

“Dad?” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 7 – July 24, 2022

- I. **Luke 11:1** – ¹ 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.”
- II. **Where do you go when you need help?**
 - a. Many of you would say family (if they are available).
 - b. Some of you have friends who are willing to help.
 - c. And many of you might ask your church family for help.
 - d. I suppose it is also a matter of what kind of help you need, right?
 - i. I always say that a person knows who their real friends are when it comes to moving... if you can call them and ask to help you move... well then, they are a good friend.
 - e. Yet, sometimes we have no one to help because whatever we are dealing with is beyond human intervention.
 - i. Sometimes God is the only one to turn to... the only one to trust.
- III. **We are not in control, but we can turn it over to God.**
 - a. That’s a hard lesson to learn for those of us who believe we are self-sufficient and independent.
 - b. One hot summer day, our kids were playing with all the other seminary kids in St. Louis.
 - i. Our little Alexa decided to ride her bike with flip flops instead of shoes
 - ii. She hit a signpost along the sidewalk with her foot and the bike pedal – which broke her foot and caused an open fracture
 - iii. Our downstairs neighbor happened to be at the field playing and he gave her help while others called paramedics...
 - iv. After a long time in the ER we finally found out she needed emergency surgery to repair her fracture.
 - v. All I remember is looking at my kid and realizing I was not in control
 1. She would be whisked off to surgery, and the results were out of my hands.
 2. Michele and I prayed, and felt helpless
 - vi. Since then, we have gone through many surgeries with Michele – in the same way, we can only do so much before we turn it over to God.
 - c. I’ve spent time with many of you in the same situation... not sure if your loved one will make it through an illness or problem... we are helpless.
 - i. As many of you know, I’ve been visiting Gina Kreps as she suffered serious seizures over a several week period...
 1. It got so bad they almost put her in a medically induced coma, but she turned a corner that night and improved
 2. She’s home now, and she is getting better, but progress is slow

3. While in the hospital, Celia (Gina's mom) told me that a friend of theirs envisioned the prayers of the faithful flooding our heavenly Father on Gina's behalf.
4. Gina says she just wants to give everyone praying for her a big group hug... and that it gave her great comfort during those dark days knowing that people were praying diligently for her.
5. The helplessness we felt... and still do in many ways... is turned over to God – who promises to hear.
- d. You see, we usually try to fix the problem ourselves, using our best effort.
 - i. We then turn to friends or other people like professionals to help.
 - ii. When all these things fail, then we pray to God to deliver us.
- e. Jesus would have us praying in a much different way as He teaches us to pray all the time (not just when we are in trouble).

IV. **Lord, teach us to pray...**

- a. I suppose somewhere along the line, John the Baptist taught his followers how to pray, and that included some of Jesus followers now.
 - i. No one knows the prayers or method John the Baptist taught, but Jesus gives us the model for trusting in God with all our heart.
- b. We read in Luther's Small Catechism that "In the Lord's Prayer, we now pray for God's will to be done and for His gifts to be received in the face of all dangers"
 - i. In other words, we are God's children, so He wants us to commend our lives to Him and seek His gifts no matter what's going on in life!
- c. You see, the Lord's Prayer is an opportunity to turn our will and lives over to the care of God our Father in heaven.
 - i. That takes trust, doesn't it?
 - ii. If I'm going to give my will and my life to someone else... I better believe that they have my best interest in mind.
- d. So, Jesus uses earthly examples of people in need... and it might seem like a strange argument, but what He's helping us to understand is that we go to people in the world for help all the time... if they can come through with help, then how much more do you think we can get from God our Father?
 - i. Even bad fathers will not give their child a snake or scorpion when they need a fish or an egg.
- e. For some of you, your earthly fathers were not good at all... and this can be a huge problem when it comes to trusting God as your eternal Father.
 - i. We can't help but put some of the negative feelings into our relationship with God, but stop for a moment and consider the best father you could ever imagine... now multiply that to infinity and you have God the Father... the most loving, caring, wise and trustworthy
- f. Yes, this is the question to answer for yourself today – do I trust God enough to seek and knock?

- V. **I want to commend you to our Father because He loves you.**
- a. He loves the world so much that He sent His only Son to die for you, so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life.
 - b. The Father sacrificed His very own Son to bring us salvation – and Jesus, our Savior – always turned to His Father for everything and every need.
 - c. The Garden of Gethsemane is a stark reminder of Jesus praying to His Father – as He was under so much stress that He sweat blood...
 - i. And the words of Jesus ring in our ears to this day – [Father], not My will, but Yours, be done.” (Luke 22:42)
 - ii. Yes, it was the Father’s will that Jesus go the way of the cross in a great victory over sin – and death – and satan himself.
 - 1. In other words, no matter what happens to us in this world of trial and misery, God has the final word... and the struggle is not the end, but a transition to a paradise without end.
 - iii. We can be certain that the God who loved us enough to give of Himself will certainly be there when we pray for His will in our lives.
- VI. **God the Father is worthy of our prayers and trust...**
- a. Someone told me the other day, “Pastor Jim, I pray for what I want, but then it’s so hard for me to say, ‘Thy will be done’ because God may have other things in mind than my will.”
 - i. Yes, it is true God’s ways are bigger than we can understand –
 - 1. Remember when He puts Job in his place by asking, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?” (Job 38:4)
 - 2. We cannot always answer why, but we trust that God loves us – and just like an earthly father, we turn to Him in need.
 - b. Jesus expects this when He says, “When you pray...” – take note, He didn’t say, “If you pray...” but assumes that you will pray to the Father just as you would go to a loving and caring dad in your life.
 - c. Even though God is so much bigger and beyond, He still wants you to call Him Dad.
 - i. When I was a kid, I did something strange by most people’s standards, I called my dad by his first name.
 - ii. I found out a long time later that he did that with his dad too.
 - iii. But today I gladly call him “dad” because it is too impersonal not to.
 - d. Have you ever considered calling out to your Dad in heaven?
 - i. Dad, Your will be done – even when I have no idea where this is going
 - ii. Dad, I trust You with all my heart to care about me and care for me in my darkest times and in the best times
 - iii. Dad? Please help me and be with me, thank You.
 - e. Take your cares, your uncertainty, your will... and your life to your Dad – take them to your Father in heaven who is by far the best Dad of all. Amen.