

July 24, 2022

Luke 11:1-13

“Our Father Cares for Us!”

Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
2155 North Oakland Ave.  
Decatur, Illinois 62526

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You might have noticed that there are a few things missing in Luke's account of the Lord's prayer. It is somewhat different than the way in which we have learned it from the Gospel of Matthew. This should not bother us in the slightest. Three years ago I explained the main reason. In brief, the Lord's prayer in Matthew is focused on prayer that the children of God say together in corporate worship as the opening words read: "*Our* Father who art in heaven." The prayer in Luke is in the context of private prayer. That is why the opening is simply reduced to the word: "Father." Moreover, in the gospel of Luke "Deliver us from evil [the evil one]" is also missing, but if you read immediately after our lesson you will discover that Jesus is delivering an individual from the evil one.

Finally - and this is the main subject matter of my message for today - in the gospel of Luke "Thy will be done" is missing from the prayer. However, the will of the Father is considered in great detail in verses five through thirteen of our gospel lesson. We are taught by Jesus what the Father's will is for us and how it is done through him who died on the cross and rose from the dead. We learn that our Father knows what we need! **Our Father Cares for Us!**

Jesus gives a model for our words in the Lord's Prayer - a way to talk to the one who made us. While this is the Lord's prayer it becomes our prayer and serves as a wonderful outline for all that we pray about. It is a prayer which meets life where it is in every moment. It pleads for forgiveness and help to forgive others. It is a prayer which asks for guidance in everything and where we turn to the Lord who alone can help and direct our lives. What is the Father's response to our pleas for help? What is his reaction to us when we approach him as trusting children? When we answer these questions, we begin to see that our Father's will is truly gracious.

It is very important for us to see his gracious will for us. Our Father is not our enemy. He is our friend. He is not out to get us as we may often feel. By his Son Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection he gives us the very best. By the full and free payment for our sins in Jesus we have forgiveness and can approach our Father unashamed and confident that he will do only what is good for us and all that pertains to our salvation. We will discover that he has not forsaken or has cast us aside. We belong to him. And he is more to us than any friend or even a father in this life could ever be. Luke writes:

And Jesus 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, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 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'? 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 ..."

Our Father is more than a friend, as Jesus describes here, and that's the point. For what may a friend do? If you come to your friend when you are in need and at an inconvenient time, he may very well refuse you until it is convenient for him. He might be willing to help, but only under certain conditions and

limitations. In other words, friends often want consideration before they will show consideration. They might not open the door. They might ignore you. They might make you fit into their schedule and make you feel that you are quite unimportant.

But our Father is always home and his door is always open. I guess we might say that our Father has a lot of things to do, but you are so important that he will not consider himself being bothered. There is always room for you. Only the almighty and eternal One could be that way all the time in every circumstance. He is our truest friend.

The Lord comes to our aid in a different manner than the so-called “friend” in Jesus’ illustration. We are lovingly invited to come to him, continually asking and knocking and seeking. As Jesus himself says, “... ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” You can be certain that your Father in heaven will give to you all good gifts. You will find. And all that is good will be opened to you when it is in keeping with his name being hallowed and the coming of his kingdom and the salvation of his people. Our Father is our first and last resort. He is our first and last one who can help. And this invitation for us to continually ask, seek, and knock is not for his sake but for ours, that he may complete his good work in us and bring us home to heaven.

This brings us to further considerations when it comes to prayer and the Father’s care for us. We pray to our heavenly Father that by his undeserved favor he would give us what we ask. However, we want the glory to be forever his. We want his name to always be holy. And that has a profound effect upon what he gives. In every day life, it is expected that a father gives only good gifts to his child. If he were to give only bad gifts, the child might very well ask, “What kind of a father are you?” The mother would complain and say, “You are not being a father to these children!” That brings us then to the way in which a true father functions when it comes to his children who live a fallen world. We read:

What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him 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!”

Our heavenly Father always gives as only He can give. In other words, he gives according to his own goodness and for the good of the one who receives. Our Father not only remains who he is, but in everything he does he gives in accordance to his righteousness. In the words of one author:

He is what He is. In Christ we are His children. Having set us free from our sins and cleansed us from all our wrongdoings, which would have cast us out of his home, we now have the right of children. The Elder Son [Jesus] has brought us back and keeps us by the Spirit within the Father’s home. Humbly and boldly we can speak to our Father. And he acts as only He is capable of acting. He is not human ... He is God. He is our Father and nothing less will He ever be.

What that means is that He is the Good One, and will only do what is Good. Consequently, he knows how to give good gifts to his children. Our Father cares for us as it pertains to us having Him and all that is good in Him forever. That means that whatever he gives in this fallen world always has that in mind. In regard to us, he is continually thinking of our eternal destination with him. This is expressed in the words of our gospel lesson: "... how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

First and foremost, he gives us the Holy Spirit, that is, the Father's gift for faith and its preservation. He further supports that faith by supplying all that is necessary for that faith to manifest itself in every good work. Our Father does not lie to us. He knows our desires and needs. Overall he gives to us Jesus on the cross for life and forgiveness and salvation. What he gives - what we find - every door that is opened is so that we may always know our Father, believe in him, and love and serve him in our relationship to one another.

Every answer to every prayer is so that we may recognize that **Our Father Cares for Us!** And he does so by sending his Holy Spirit that we may believe in his Son. Everything serves to the end that we may be born anew and remain his children. Every answer that he gives to our prayers simultaneously makes us a stranger in this world and a ruler of the universe with him. And every answer serves to the end that we will remain with him forever. Paul writes in Romans 8:14-17 these words:

All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Indeed! **Our Father Cares for Us!**

Amen.

Pastor Brock Abbott