

Sunday, July 28, 2019 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

“Talk to Me”

Luke 11: 1-13

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Definition Structure

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

“Give me, give me, give me.” Ever heard that one before, parents? “Give me dessert. Give me an allowance. Give me the car keys.” As they get older they probably say “Please” but the tone and expectation may still be there – “give me.” Even a crying baby says it, in their own way, “Give me. Give me a clean diaper. Give me food. Give me time. Give me comfort.” Maybe you think Jesus would get tired of the constant begging and pleading, but instead as He teaches us how to pray, this is what He tells us to do! We’re God’s children asking of the Father. And we’re to keep on asking because we desperately need what only the Father gives. Everything! The Father does the giving.

In fact, it becomes a problem when we *stop* asking. Our prayers become meaningless when we forget how needy, how totally dependent we are. Have you heard Jesus’ parable of a Pharisee and a tax collector? The Pharisee, the religious guy doesn’t ask for anything from God. Instead he keeps thanking God for making Him so great. He’s proud, he’s good enough on his own, he’s done everything. Then you’ve got the tax collector – stereotyped as turncoat, legendary for graft, hustling their powerless countrymen to swindle way more than the Romans actually charged in taxes to line their own pockets. The tax collector is the one who knows that before God he is a beggar. He needs everything God gives. In fact they both do, but only one knows and acknowledges it! It’s so bad that Jesus uses the word “evil” to describe our condition. It’s that bad. Even the best earthly father among us, who would never think of giving his children anything bad, is evil when compared to God’s standard!

So when the disciples ask for help in learning how to pray, Jesus gives them what they need more than anything. As He teaches us to pray He teaches us how much we need what He has to give and how to ask for it.

My prayer is that as we work our way through the different parts of the Lord's Prayer this morning it gives you a chance to reflect on it for yourself. This is a prayer that is so easy to say by rote... so let's reflect on how Jesus is teaching us to come to God.

The word "Father" puts us in our place. I don't mean that as a put down, but as a word of blessing. When you're baptized you're adopted into God's family. God is our Father, and we are his children. That's your place. Nothing changes that. The true good Father, God gives only good gifts. He gives us his name so that we can always call on him. My own earthly father isn't perfect but the day I drove *his* car, that is, a car left for my use in college, to a remote location without his knowledge and ended up with engine failure stranded 400 miles away from school and a thousand miles away from him, scared as I was to do it I could call on him receive the gift of his help to navigate the mess I'd gotten myself into – because I'm his son and he's my dad. How much more so our heavenly Father!

"Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come." What we often think is most important to us is our name (reputation) and our kingdom (wealth and power), but Jesus redirects our wants to the best gifts. Keeping God's name holy is knowing who God is and what God has done for us in Christ Jesus' suffering and death. Without God's name we have no life, no one to beg for help, no way to know the eternal truth of our salvation.

Receiving God's kingdom is receiving faith and forgiveness through Jesus' Word, through baptism and through the Lord's Supper. We are also asking the Father to enable His church – we ourselves – to be used as Jesus' hands and feet to spread His love and His message throughout this world on His mission, even as we pray for Him to come back again! We're so confident in God's love and promises that we pray for the end of this world and the beginning of the world to come.

"Give us each day our daily bread." All our needs of body, life, and soul are met by God alone (James 1:17). We can't trust our needs to be met all on our own. Contrary to what your own pride wants to tell you, depend on yourself to support yourself and you'll end up dead. We need

what God has to offer. Instead we trust the Father, who gives us work and prayer and gives daily bread through them both.

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.” Without the blood-bought forgiveness of Christ we are dead and have no right to ask the Father for anything. The result? We have no hope. Remember that Epistle lesson from Colossians earlier? God made you alive in Christ, took everything that we did that we’re guilty of and accuses us and nailed it up to the cross with Jesus!

“And lead us not into temptation.” Praying is serious business. It is the battle cry of faith in the war with Satan, the world, and our own rebellious will. The stakes are life or death. We’re going to be tempted and sometimes it’ll feel unbearable, but it’s not – God will always provide the way for escape. We have His promise that when we pray this He will help us. We need the Father’s help to hold strong right through the end.

Our Father wasn’t put out by Abraham’s endless pleas for Sodom in our Old Testament text and He doesn’t get tired of you or me reaching out to Him, either. Do you imagine Him too busy? He’s the God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Nothing is too big for Him. Do you imagine Him disappointed – in what you did, in who you are, in what you bring to the table, in how you’ve failed? He’s pleased with you. He adopted you. He’s relieved you’re coming to Him and being honest about the trouble you’re in and are seeking the help that only He can give. Does your model for father or mother leave little room to imagine God being good to you? He’s the very ideal of a father, altogether better than even the children of the best earthly parents can imagine. In fact, He takes delight in helping us, He invites us to it, He asks us, practically pleads with us to come to Him. He’s so committed to helping that He sent His Son to death to set us free. And, He sent his Son to teach us – His disciples then and you and me, His disciples today, to ask for everything we need: forgiveness, life, salvation, peace, thanksgiving, and joy. In Jesus’ name, Amen.