

July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Year C; Proper 12

Psalm 85

Colossians 2: 6-15

Luke 11: 1-13

**Luke 11:1-13**

*Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, 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.*

*And forgive us our sins,*

*for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.*

*And do not bring us to the time of trial."*

*And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.*

*"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? 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!"*

*"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."*

*"Lord, teach us to pray."*

The disciples have seen Jesus praying, in a certain place. A little apart but still close enough for them to steal a glance at him, in prayer.

And though they have prayed all their lives, something in how Jesus prays draws them, something opens a yearning in them for that prayer.

Lord, teach us to pray.

And goodness knows we often feel the same, in our lives and in our overheated, fractured world.

Lord, teach us to pray.

And Jesus goes on to teach his friends a few of the pieces of what would come to be known as The Lord's Prayer, often the first thing we memorize as young Christians.

But we often forget the story that Jesus tells right after he gives them these fragments of the prayer.

This story of a family, we can almost picture them, all tucked into bed together, the door locked, the last child has had the last drink of water, and all the arms and legs are tucked in with the parents. Midnight, and finally all are in bed and asleep!

And then the knocking starts! Ugh!!!

And a voice calling out. A neighbor in need of bread???

The head of the household says, forget it! We are all in bed, the last child is finally quiet, shush! We can't help you.

But the knocking goes on and the head of the house does get up, and brings the bread to the door for the neighbor.

And Jesus tells his friends who started with, Lord, teach us to pray, Jesus tells them, go on and pray!

Knock, ask, seek, find.

If we ask for fish or an egg, we will not get a snake or scorpion. Good things, not poison or tricks. God loves us.

God will answer.

Lord, teach us to pray.

Knock, ask, seek, find; but we so often are asking, understandably, for very specific things in our prayers.

*“Oh Lord, won’t you buy me a Mercedes Benz?  
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends  
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends  
So, oh, Lord, won’t you buy me a Mercedes Benz?”*

Ok, maybe not as specific as Janis Joplin so slyly sang all those years ago, but still we all have a little Janis in us, something, someone, some outcome as clear in our minds eye as a new Mercedes Benz.

A problem solved, a new job, health, wealth, healing.

*“O Lord won’t you.....help, won’t you heal?”*

Lord, teach us to pray.

And so we return to Jesus, in a certain place, his friends watching from a little distance, seeing prayer that they yearn to know, seeing in Jesus, their brother and their friend, who speaks of his death, of his suffering ahead, a way to pray that does not solve, but heals.

Less Mercedes Benz, more Holy Spirit.

And so we return to the prayer Jesus taught his friends, and teaches us.

*“Father hallowed be your name.”*

I will add the “our”, Our Father, hallowed be your name.

The our reminds us, startles us, into remembering that we are in relationship with our God.

As one commentator said so beautifully:

*“Our Father.” Everything that follows is bathed in the light of that relationship. (Christian Century Editors, February 2009)*

We are not distant relatives, we are not vaguely remembered acquaintances, we are each, we are all, beloved children of God’s heart, yes bathed, immersed in the light of that relationship.

And we are invited by Jesus to begin our prayer there: Our Father, Our beloved parent, your child is here.

*“Your kingdom come.”* Before ourselves we pray for our world, in all its anger, brokenness and pain, we pray for God’s kingdom to be known on earth.

And this prayer is: *“a cry for a different kind of world. It is an expression of our deepest longings for a time when God’s peace and justice and righteousness will prevail.” (Christian Century Editors, February 2009)*

And then ourselves:

*“Give us each day our daily bread.”*

Each day, this today, July 24 2022, now, not running into the future with our fretful human minds, but now. We are so like the Israelites trying to save up the manna in the wilderness, saving up a bit of extra just in case God abandons them, thinking they can cover their future needs, and finding in the morning only worms in what they saved.

Help us to trust, to lean on our God, to sustain us, daily; food for our body, our mind, our spirit. Hope and healing, mercy and forgiveness.

And then the last part of the prayer:

*“And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.”*

Oh, my. The hardest part, as we know we fall short, we need God’s mercy, but we are miserly with offering forgiveness. Not to forgive, to excuse, but to forgive to be freed, from hating, from anger, from sustaining the pain, rather than living again.

God waits patiently for each of us, now and in the life to come, to forgive, to be freed from the hating and anger that eat up our days.

The writer Annie Lamott, who writes of her own Christian faith, of her recovery from addiction, and her own journey to forgiveness wrote recently:

*“It is miserable to be a hater. I pray to be more like Jesus with his crazy compassion and reckless love. Some days go better than others.” (New York Times op-ed, July 2022)*

Oh yes, some days do go better than others in all of this prayer.

So many days I sit with a handful of wormy manna, forgetting over and over.

Our Father: This relationship bathed in light, all of us children of God’s heart.

Thy kingdom come: Praying for our world to bend toward the light of God.

Give us each day our daily bread: To lean on you for our daily food for body mind and spirit.

And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us:

Yes, that again, and over and over, teach me daily dear God.

**Amen.**