

IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Reverend David J. Powers
Sunday, October 2, 2022

Luke 11:1-10

so in a way that Hymn of preparation serves as a prayer of elimination for us but I'm going to invite you in just a few moments to join me in prayer I want to remind you as we begin our time as we read from God's scripture and hear the word proclaim that we are continuing that sermon series finding our why the question as I mentioned at the beginning of our time together this day for us is why pray so we're asking ourselves throughout these few weeks why is it we do what we do some of the questions we asked might seem to have simple straightforward answers and then others are much more complicated so we asked for God's spirit to dwell within us and around us in this time that we might be we might hear God's word for us so I invite you to join me in our prayer of Illumination

good and gracious Spirit as you moved across creation we pray that you would move once again here

move amongst us and within us to quiet us quiet any voice within us but your own that we might hear your word for us this day and that in hearing we might be called to lead lives of response so may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to you God our Rock and Our Redeemer amen

The Lord's Prayer

He 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.'

Perseverance in Prayer

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 to 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.

the grass withers and the flower phase but the word of Our Lord endures forever amen

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tells the story of Thomas Keller perhaps you're familiar famed Chef proprietor of French Laundry among others Keller has a way of thinking about recipes that I just love he says the first time you use a recipe do it exactly as written follow every direction every measurement that way you taste what the recipe writer or the chef has in mind exactly then the next time you rewrite the recipe in your own words as simply as possible you're moving from their language to your language once you've Rewritten the recipe your way make the dish according to your new recipe the third time make it only from memory and make at least one change switch out a vegetable change a spice something to make it different from the original Keller says that after you've made it for the third time the recipe is yours you've internalized it it's not a recipe in a cookbook it is in you it is part of you

there's something about Keller's wisdom here that Jesus is speaking to when the disciple comes to him and asks teacher Lord will you teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples there's something of this three times making it your own repeating it rewriting it in your own language that Jesus must be getting to at this time Jesus responds and says 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 Jesus gives the recipe with all the ingredients glory to God the looking forward prophetically to the kingdom breaking in sustenance for our lives forgiveness for our souls

and the ability to not be tempted

that's the prayer that Jesus offers and it's an interesting thing because we've obviously we just prayed it with our children a little bit ago we've uh over a couple Millennia we've added to it in different ways I believe that Jesus must have expected that when he shared it for the first time I actually think that Jesus probably hoped for his disciples that they every time they laid their head on the pillow or got up in the morning or sat at a table for a meal that they wouldn't just pray this simple prayer that he laid out before them but instead that over time they would write it in their own language maybe change out a spice or a vegetable or a phrase and I believe Jesus would have hoped for this because at some point in the midst of that practice that prayer would cease to be for them this prayer that Jesus had taught them and instead it would become part of who they are

Perhaps it is like Keller and like Jesus for us this day when we try to answer the question why pray Perhaps it is something that we have to roll around in our minds and allow to cross our tongues at least three times before we can make it our own there are countless reasons why the people of God pray to God and I won't try to give you all of those today but all posit a few when we in the reformed tradition pray we believe that we are communing with the God of all creation it's Preposterous if you think about it the one that birthed creation set worlds spinning and brought forth all life as Preposterous that that one and three would be interested in hearing the prayers of our hearts and minds and yet we believe it to be true it is part of the good news that we Proclaim and so what we do when we pray is we bind ourselves in communion to God so that one day that Divinity that holiness that Grace and that love might become part of the fabric of

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Who We Are but beyond that we pray so that we might acknowledge that we are not in control it seems to me like that purpose might be the purpose that leads us most to question why it is we pray why pray you might have pondered over the last few weeks when there's such Brokenness and hurt in the world why pray what difference is it going to make well I pray when all we do is send our thoughts and prayers

here's the thing true prayer allows us to be honest about the world around us and our place in it it allows us to look upon the world and recognize his Brokenness and also claim that God is at work in that world as Roar says prayer is looking out from a different set of eyes which are not comparing competing judging labeling analyzing but receiving the moment in its present wholeness and unholeness

we pray we claim before God our honest experience of what it means to be human

strikes me also that when we pray we are and when we pray particularly for people that we love and care about and our community and the world we are entrusting the people that we love and the situations that overwhelm us to God especially when things feel out of our control prayer is acknowledging that we are not in control but that there is a power Beyond us a God who holds us and indeed holds it all and this God is trustworthy and Powerful and is strong enough to hold the enormity of our fear and our worry

when we do this when we see control or illusions of control to the God of all creation Nyquist says prayer is like yoga for our insides I love that a tenderness a stretching a calmness a breath and yet also difficult to hold the posture in the midst of trying times

finally beloved I would pause it to you that we pray so that we might be reformed together into God's image God works lovingly and powerfully inside us as we pray rebuilding us and restoring us shaping us into the kind of people who forgive as Christ called his disciples and who repair and who give Second Chances the kind of people we all desire to be and we can't always get there on our own this is what prayer can do this is what God can do through prayer this day when we Ponder the question of why it is we pray we have an invitation because indeed we pray for a number of different reasons but what we know happens is that as we pray God works on us on our spirits on our souls bringing us to a place of recognition about the beauty and Brokenness of ourselves and of the world

so this week and encouragement a request perhaps for you prayer has not been a part of your regular spiritual discipline it's pretty normal we get to times when prayer is repeated perhaps it meals or at times of rest or even in times of tragedy but but few of us actually are able to to live in the midst of a prayerful life where in a moment we can pause take a deep breath and commune with God in the midst of joy in the midst of difficulty and so the encouragement is this there's no right way to do it no right words no matter the prescription that Jesus gives us actually because here was the hope that he had over time we would use this form and then we would plant our own words into it and then we would say it over and over and over again and it would be bound

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into us so much so that it would just become part of who we are so here's the encouragement pray this week

perhaps for a loved one or relationship or your church perhaps for Memphis or our world you don't have to pray for all of them pick one and if you need one particular then here's the request on Friday at 11 o'clock a group of your deacons are going to meet in the Jones building and we are going to have a teleconference a video conference actually with a group of folks who have been engaged in the intercessory prayer Ministry for decades now this intentional Ministry of prayer has changed their Church hundreds of people participate what happens is that people devote time specific time slots each day to praying for the joys and concerns of a community and what happens is more and more people get engaged in that prayer and over time the entire Community is bound up in the fabric of communing with God and lifting to God the prayers of God's people and it has transformed this church that we will be speaking to we have a wonderful Prayer Ministry here we have many people who are committed to prayer and yet our hope is that we might take some nuggets of wisdom this Friday at 11 o'clock and we might develop for us what it looks like to have a robust intercessory prayer ministry here so Mark the calendar on your phone if you need something to pray for pray for our Deacons for the wisdom of moving forward with that

but here's what I'll say there is no prescription only an initial recipe given to us by our Lord and savior with the expectation that we will write it in our own words change an ingredient or two and at some point through prayer God will make it our own in the name of the father and the Son and the Holy Spirit one God mother of us all amen