***"in (Jesus) and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence."*** Trusting in Jesus Hebrews encourages us, ***"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."***

A second truth to THINK about. **Prayer** is not about getting OUR WILL done but getting GOD'S will done. Let me repeat that. Prayer is not about getting OUR WILL done but getting GOD'S will done. The first three petitions are ***"Thy/Your name – kingdom – will"*** NOT MY name, will, etc. It's not until the **4th Petition** that we specifically ask FOR OURSELVES – ***"Give US this day OUR daily bread."*** Even then we're not praying ONLY FOR OURSELVES – "give me my daily bread – forgive ME MY trespasses – deliver ME from temptation, etc." **Prayer** is NOT STUCK on ourselves or just our families.

A third truth to THINK about. When praying KEEP YOUR PRIORITIES straight. Jesus tells us, ***"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things*** (food, clothes, etc.) ***will be given to you as well."*** The first three petitions are SPIRITUAL NEEDS and **requests** and even the last three a PRIMARILY **spiritual**. It's only the 4th Petition – ***"our daily bread'*** – that really deals with our PHYSICAL NEEDS and even then it's with the SPIRITUAL TRUTH that our ***"daily bread"*** really comes from our heavenly Father – that we depend on GOD BLESSING our work, fields, etc.

That's a lot to THINK ABOUT as we pray. Real prayer is WORK - but don't let that keep you from praying! Real praying is not a MINDLESS MUTTERING of words but an attentive thinking. AS WE PRAY Jesus teaches us…

II. To be persistent in our prayers.

Jesus illustrates that persistence. ***"Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and tell him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine who is on a journey has come to me, and I do not have anything to set before him.' 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.' 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."***

You wouldn't do that, would you? That's being RUDE and inconsiderate. Sure, showing hospitality is **important** but this was NO LIFE-OR-DEATH **emergency**. It took a lot of GUTS for this **guy to do** this. He just wouldn't take **"No!"** for an answer. He kept at it UNTIL his friend FINALLY got up and **gave him** some food JUST TO GET RID of him. He didn't do that ***"because he is his friend"*** but because of his ***"bold persistence."*** The Greek word literally means **"shameless."** We'd be ashamed to do this, wouldn't we? But that didn't stop this guy!

Jesus teaches us **to pray** WITH SUCH PERSISTENCE. He's arguing from a LESSER to **greater** point. We're not being RUDE **when we pray** – God invites us to. There is no ***"midnight"*** – no BAD/WRONG TIME to pray. God is ALWAYS ready and eager to **hear and answer** our prayers. Our praying is **not** ONE FRIEND GOING to another but a beloved child going to his loving, heavenly Father. So pray WITH PERSISTENCE!

Jesus drives home **that point** with some COMMANDS **and** PROMISES. Jesus repeats Himself from the Sermon on the Mount. ***"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. For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. And to the one who knocks, it will be opened."*** Those commands are NOTICE that ***"KEEP asking – KEEP seeking -KEEP knocking."*** Jesus couples each command with a PROMISE – not a "MIGHT/MAYBE" but a ***"you will."***

Persistence is not asking JUST ONCE and then assuming you have **God's answer**. Persist – KEEP ON – praying until God's answer is **clear**. FOLLOW Abraham's example in the OT reading. He kept coming back to God FOR MORE! Abraham was both HUMBLE and PERSISTENT!

Just because we ask for – MAYBE EVEN **got whatever** from God – doesn't mean we SHOULDN'T BOTHER God for **whatever else**. God wants us to ***"keep"*** COMING BACK" to Him in prayer and He

promises to ***"keep"*** ANSWERING our prayers. We're not talking about being GREEDY but being persistent or ***"shameless"*** to use the Greek word. We should never feel **as if** we're BOTHERING God with our prayers – **as if** God has BETTER THINGS to do – BIGGER THINGS to handle than our **puny prayers**. Jesus teaches us to **pray with persistence** AND…

III. To be confident as we pray.

Jesus illustrates that confidence but now He switches FROM A FRIEND **asking a friend** to a child asking his father. ***"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? Or if he asks for an egg, would give him a scorpion? 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?"***

Once again Jesus argues FROM THE LESSER to the **greater point**. No normal, loving father would BE SO MEAN and CRUEL to **do that** to his **hungry**, trusting child. **Now**, Jesus continues IF YOU fathers who are nowhere near **perfect** – if you want to do what YOU THINK IS BEST from your children – HOW MUCH MORE will your perfect, loving heavenly **Father do** what He ACTUALLY KNOWS IS BEST for you! So pray WITH CONFIDENCE!

Jesus backs up **His point** with SPECIAL PROOF of **how much** God really does love us. We have Jesus – God's **own, eternal Son** – as our PERFECT Savior. We have the Holy Spirit who has brought us to faith in Jesus and who daily helps us live our **Christian faith**.

FOR CONFIDENCE in praying go kneel at the manger – **there's** God's Son born one of us to **be the Savior** of all our us. MARVEL again that Jesus gives us **all the credit** for His life of perfect love and obedience. If you HAVE ANY DOUBTS **at all** about God's love go stand again at the cross – God ***"did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all."*** There on the cross Jesus personally paid for **every single one** of our sins with His own innocent sufferings and death. Look again at Jesus' **open and empty** grave and SEE THE PROOF of God's love – His power – His faithfulness. LOOK AGAIN at that baptismal font. **There** the Holy Spirit entered your heart and life – washed away all our sins – clothed you with Jesus' perfect life – brought you to faith in Jesus – made you a **child** of God and **heir** of heaven. Do we really need to wonder if GOD LOVES us of if it really pays to PRAY to Him?

"Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus has already answered that prayer. So now we pray, "Lord, HELP us to think **as we pray**! HELP us to be persistent and confident **as we pray**!" Amen.

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