

## **“Thy Kingdom Come”**

Message by DD Adams

Providence United Methodist Church

10<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

July 24, 2016

Today’s lesson is taken from Luke’s gospel, chapter 11, verses 1 through 13. I’ll be reading from the New Revised Standard Version. “Jesus 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.’

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. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give 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!’ This is God’s word for God’s people. Thanks be to God.

Let’s pray. Holy God, touch and open our hearts; we trust you have prepared them. Cause your word to find a lodging place within us that latches on to our deepest need and reveals to us the importance of prayer. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen. Peace be with you!

The last month we’ve talked about discipleship. Service, obedience, and loving God and neighbor—a disciple’s greatest commandment. The Holy Spirit provides the power needed to transform us and to become that community that loves others. And the two sacraments, baptism and communion work as a means of grace so that we *can* become salt and light to the world and to be the witness of God’s love in the world.

In the gospel of Luke, we see Jesus modeling the priority of prayer for his disciples. Jesus prayed a lot. Jesus prayed at his baptism, before he chose his disciples, at his transfiguration, and infinitely more times. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus asks his Father for the kingdom to come. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray for God’s Kingdom to come. It’s a big request, but we have a big God.

We’re also to pray. We’re to bring our attitude, our worship, and personality and all that we are to God. When we pray and are transformed by the spirit, the Kingdom of God becomes part of us, but the kingdom is also in our midst, and as we change society can change. The transformation of ourselves and society is a foretaste of what the future Kingdom will be like.

We’re to keep on asking, searching, and knocking. And if we’re really honest about what we think this world needs than we should continue to ask, and ask repeatedly. We’re to seek God’s Kingdom first and that God’s will be done on

earth as it is in heaven, but when we turn on the news, the violence is overwhelming.

We pray for God's Kingdom to come, and we also pray for our heart's desire. We see glimpses and God's presence and of the kingdom in response to the violence of course, but are we praying for peace, justice, and freedom? What we see too frequently is violence; the killings of men, women, and children, police officers being targeted, racial wars, revenge, poverty. Are we praying for God's kingdom to come? Are we praying?

Terrorism is on our minds a lot, and it can provoke terror *in us*, and anger and fear. But Jesus says this in verse 13 to his disciples, "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!" Jesus said he would give us the Holy Spirit and all we could ask for, but are we praying? When we pray and ask sincerely, not selfishly, the Holy Spirit gives all the good things this world needs—justice, peace, freedom.

How much more violence can the world take? How much more hatred can it consume? If we're crying out to God to stop the violence, we should also be willing to be changed through prayer that leads to action. Social holiness won't change until we're willing to change. You've ask me what to say to your children about the violence and where to find peace; this is where we begin.

In verse 1 of this text, Jesus was "in a certain place" praying. Where's your certain place? Everyone's place is different, but the important thing is to find it and go to it. Go to it often. My "certain place" is a place I go to remind myself that God is in control. I pray with more certainty about the promises of God.

It's a place that reminds me how weak I am without God. I put my feelings aside or I let my feelings flow, but I trust the all-knowing, all-present, and all-

powerful God who created me. Disciples must pray and pray often. Pray for God's Kingdom. Pray about what action you can take to make a difference. Pray for the comfort, peace, and hope for the families who live in the midst of the chaos of this world. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Daily prayer calms the soul. James 5:16 says the prayers of righteous people have great power in their effects! Luke 18:1 says to always pray and never give up. Philippians 4:5 says to have no anxiety about anything, but to pray and let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God that passes all understanding will set your hearts and minds in him. Colossians 4:2 says to devote yourselves to prayer and to be watchful and thankful. 1Thessalonians 5:17-18 says to pray continually giving thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Are we praying and praying about what we can do?

In the printed book fold message I have listed a website where you can go for more information about what to do. [<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/focus-areas/preventing-violence-and-reducing-injury/preventing-violence-advocacy.html>] Let us pray. Holy God, we pray you would help us to find that certain place that shuts out the noise and confusion of our day. When we know you intimately it changes our lives and moves us away from selfishness and turns us in the direction of your love and goodness to bring the Kingdom of God within us and in our midst. We pray your kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.