

Sermon Luke 11 1 13 10th S af Pent SC

Sermon: 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Luke 11:1-13 (v.1)

Theme: How do you pray?

Goal: To encourage people to pray according to the pattern Jesus taught us.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: Have you ever received an unexpected guest late at night? I guess it very seldom happens in our days, when everyone has a cellphone and other ways to communicate that he/she is coming to visit us. But in the days of our parents it was very common, as it was in Jesus' time. Travelers just arrived to stay for one night, without announcing it. And they were welcomed.

What would you do if you didn't have anything ready to offer to eat? Would you go to your neighbor to ask him for something, like Jesus mentioned in this short parable? – Anyway, the point Jesus highlights here is that when someone is requested to help his neighbor, he will help out of good will, or just not to be bothered again. But he will help!

Or when a beggar or a stranger knock on your door, will you open it? Very seldom... We look out through the windows and ignore them...

Jesus teaches us something different when He talks about prayer and our relationship with the Father. What is the Father's reaction when we "bother" Him with our requests? What is the Father's reaction when we knock on His door?

*I – "When you pray, say..."*

To the request of the disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray", Jesus taught them the Lord's Prayer and gave them some other teachings

about how to pray. Jesus is talking to His disciples, this means: to us, Christians. At the same time that this is a prayer, it is also a teaching for our lives.

The Lord's Prayer includes whatever we need. When you think about anything that you need or want, you can fit it in the Lord's Prayer.

The first three petitions talk about God's matters. *God's interests are put first, following by ours. That obviously is the true priority in the prayer life of a Christian* (ABC 1226). I guess this is not the reality in our free prayers. Usually we pray for ourselves and for others; but we don't have a specific moment in our private prayers to pray about God...

The Name of God, the Kingdom of God, and the Will of God are the content of the first three petitions.

The Name of God can be hallowed by a true teaching and preaching of His Word, and by living a godly life; or the Name of God can be dishonored and blasphemed by false teaching and by a shameful life. What do we want to do with His name?

The Kingdom of God includes the church and all her missionary efforts. As we care for the church and are concerned about those who are far – those who went astray and those who never had a chance to hear about God's love in Jesus, we are praying for God's Kingdom to come to us and to others. Do we have this concern?

God's Will is above all other wills: our will, the will of the world and the devil's will. We submit ourselves to His will, and we trust that His will is done in all and in any circumstances. His good will is to save everyone.

The other four petitions are about our needs, physical and spiritual needs: daily bread, forgiveness of our sins, protection against temptation and against the devil.

*Daily bread includes everything that belongs to our entire life in this world... Luther wrote: You must enlarge and extend your thoughts to include not only the oven or the flour bin, but also the broad fields and the whole land which produce and provide for us our daily bread and all kinds of sustenance* (ABC 1226).

*When Jesus tells us to pray ‘forgive us our sins, for we also forgive’, he is not suggesting that God’s forgiveness is dependent on our forgiveness. Rather, he is simply assuming that those who seek to learn how to pray from him will indeed forgive their enemies.* (ABC 1226).

Temptations and evil work together to lead us astray from Jesus. To prevent it, we have to pray for strength and for God’s protection against the enemy; and we have to fight against our personal temptations. God gives us the weapons: His Word and the Sacraments.

Some Christians just pray the Lord’s Prayer, and don’t spend time with other words of prayer. It is not wrong. But we have the example of Jesus Himself who spent nights and nights in prayers, alone, on the top of certain mountains. And we have the example of the apostles as well, who offered several prayers written in the book of Acts. - To encourage us to pray more, Jesus told two short parables:

### II – Persistent Prayer

The first one is about the man who received a guest at midnight and asked his neighbor for help . And the lesson is: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks

finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be open.” This I about persistent prayer. We shall not give up praying. God has His own way to answer to our prayer. But He listens to them. And if we give up, He will say: *it was not that important for my child...*

An example of persistent prayer is the plead of Abraham on behalf of the cities of Sodom and Gomora. For six times he “bargained” with God asking Him not to destroy the cities. But there were not even ten righteous people in those cities. Only Abraham’s nephew Lot and his two daughters survived.

### II – Confident prayer

The second parable is about a child who is asking his father for a fish or an egg . Will the father give him a snake or a scorpion? Never! The point is: “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him”? Are we asking the Holy Spirit to fill our lives?

Little children are not scared to ask mom and dad for what they want. They even cry and are stubborn in their intention to get something. When Jesus taught us to call God as “Our Father”, He wants us to approach God with such a confidence like little children approach mom and dad. Luther explained: *With these words (Our Father who art in heaven) God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.*

Conclusion: God is always available to listen to the prayers of His beloved children. Let us use this privilege and talk to Him as often as possible, because Jesus opened the door for us to come to the Father. Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle, Cape Town, 24 July 2016