

## “Jesus Teaches Us to Pray”

(Luke 11:1-13 – Pentecost 10 – August 17, 2025)

Luke 11:1-13 – <sup>1</sup>Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” <sup>2</sup>So 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 day by day our daily bread. <sup>4</sup>And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” <sup>5</sup>And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; <sup>6</sup>for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; <sup>7</sup>and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? <sup>8</sup>I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. <sup>9</sup>So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup>If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup>Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>If you then, being 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!”

Dear children of the heavenly Father through faith in His Son:

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches us to call God, “*Our Father in heaven.*” What do we mean as we address God this way? Luther’s Catechism says: “God would hereby tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him with all boldness and confidence, as children ask their dear father.” We see this truth in our text as **“Jesus Teaches Us to Pray”**: **1) To our Father in heaven, 2) With boldness and confidence.**

### 1) To our Father in heaven

Jesus said: “*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. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*” (vs. 2-4).

Here Jesus teaches us to bring all kinds of requests to our heavenly Father, for physical and spiritual needs, for our own needs and the needs of others. As the hymn puts it: “What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!” But why can we address God with such

intimate terms? Again the hymn says it all: “What a Friend we have in Jesus.” Through Jesus, we can call God “*Our Father*” and pray boldly and confidently as His children.

Without Jesus, we would have no relationship to God as our heavenly Father. As sinners, we could only know Him as our righteous Judge. Apart from Jesus as our Savior, we would have to live before God as slaves to our sinful nature and fear. For God’s Word and our conscience bear witness that we deserve punishment for breaking His holy Law.

Even the petitions in the Lord’s Prayer might only remind us of our shortcomings and lack of relationship to God, if we could not pray them in the name of His Son. For we have not always hallowed God’s name, but we have misused His name by unholy talk and lives. We have not always desired God’s kingdom to come, but we have set our hearts on the things of this world. We have not always desired His God’s will to be done, but we have followed our own will. We have not always looked to God for our daily bread, but we have received it with untrusting and unthankful hearts. We have not always sought God’s forgiveness as those who were ready to forgive others, but we have held grudges. We have not always prayed for God’s help against temptation, but we have given in to sinful desires. Indeed, apart from Jesus as our Savior, we could not pray for deliverance from evil; for being lost in sin and unbelief, we belonged to the evil one.

But by grace, God has given us a new relationship with Himself, through the saving work of His Son. We do not pray to our Father in heaven based on our own holiness of life, but based on the holy life of His Son as our Savior. Every moment of Jesus’ life was a righteous prayer to His Father that said: “*Your will be done.*” Jesus’ every word and deed hallowed His Father’s name and earned for us a place in His Kingdom.

Today’s Epistle lesson in Colossians 2:12-14 tells how our status was changed as God joined us to His Son, having been: “*buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*”

In the name of our crucified and risen Savior, we have a new relationship with God. He has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6), giving us saving faith. Scripture says: “*You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’*” (Romans 8:15). Therefore, Jesus teaches us to pray in such intimate terms to “*Our Father in heaven*” with all boldness and confidence, as children ask their dear father!

## 2) With boldness and confidence

Children can be pretty bold when they want something. In fact, they can be downright persistent until they wear their parents out with their requests. Jesus pictures such boldness in the following illustration: *“Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs”* (vs. 5-8).

Consider that word *“persistence.”* It means a shameless kind of boldness and insistence on getting what one needs. The man inside the house finally answered, not because of their friendship, but because the man outside wore him out with his requests; and he just wanted to get him off his back and get back to sleep!

In this illustration, Jesus uses an argument from the lesser to greater to show why we can pray all the more boldly and confidently to our Father in heaven:

- Here a man asks a friend for the limited help he can give; whereas we pray to our Father in heaven, *“who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”* (Ephesians 3:20).
- Here a man pleads with his friend at midnight, an inconvenient time that gave an excuse to turn him away; whereas with our Father in heaven there is no night, for He *“shall neither slumber nor sleep”* (Psalm 121:4) as He watches over us and answers our prayers.
- Here a man asks for help on behalf of a stranger his friend does not know; whereas when we intercede for others, all are known by our Father in heaven who is committed to our care.
- Here a man asks a friend who might refuse to give for selfish reasons; whereas our Father in heaven is perfect in love, promising to give us all that we need as we ask in the name of His Son, Jesus (John 16:23).

When God does not answer our prayers at once, or in the way we expect, we often doubt that He hears or cares, and we give up. But this is far from the truth. Long before we utter a prayer, the Lord knows it completely (Psalm 139:4). Unlike the friend in the illustration, the Lord wants to help, but in the best way. Sometimes in His wisdom, He lets us wait outside the door for an answer, to test our faith and increase our patient trust.

Imagine how it would be if God answered every prayer at once, at our whim. If all we had to do was say, “Okay God, I need a new house, a car, a job, or money”; and at once, there it was! Or if we simply snapped our fingers and said, “Okay God, I need You remove this bothersome person, or this sickness, or this uncomfortable challenge”; and at once,

there was no more trouble. Wouldn't you think that, after getting whatever we wanted, whenever we wanted it, we would end up like spoiled children, despising our heavenly Father and treating Him merely as a means to an end? This is not what God wants for us.

Above all, He wants to guard the precious relationship He has given us with Himself, paid for by the blood of His own Son. God wants to keep us in true faith as children who look to their dear Father and pray from the heart such petitions as: "Father in heaven, forgive me all my sins; and as I know Your boundless forgiveness in Jesus, help me also to forgive this difficult person." "Father in heaven, help me against temptation and evil; strengthen my faith and lead me to keep Your name holy in my words and deeds." "Father in heaven, help me not to fret about daily bread, but to trust You to give me and my loved ones what we truly need for body and life."

We can pray confidently this way, for Jesus promises here: "*I say to 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 he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened*" (vs. 9-10). The command is given with a promise: every prayer will be answered! The answer may not be what we were looking for, or when we expected it; but it will be the answer of our wise and loving Father in heaven, who always gives what is best for us.

Jesus pictures this in the final illustration: "*If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being 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!*" (vs. 11-13).

Again, the argument is from the lesser to the greater. If even a sinful human father will not give something harmful to a child he loves, how much less will our perfectly loving Father in heaven give us what is harmful in answer to our prayers! God always gives what is truly good for us – not only our physical and temporal needs, but above all our spiritual and eternal needs. He gives us His Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith unto eternal life.

So as we pray to our Father in heaven, let us learn to pray: "*Your will be done.*" His good and gracious will toward us has already been proven when He gave the greatest gift of His Son as our Savior. Together with Jesus, God has given us His Holy Spirit, faith, forgiveness, and all the gifts of His Kingdom. Truly He is answering every prayer, every day, in the best way! And at last, every prayer will be answered in full when His Kingdom comes and heaven's glory dawns. Therefore as Jesus teaches us, let us pray to our Father in heaven with all boldness and confidence, as children ask their dear father.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.