

Sermon Notes: July 24, 2022

Focus: what Jesus says *after* the Lord's Prayer

[Lectionary Readings](#)

I want to avoid a line-by-line deconstruction of the Lord's Prayer. A multitude of sermons and adult series have already covered this well-worn topic. I want to focus today on Jesus' teaching about prayer, generosity, and persistence *after* "Our Father who art..." There, Jesus helps the disciples to prayerfully persist in God's generosity.

Luke 11:5-13 paints a picture of how we know ourselves to be; how we hope to be with our family and friends; and how God embodies a loving responsiveness beyond anything we can expect from ourselves or our fellow humans.

"It is what it is" (Luke 11: 5-8) *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; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him."⁷ 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."⁸ 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.*

This is how we know the world to be. We must beat, beg, and plead. We have precious few people who would not mind a 3am wake up to get us out of a jam. The NIV version of the bible in v 8 says "because of his shameless audacity" instead of his persistence. Personally, I really like that spin. Our prayer life could use a little more shameless audacity because without it, we just silo into our sufferings blinded to our own needs and blind to the travails of others.

How we hope it to be (Luke 11: 9-12) *'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?*

This is about expectation. If you expect answered prayer, and if you expect God to care for you, then your odds go up on getting what you need. It is not 100%, but Jesus does say everyone who searches, and knocks, gets a response.

BRAVING

You know I am a bit of Brené Brown groupie. She offers good advice on how to practice becoming the people that we hope to be. This is a prayerful approach to holding relationships lightly, gratefully, and respectfully. I will explain her acronym in my own words.

BOUNDARIES:

Communicate early and often who you are and what you can do. Doormats do not bless people. You bless people because they know what to expect from you.

RELIABILITY:

People trust you to dial into them. They trust that you have good radar, and you show up when people really need you.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

When you stink at reading people and responding to them, you own it.

THE VAULT:

You are not a leaky sieve for gossip. You are a vault where confidences stay. You do not trample on secrets, and do not weaponize information.

INTEGRITY:

You practice what you preach. When you do not walk the walk, you return to accountability, rinse, repeat, and move forward.

NON-JUDGMENT:

You really think people are inherently trying their best. You try and try again to accept people as they are. Those around you are not marionette extensions of you.

GENEROSITY:

You give people as pass when they do not live up to your expectations. You do not create narrow narratives about them. For example, if you are already annoyed about an upcoming meeting, you avoid the temptation to tell a story like, “they never come prepared for a meeting *because* they don’t care about me.” The ‘because’s could get you into trouble and rob you of your generosity.

Who God is (Luke 11:13). *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!*

Self-expectation and healing: God is itching to walk through the doors that we open. I cannot remember who said it, but it is something like “healing is not becoming the best version of yourself but letting the worst version of yourself be lovable.”

Through prayer we see a lovable God loving the whole package.

God is “braver” than any of us could ever be, yet God slows down enough for us to jump on board. God is more responsive than we could hope for but is patient enough for us to try and try again to be more loving. God gives the best gifts and is not above holding our hand while we figure out how to give better love and respect to friends, family, and enemies alike.

Todd