

Hello everyone. Hope you enjoyed July as it wizzed by us in a hurry! One more summer month. What a fast year!

Have a super week. Hope to see you this Sunday. God bless you!

Pastor Don

“Jesus Teaches Us To Pray” Luke 11:1-13 July 26, 2013

As the storm raged, the captain realized his ship was sinking fast. He called out, "Anyone here know how to pray?" One man stepped forward. "Aye, Captain, I know how to pray." "Good," said the captain, "you pray while the rest of us put on our life jackets - we're one short."

One day a lawyer told a lawyer friend that he had become a Sunday school teacher at his church. His astonished friend replied, "I bet you don't even know the Lord's Prayer," he fumed. "Why everybody knows that," the other answered. "It's, Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." His friend was astonished! He said, "You win! I didn't know you knew so much about the Bible."

A young boy from New Haven, Connecticut was struggling to learn the Lord's Prayer. His mother was concerned because he was having trouble with the beginning of it. She had him recite it for the pastor. The pastor chuckled when the little boy said our father who art in New Haven, how did you know my name. Then he complemented him on his work. The pastor told him and his mother that he had brilliant theology. He had embraced 2 very important truths; God is near and God knows our names.

There is an old Jamaican proverb that says if you're going to pray, don't worry; if you're going to worry, don't pray.

There is no secret to praying; it simply is just talking to God. We don't need to be taught to pray, we just need to do it. God doesn't answer our prayers because we chant them over and over again. He answers our prayers because He loves us and wants what is best for us. A good prayer is simply a heart to heart talk with God.

When was the last time we had one of those?

A good prayer life is essential to having a good Christian walk. How can we have a good relationship with God if we don't talk to Him? How is our communication with God this morning? Are we satisfied with our prayer life? More importantly, is God?

Let us pray as we begin this morning's message. [Pray]

The disciples came to Jesus and asked Him to teach them to pray. Jesus is the right person for them to ask as He is their teacher, their master, their leader. They are His disciples; they are to learn from Him and are learning to be like Him. Are we learning to be like Jesus? Are we His disciples? Do we pray?

Notice that Jesus was praying when they approached Him. They were polite enough not to interrupt Him, they waited until He finished and asked Him to teach them how to pray. Ever have anyone tell you that they don't know how to pray? Praying is simply talking to God. Everyone can do that. God is our loving heavenly Father and He likes to hear our voice; He wants us to talk to Him; all we have to do is do it.

The verb pray simply means to take our petitions to God. We can all do that. We are good at taking our petitions to Him aren't we? But praying is more than just asking God for stuff; it is also praising, thanking and worshiping Him. Paul says to pray about all things, at all times without ceasing and with thanksgiving. We are to pray in Jesus name for the will of God to be done. Is this the way we pray? Do we really want God's will to be done? Do we listen for God's answer before we act?

Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship. A relationship is built on communication. Praying is our half of this communication with God. We talk to Him, that is praying; He talks to us through His word; that is studying. We need to study His word and listen for our answer. God's answer will never go against His word. Do we check the answer we think we hear with the accuracy and authority of God's word?

Jesus answered His disciples by giving them a model prayer. He said when you pray, pray like this. Notice Jesus did not say pray this prayer whenever you pray. Prayers are spontaneous; they are conversation between us & God; they come from our heart at the time we utter them. Notice also

that Jesus said when you pray not if you pray. Jesus is expecting His disciples to pray. Are we prayerful disciples?

Jesus said to begin our prayer with a proper address. "Our Father in heaven." God is our Father and He is in heaven. We pray to God our Father in the name of Jesus. We don't pray to anyone other than God. He and He alone can answer our prayers. We are to praise God, "Hallowed be Your name". Hallowed means holy or revered. We can add good titles like loving, merciful, powerful, awesome or almighty to our address. This is a way to praise God. God's name represents all His unique character and attributes. God's name is holy; it is not to be used in vain. Do we revere God? Do we start our prayers by praising and glorifying Him?

"Your kingdom come; Your will be done". This is a plea for God's will to be done in our life and as an answer to our request. Do we seek God's will when we pray?

On earth as it is in heaven tells us that God's will is done in heaven. Do we really want God's will done in our lives? Do we seek God's will? Do we trust God's will?

It is God's will to meet our needs. God meets our needs, not our wants. There is a difference. We need food, shelter and clothing. Jesus says to ask God for our daily bread. When we ask Him to feed us, do we trust that He will? God meets our needs everyday. Do we thank Him and praise Him for meeting those needs?

Then Jesus says we are to ask God to forgive us of our sins. Luke uses the very word sin. Matthew uses the word debts. Some of us learned this prayer with the word trespasses in this verse. Luke makes it simple and calls it what it is, sin. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There is not one righteous, no not 1. We all need forgiveness. Every time we sin, we should seek forgiveness. Jesus tells us plainly and simply to ask for it. Have we asked God to forgive us?

Sin is indeed a debt to God that must be paid. Jesus paid that sin debt for us with His own blood. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Our sin must be acknowledged and forgiven on the basis of His mercy. Do we acknowledge our sins to God, intentional or not, and seek His forgiveness? Do we forgive those who have sinned against us? Because God forgives us when we repent, we need the ability to forgive others as well.

Jesus closes this prayer model by asking for protection and direction; "do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Peter says Satan walks around like a roaring lion seeking to devour us. James tells us to resist the devil and he will flee from us. Paul tells us that with every temptation, there is always a way of escape; do we look for it? James also says draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Prayer draws us near to God. How is our communication with God? Do we talk to Him? Do we listen for His answer? Prayer is vital to our Christian walk; how is our prayer life this morning?

We must not be confused by the wording of do not lead us into temptation. James 1:13 says "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone." Vs. 14 say "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed." Jesus is telling us to avoid sin. We can do that if we follow where God leads us because He will NOT lead us into temptation. Do we follow God's leading? Do we avoid sin?

This text is called the Lord's Prayer. It is a good model for prayer. It is a well rounded model. It includes praise, direction, provision, forgiveness and protection. We need a good prayer model because most of the time our prayers are simply asking God to give us something we want. We are human and we tend to only think of ourselves and our will. Jesus is teaching us to praise God 1st, then pray for God's will to be done in our lives. God is our heavenly Father; He loves us and wants what is best for us. He knows what is best for us; He sees the big picture, we only see a portion of it.

God answers all prayers. No is an answer. We don't like it but sometimes, in His wisdom, God says no. Sometimes God says not now. We hate to wait don't we? We want everything now. We have instant everything in America today; instant potatoes, instant oatmeal and instant replay. But God is not on our timetable. Sometimes we have to wait.

Waiting teaches us to persevere. The parable about waking the friend to get bread for a weary traveler who just arrived teaches us to be persistent. The initial response was no, everyone is in bed. But the man kept knocking and asking for the bread. Finally the friend with great personal trouble, gave him the bread. In those days everybody slept in the same room; all were awakened when the lamp was lit to get the bread. Persistence pays off; especially in prayer. With this parable Jesus teaches us the principle of asking seeking and knocking. Jesus says ask and you shall receive.

James says we have not because we ask not. Do we ask God for what we want? Persistence means relentless pursuit of something. Sometimes not only must we ask, we must seek. For example, if we are praying for a job, we need to be checking the want ads and filling out applications. Sometimes we must seek the answers to our prayer requests.

Sometimes seeking will put us at doors that we must knock upon so that they can be opened unto us. Just because we come to a closed door, that does not mean our prayer was denied. Knock on the door and see what happens! Sometimes God may lead us to a closed door, but there is an open window nearby. Prayer requires trust. Do we trust God?

Praying for God's help and guidance implies that we will follow where he leads us. Your kingdom come, your will be done. Do we trust God enough to obey Him? Jesus compares God to

our earthly fathers. If we ask them for bread, do they give us a stone? If we ask them for a fish do they give us a serpent, if we ask for an egg, do they give us a scorpion? Of course not! Then Jesus says if we who are evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. Jesus is telling us that if we evil humans know how to give good gifts, how much more can we expect from a good God? God loves us and knows what is best for us. He only gives good gifts. James 1:17 says “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” Do we accept them? Are we happy with them? Do we believe God only gives us what is best for us?

Next to eternal life, the Holy Spirit is the greatest gift God could give us. He is the seal of God upon our lives. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to all His followers once He got to Heaven. On the day of Pentecost, Jesus kept His word and sent the Holy Spirit to His followers. Today, God sends the Holy Spirit into each believer’s heart when they ask Jesus to come and live there. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the proof that Christians have a home in heaven. He is God with us here in this life. The Holy Spirit helps us pray, witness, love and interpret the scriptures. Do we follow the Holy Spirit?

This model pray tells us how to pray. 1st we praise God. Praising God puts us in a worshipful frame of mind. Too often our prayers are simply a wish list we give to God. By worshipping Him 1st, our mind and heart are reminded He is the creator and we are the creation. He is in charge not us. We need to ask Him for the things we want and not demand them. We cannot order God around. Our lives and everything we have belong to Him, we are just His stewards. Do our prayer requests bring glory to God? Do we have the love of God in our hearts or are they filled with hard feelings and vengefulness? Are we focusing upon Christ or are we tempted to live for ourselves?

God answers prayer because He is faithful and loving. God is still on the throne and prayer changes things. One of the things prayer changes is us. It may not change our situation, but it will change our outlook upon it. God is still in charge; things will work out for his glory; all we have to do is trust him. He promises us in Romans 8:28 “*That all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according His purpose.*” Do we trust God? Do we love God? Do we really believe that God hears and answers our prayers? All Christians are called according to his purpose & by His name; are we living up to that name? r we prayer warriors for Christ? r we consistent & persistent in our daily walk with Jesus? Have we let Jesus teach us to pray? Amen! (Pray)