

Luke 11:1-13

“Receive Generously”

7th Sunday after Pentecost

July 28th, 2019

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Vicar Otterman

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

[Introduction]

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

Have you ever been to a restaurant with someone and had them tell you, “I’m buying, get whatever you want?” And then you enter a moral quandary as you try to figure out if you really should order the expensive meal that you really want or if they were just being polite and you should order one of the cheaper items on the menu.

I’m sure that I’m not the only one here who’s been afraid of committing this social faux pas. Our society sets up unwritten rules about how to be polite, and these rules ingrain themselves in us.

For instance, if your friend offered to pay for your meal, and in response you ordered three of the most expensive entrees, eating one now and saving the other two for the rest of the week, that would be taking advantage of your friend’s generosity. That would cross the line of what society would deem acceptable.

[Being Polite to God]

But those limits don’t apply when God is the one making the offer. When God gives us a promise, he does so because that’s what He wants for us, not just because the sentiment is nice. When God gives us forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life through the cleansing blood of Jesus, He doesn’t want us to say, “That’s very generous of you, God, but you’re being kind. You don’t have to give me all three. I’ll be fine with just one of those things.” No, God wants us to receive all his gifts with open and eager arms.

[The Lord’s Prayer]

That is why, when the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray, he tells them to pray to their heavenly Father and ask Him for all their needs. He wants us to come to God with our daily needs of body and soul. He wants us to continually

come to him to ask for forgiveness for our sins and for protection against the world's temptations.

So the question for us is: do we come to God with all of our troubles and needs? Do we pray without ceasing as Paul says to do in his letter to the Thessalonians? Sometimes our cares seem too little and insignificant to bother God with. Sometimes they are so big that they seem greedy. Maybe it seems like you've asked for forgiveness for a particular sin one to many times, and you're afraid that God might not forgive you this time. Maybe you've tried praying, and it just doesn't seem like God is listening.

But whether or not our prayers are big or small, or whether or not God responds the way we want Him to, He still bids us to come to Him in prayer. He wants us to come to him with everything, our hopes, our fears, and our guilt. He wants it all, because He loves us like a Father loves his children.

[Our Holy Father]

In fact, Jesus emphasizes God's Fatherly love for us by comparing Him to human Fathers. He asks, "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?"

Jesus asks this question, because it is absurd. Even human fathers, who are evil, are supposed to know that this is not how they should treat their children. How then do we dare to think that God will not hear our prayers and answer them with His love and grace, giving us what we need.

When God invites us to come to Him in prayer, He isn't thinking to Himself, "Well, I hope they don't ask for too much this time, because my grace for these people is starting to run a little low."

God's grace for us is infinite, because Jesus already gave his life as a sacrifice for us on the cross. The payment is already made, once and for all, and now God invites us to come and feast at His buffet of love and forgiveness where the grace never runs out.

But when we don't come to God with all our needs, we imply that God is not a good and loving Father. We imply that He is not trustworthy, and that He does not

intend to give us what we need. We fear that He won't listen to us or that He will give us bad gifts like the father who gives his son a scorpion instead of an egg.

That is not our God. He is not fickle, and when He makes us a promise, He keeps it.

We may not always understand how He answers our prayers, or why he allows us to suffer physically and emotionally, but we know that He has our best interests in mind. We know that, because in the life and sacrifice of Jesus, we clearly see God's love for us. It is as Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."
(John 14:9)

[Buffet of Grace]

Through Jesus, God gives us many gifts, and one of the greatest gifts we've received is the Holy Spirit who seals us into God's family as his children and strengthens us to live out our lives of faith, which means coming back to God again and again asking for forgiveness and trusting in Him for everything.

Jesus says that God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask, and the Holy Spirit grants us saving faith, to sustain us in this life and in our times of trial. He emphatically urges us to ask God for this gift in our prayers, and he 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."

When Jesus taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer, he gave us more than an example of how to pray, he gave us a promise that our Father in heaven will hear us and lovingly give us all that we need to sustain us in the faith until the day when he returns to give us everlasting life.

So ask. Go to God in prayer, ask your Heavenly Father for help, and trust in His will for your life. Amen.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
