

Sermon- Our Saviors Lutheran Church- 7/28/19

Text: Luke 11:1-13

I Jesu Navn Gar Vi Til Bords

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Today we focus on Prayer 101. Prayer - almost a non-concept for Lutherans. I remember the time I was asked to do a prayer before a wedding reception dinner. I explained that I couldn't because I had already committed to do the prayer at another reception dinner. (I had two weddings that day). The bride, in shock, said "oh no, who will do the prayer?" And this was an ELCA wedding full of ELCA folk.

Apparently, the disciples had the same issue. They had observed Jesus praying multiple times. But they needed to learn because they didn't know how to pray. So they ask, "teach us to pray, Lord." And Jesus does, he teaches them the big one - the one we call The Lords Prayer.

But if you think about it we do have some familiarity with prayer. If you grew up in the Roman Catholic tradition, or watch Blue Bloods, you know what I mean. I watch Blue Bloods faithfully. Mostly because it reminds me of my roots. The home where Commissioner Frank Reagan lives is an actual home located about 10 blocks from the apartment where I grew up. When the TV crew starting filming Blue Bloods, they gave the occupants of that house mucho bucks to move out for a month. Very often in Blue Bloods the entire Reagan clan is gathered around the dinner table and someone is invited to say grace. What follows is the Catholic Table Prayer.

Bless us, O Lord, and these, thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord. Amen (followed by the sign of the cross)

Then, of course, we have the Lutherans. The ELCA folk, where if you gathered 50 or so, all with coffee in their hands, they would break out in song to their table grace.

"Be present at our table Lord
Be here and everywhere adored,
These mercies bless and grant that we
May strengthen for thy service be"

Pastor leads the congregation in song.

And then of course what you probably taught to your children.

Now I lay me down to sleep

I pray the Lord my soul to keep

His love to guard me through the night

And wake me in the mornings light. (Notice the new ending so that children are not scared)

When I began to talk, I was taught the Norwegian prayer which I still use 70+ years later.

I Jesu Navn gar vi til bords a spise, drikke pa ditt ord.

Deg, Gud til aere, oss til gavn, Sa far vi mat I Jesu navn.

And for those non holy land people present, a translation.

In Jesus name to the table we go, To eat and drink according to His word.

To God the honor, us the gain, So we have food in Jesus name.

So yes, we have some familiarity with prayer and especially the big one. The Lord's Prayer - we could go over it line by line but suffice it to say when we pray it each and every Sunday we should take seriously what we are praying. We should honor God's name. When we pray 'thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' we are saying we will make it happen. Walk the walk. And certainly we should be about the business of forgiving others. We say it every Sunday.

But I want to focus on the last part of the Gospel. The part where Jesus talks about bread, and knocking on doors at midnight, and the phrase ask and it shall be given to you. This part is about praying always, not just on Sunday. Persistence in prayer. It's as if Jesus is reminding us of the Jimmy V 7 words. Don't give up, don't ever give up. Jesus was reminding us that prayer is simply talking to God. Anywhere, anytime.

Like this:

Hi God, help me to be patient today, I really need it.

Hey God, my kids are struggling, send them some peace.

Hi God, I'm thankful today, things are looking up.

God, need your strength today, the tests results are lousy. Give me some strength.

You get the idea. Prayer is simply talking to God. At home, work, in a car. Doesn't matter.

You see He is there. Listening, and waiting for you to talk with him.

Don't give up, don't ever give up.

Amen. Let it be so.