

*The Tenth Sunday After Pentecost*

July 28, 2013

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Pastor Chip Wilke

Luke 11:1-13

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."'" Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. "So I say to you: 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 opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" If 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!"*

Has this ever happened in your home? The day is going along fine and then something suddenly turns the house into one of panic and chaos. I will share with you an incident in our home this week. Of all things, as much as I don't like to admit it, it was over a cat. It was after lunch and my two older children, Katie and Andrew, agreed to come back to church with me to help fold bulletins since I had a couple weeks worth to prepare. As we were getting into the car we heard Lisa say one of the cats was missing. After lunch Lisa usually lets the cats go out back. But Lisa got a phone call and didn't watch closely if all three came back in and Patches was missing. The kids started frantically searching under every bed, in the basement, and behind every couch. We looked everywhere in our back yard and in the neighbors. Lisa started to drive around the neighborhood yelling for Patches to come back home. There were tears being shed and thoughts that Patches was gone for good. And after about 45 minutes of this panic and frantic search I said I had to get some work done.

I got back here to church and that is when it hit me. I missed out on an opportunity, an opportunity to teach my children where to go with all our troubles. Instead of just watching the panic and chaos I should have gathered them together for prayer. I could have taken the chance to teach them to pray. So I said a prayer here first asking God to forgive me for missing that chance and asking Him to help me take advantage of such opportunities in the future. Secondly, I prayed that our kids cat Patches be found. As soon as I finished the prayer I got word that Patches was found and everything was okay for now in the Wilke home again.

Have you ever felt similar when it comes to your prayer life? Do you ever forget to pray? Do we first panic and try to figure out things on our own? Are our prayers lacking? Do we ignore the godly advice of James when he writes: ***“Is any of you in trouble? He should pray.”*** (5) Then perhaps we too could join the disciples today by turning to Jesus to ask: ***“Lord, teach us to pray.”*** Our Lord graciously teaches us to pray. As Jesus teaches us in this lesson my prayer is that we learn to: **Keep Praying! For the Father loves to answer His children!**

Jesus was praying in a certain place one day (possibly the Mount of Olives) when one of His disciples asks for Jesus to teach them to pray as John (the Baptist) taught his disciples to pray. Jesus says to them, ***“When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”*** Luke records for us five out of the seven petitions that make up what we know as The Lord’s Prayer. A sermon could be preached on each one of these petitions, but since you did not come here planning to listen to seven sermons today I will leave you with a few thoughts. What Jesus gives us in this wonderful prayer is a model prayer or a pattern for us to follow with our prayers.

I imagine one thing the disciples had to notice when they heard Jesus pray was the close and intimate relationship He had with God the Father. Jesus would use the Word “Abba” meaning Dad. After all, Jesus is in every sense the Son of God so He talks to God as speaking to His own Father. Now Jesus tells His disciples, He tells us, we can too. We are able to address God as our own heavenly Father. In this prayer Jesus teaches us to pray to our Father with the emphasis on spiritual things. Only one of these petitions deal with our physical needs – our daily bread. While God wants to hear all our prayers, including all the things we need for body and life, this prayer reminds us there is so much more to pray for each day. This prayer teaches us to: **Keep Praying! For the Father loves to answer His children!**

When we went to Virginia we stopped at the closest city to our resort to pick up groceries for the week. When we were going to check out Rachel said she wanted some of her favorite cookies. I told Rachel we had enough snacks and treats already but Rachel insisted once again that I grab her hand and go with her to get the cookies she wanted. Again I told her we were about to check out and we had enough. Then Rachel put her hands on her checks and said: ***“Dad, how can you say no to a face like this!”*** So I grabbed her hand and we went to get the cookies as a lady nearby smiled and said to Lisa when we left ***“you guys have your hands full with that one!”*** I tell this to point out more than the fact that Rachel has her daddy wrapped around her little finger. Rachel is very bold to ask her father for whatever it is that she needs or wants.

Yes, we are to be that bold in approaching our heavenly Father! Jesus teaches us to turn to God in the very same way in this short parable about the man who asks his friend for some bread late at night when they were already in bed. What a bold request! Jesus wants us to pray with the same boldness, with the same persistence, and with the same confidence. Jesus teaches, ***“So I say to you: 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 opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" If 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!"***

Is the lesson Jesus is teaching us about prayer becoming clear? Jesus wants us to keep praying, to keep asking, to keep seeking, to keep knocking for we have a Father who loves to answer His children. We have a Father who wants to give us good gifts. We have a Father who wants us give to us even more than we could ever ask for or imagine. We have a Father who knows and wants what is best for us. We have a Father in heaven who wants to hear from us.

So what is our Father hearing? How often do we talk with God? Do we ever tell people we will pray for them but never do? Is our prayer life lacking? Do we pray with all the confidence and boldness Jesus' teaches us to pray with today or are there times we foolishly think what is the point? The truth really is that because of these and all our other sins, the Father should shut His ears completely to our prayers. For such sins separate us from a holy God.

That is why I don't want us to skip over the very first verse of our text or the many similar verses like it in Luke's Gospel. ***"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place."*** Who was busier than Jesus? Yet, Jesus always took time to pray. Jesus never faced any trouble alone because He knew His Father was there to hear His prayers. Jesus had a perfect prayer life and it is that perfect prayer life of Jesus that God credited to you at your baptism. And it was for our imperfect prayer life that Jesus' blood was poured out on Calvary's cross. The blood of Jesus was shed to pay for those and all our other sins. Now the door to the Father is as open for us as Jesus' tomb! For in Christ we are the children of God.

The story is told of Abraham Lincoln as he served as president of the United States. He had one standing rule about access to his office. While all the others had to knock and get permission to be admitted, his son Tad could come in anytime, about any concern. The president would drop everything, stop every conversation, devote his time and attention to Tad. Dear friends, you are that precious to your heavenly Father! He has an open door for you, one that was opened by the blood of His own Son. So keep praying. May we all learn to make prayer our first option and not our last. May we pray at all times and in all places with confidence and boldness that God will hear and answer in a way that is always best for us. May we keep praying with the understanding that our Father loves to answer His children. So I pray, ***"Father send your Holy Spirit to strengthen me and all your people here this morning, guide us in faith and knowledge, and help teach us to pray!"*** Amen.