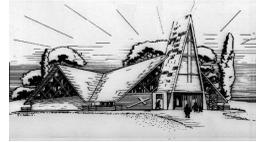




Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon - Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 12C)

Jesus, teach us to pray!



St. John's Lutheran Parish Shelly Beach

• [The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Luke 11, 1-13:](#)

• **ESV** **Luke 11:1** Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

• **2** And he said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

• **3** Give us each day our daily bread,

• **4** and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

• **5** And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves,

• **6** for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him';

• **7** and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'?

• **8** I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

• **9** And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

• **10** For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

• **11** What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent;

• **12** or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

• **13** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

• [Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and our hearts so that we will truly listen attentively and hear Jesus speaking to each and everyone of us and teach us to pray. Amen.](#)

Dear Congregation in Christ!

• Teach us to pray- that is what one of the disciples asked of Jesus! He had seen Jesus praying. He wanted to learn from Jesus to pray like He prayed. That is when Jesus said to him, "say this". Jesus gave them what we call the Lord's Prayer. It is a slightly shorter version, which shows that it is not about the rigorous form.

• Nevertheless it is a prayer Jesus gave to His disciples to pray together with one another. It is the prayer our Lord prays. So, Jesus wants us to fall in with Him. He says, 'come pray with me!' Say it with me! That is why we pray His prayer in the family, with others, daily, and in

the congregation at least every Sunday. Think for a moment, how the Lord's prayer is prayed each Sunday all around the globe by the many many disciples of Christ together with Christ and with us!

- This is a very special prayer! What makes it so special? Why couldn't Jesus' disciples simply follow the prayer tradition of John the Baptist?
- After giving the Prayer Jesus tells two parables and explains them. He says, who of you, who has a *friend*, would receive nothing from him, if you would ask him for a piece of bread, to be able to give to your other friend, who unexpectedly came to visit you? Could you imagine such a *friend* who would not give you something if you ask him when you are in great need? The point is, your *friend* will always help you when you are in need. That is what *friends* do for one another.
- Now, if your neighbour would not be your friend you would not go and knock at his door, because you wouldn't know him. You wouldn't know his reaction. He might just get angry with you because you are waking him up so late. But, this is not the case with a true friend. A true friend will understand that you really need something to eat to give to your other friend. He will see and understand your real need.
- The second story is similar: There Jesus uses the father- son relationship to explain that a good father will never give something bad to his dear son. If we sinful fathers know how to give to our children what they need, how much more will God the FATHER not give us the Holy Spirit says Jesus.
- Jesus reveals to us or reminds us today, that God is our best Friend and our best Father in Heaven! We may address Him directly as "Father". That is the Name He has given Jesus to baptise us into. This is the relationship God has initiated with us. In Baptism He said to us and He restates it today to us, I am your Friend and your Father! Don't be afraid to ask! Ask and it will be given to you. Jesus has reconciled you with Me. It is done. It is enough. Now, treat me as your dearest Friend and Father. For heaven's sake, don't try and solve your problems on your own.
- You see, there is more to the first story of the friends. The person in need has no way to solve the problem all by himself. He has to go look for help elsewhere!
- Does that sound familiar? Do you know such situations, have you been in such a situation, are you maybe in such an awkward situation? A situation where there is no room to move,

a relationship where you are just stuck, a situation or problem, where you are at your wits end. In our daily lives we do encounter such circumstances, just like the person in the parable. So, what is Jesus saying?

- Ask and you will receive, knock and it will be opened for you, seek and you will find! You are baptised in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That means you don't have to carry all your burdens on your own! That is plain foolishness! Yet, we often try to do it, because we are stubborn and we have a pride! We don't want to give up. However, trying to be tough on my own, trying to prove something to myself, that I can handle it on my own, thank you, is trying to play God! We overestimate our abilities. We are humans, not God. And so God allows the awkward situation to condescend upon us and lock us in, to let us learn, 'I am your Father, are you never going to ask for my help?'

- Our heavenly Father loves it when we ask Him. That is worshipping Him. That is acknowledging what He has done for us and who He is for us! And we have the guarantee that when we, in foolishness, ask for something that would not be beneficial for our Life in Christ, God would not give us the bad thing, but would instead give us the good thing.

- This is a phenomenal message Jesus unpacks here for us! What does this make of our awkward situations, what does this make with our problems we face in our daily lives? All these problems and terrible situations don't simply vanish, no, they turn into opportunities to practice our faith! They are practice runs to practice prayer, to ask God and rely on Him! Prayer is faith in action!

- Here we need to clarify one thing: In the so-called "name it and claim it", also called the "word-faith" movement, they teach you that you can name what you want and claim it in faith, based on these words of Jesus. Normally this applies to materialistic riches. Many of these preachers are very rich and they claim it is because of their great faith.

- But, this is not what Jesus teaches here. Jesus says: ask, knock, search, in other words the very opposite as name it and claim it. We come as sons who have respect for their Father. A good son never names and claims anything from his father. He asks his father. It always remains the father's decision if he will give it to his son or not. The example Jesus teaches and practised Himself, was, that the son opens himself up to his father. He is willing to share his real need with his father. One does this only with someone whom you know cares, whom you trust. He shares his weakness with his father and allows him to become part of his life.

- But, if a son names and claims, he is doing the opposite, he misuses his father as a vending machine, as a father Christmas! He is not sharing his weakness with him. He comes from a strong position. He names and claims, he gives the orders. He expects the father to simply fall in with his will. Such a son would never ask to be taught to pray!
- God teaches us to pray, in His Divine Service and in our daily lives. Jesus gave us the Words and He laid the foundation that we could be baptised into the father-child relationship with our Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit convinces us about the Truth and Trustworthiness of Jesus Words and the Heavenly Father hears our prayers and cares for us in such a way which is best for our baptismal relationship with Him.
- The disciple saw how Jesus, the Son of God prayed to His Father in heaven! That triggered him to ask Jesus to teach him how to pray. Astonishingly, Jesus places us in His own position before the Father. His Father is our Father in Heaven! Jesus shares the best with us!
- And therefore we come to trust Him, when He teaches us what the content should be, when we pray! Jesus does not leave us stuck in our old Adam's selfish wish-list of material things first. Hallowed be Your Name- that is the first petition. If God's Name is holy to us, is sacred to us, is most important, is dear to us- then we will think properly of God, namely as being our Friend and Father and act accordingly namely call on His name in all trouble.
- Your kingdom come: *"How does God's kingdom come to us? God's kingdom comes to us when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity."*¹
- Then comes the petition for all the things we need for our bodily life followed by asking God for forgiveness of sins, and to not lead us into temptation. This is the right order of all the things we need. And as Jesus prays this prayer and teaches us to say it with Him, we can be certain that we will receive what we ask for, although we have no claim, in and by ourselves, although we should have been damned, but in Christ we have become sons and friends of the highest God! Thank you Father, Son and Holy Spirit! **Amen.**
- *Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. **Amen.** (^{ESV} Eph 3,20-21)*