

## July 25 2010 Sermon

Luke 11:1-13 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." <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. <sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread, <sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation." <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; <sup>7</sup> 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'? <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup> What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; <sup>12</sup> or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> 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!"

At his birth, Jesus was called the “Son of the Most High.” At his baptism, God said, “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.” On the Mount of Transfiguration God again spoke and said, “This is my beloved Son.” And by his resurrection the Holy Spirit “... declared [Jesus] to be the Son of God...” (Romans 1:4).

Jesus was not only aware of what God has sent him to do, he was also aware of his relationship to God. Over the years the disciples were witnesses of Jesus love for his Father. They witnessed his complete devotion to him. They saw his obedience to everything his Father asked of him. They heard him speak the

words that the Father gave him to speak and his refusal to speak anything different. They witnessed his deep trust and faith in the Father. He would spend hours and hours in prayer, sometimes even all night he would be in prayer. They were witnesses as Jesus suffered in agony of our sins. How in the Garden of Eden he faced the terrors of hell yet prayed to his Father, "Not my will but yours be done." The disciples were observers when Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet his faith did not flinch. He trusted his Father and called on him in the blackest days, the most horrible torments, the most painful

suffering and even in the shadow of the valley of death. Jesus never stopped loving and trusting his Father and relentlessly did what the Father wanted no matter the cost, no matter the pain.

As he faced humiliation and torture from the Roman soldiers; as he was dying on the cross and suffering the torments of hell, he prayed, "My flesh dwells secure, for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption." The disciples were witnesses of Jesus' love and trust in his Father.

But then, when Jesus stood on a mountain and taught them to pray, he said pray like this, “Our Father who art in heaven.” Jesus included them as God’s sons. Not only did they have an example of what it meant to be the Son of God, now they too were called, “sons of God.”

Not only is Jesus the Son of God, but now he calls us sons of God too. And so we are. In our Baptism we are born again of the Father. From the day of our Baptism we are the sons and daughters of the heavenly Father and brothers and sisters of

Jesus. Because of your Baptism, Jesus now calls you his brothers and sisters.

In Jesus we know what it means to be sons and daughters of the Father in heaven. We have seen his love for the Father; we have seen his devotion to the Father; we have seen his complete trust in the Father, even in suffering and death. We too can pray, "Yea, though I walk through the shadow of the valley of death, I shall fear no evil." In Jesus we have seen what it means to be a son of God. We have seen what it means to be loved by

the Father. Now the Father speaks of you: “Behold my Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

By your Baptism you are drawn into that intimate and loving relationship between Jesus and the Father and share in that same peace and rest in the Father’s arms. In all your trials, in the storms of life there is security, there is shelter, there is a safe harbor where you can anchor your boat and sleep in peace in the arms of your Father. No matter what happens, he will not abandon you to Sheol. Even in the valley of the shadow of death you shall fear no evil, for your Father is with you.

If a human father knows how to give good gifts to his children; if a human father would not give a serpent in place of a fish, or a scorpion instead of an egg, then how much more your Father in heaven will give good gifts to you, his children.

Yes, you have your problems and suffering. You are getting older and everyday one more part of your body stops working. You see the problems of others around you whom you love, and you carry their burdens in your heart. There is not one single thing you can do as you see your life and the lives of others crumbling around you. And that is the way of the sinful world.

That is the normal course of life in the kingdom of darkness. We are all dying; we are all decaying; the good times will come to an end; our bodies will come to an end. But the Father in heaven will always love you and take care of you.

You are sons and daughters of our Father in heaven. You are in his hands, You are safe, You are secure. And nothing shall separate You from the love of God, not tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword. We are being killed all day long; we are as sheep to be slaughtered. But in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who

loved us. Therefore, neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. For in the end, when our flesh is dead and buried; we will finally be rid of all sin and corruption. We will then be glorified as Jesus was glorified. Free from all vice and evil, we will be raised on the Last Day in all true righteousness and holiness for eternity. “For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building

from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.”

But while we still sojourn here in this life of sin and corruption; we cry out, “Father,...give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses...deliver us from evil.” We cry out in desperate need, for our lives are sliding down the cliff into the abyss of utter destruction. We have nothing to cling to. We have no anchors in life. Disaster hangs over our heads. We can only cry out, “Our Father who art in heaven.” We are in a fight for survival. We are in a war with the powers of darkness and the

ruler of this world. We are in a struggle against our own sinful flesh with its lusts and desires. And the field of battle where we fight these wars is prayer. Prayer is the battle field of life where we call out to our commander in chief to bring reinforcements; where we call in the air strikes against the enemy; summon help from the artillery, and order a wall of defense be built around us. Our Father is our only sure hope, our anchor, the strong arm of our defense. For in him we are secure and come to peace within his walls. He is our mighty fortress; our rock of salvation; our defender; and our safe harbor. In his hands we rest secure while

outside the torments of life rage on. We cry out to our Father, “May your kingdom come to us and may your will be done in this world as it is already done in heaven.” What peace and safety are ours because in our baptism, we know God as “Our Father.” Because we are baptized we have the right to call God, “Father.”

And if he is our Father, and we are all sons and daughters of the Father, then we are all brothers and sisters of one another. By our baptism we are made one with each other. We become a family, a community, a communion of saints. We bear each other’s burdens and share each other’s joys. All resentment,

competition, ill feelings, hatred, retaliation, division, lack of forgiveness, fighting, jealousy, bitterness, talking behind ones back, strife, and hatred, are rendered impossible. There is nothing more reprehensible than not getting along with your brother. There is nothing more disgraceful than not forgiving a sister. There is no shame greater than division between brothers and sisters. These things are made impossible for the Baptized children of the Father. They are made impossible because we are brothers and sisters of Jesus, and sons and daughters of the Father. They are made impossible because of the Son, Jesus

whose death on the cross paid for your debts that you owe each other and to God. Because his blood grants you forgiveness of sins, retaliation and lack of forgiveness are not options. They cannot and must not be tolerated in your heart. “Father,... forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” Heal our wounds. Heal the wounds we have inflicted on others. Help us as your children to love and care for our brothers and sisters. Restore unity to our communion and peace to our fellowship. And may we become peacemakers, instead of strife

makers. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.”

In Jesus we see what it means to be a son of God. We see what it means to love God. We see what it means to obey God completely. We see what it means to trust in God without a doubt or hesitancy. We see what it means to be in constant prayer. We see what it means to be steeped in his Word. We see what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves. We see what it means to forgive one another and to sacrifice our lives for the sake of our brother. Amen. With a firm faith hold fast to the riches of God’s grace and joyfully give thanks to his mercy forever and ever. Amen.