

**August 1, 2010
Luke 11:1-13
Creekside COB**

“Teach Us to Pray”

Bonney Stuart of Washtucna, Washington, tells about visiting First Assembly congregation in Eugene, Oregon. A rather lively youngster in the front row entertained the whole congregation during the hymns and the pastoral prayer. The boys' mother, seated several rows back, tried repeatedly to get the child's attention, but she failed in every attempt. Finally, just before the sermon, she walked briskly forward, grabbing her son by the shoulder and marching him down the aisle. With each step the lad would drag his heels and yell, "No, Momma, no!" The battle drew every eye in the church.

A few feet from the narthex doors, the youngster in desperation and with urgency in his voice shouted: "Oh, my goodness! Somebody pray!" (A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Church, pp. 73 & 75)

Mother Teresa appeared one time on Robert Schuller television program. Schuller reminded her that the show was being carried all over America and in 22 foreign countries including her native Yugoslavia. He asked her if there was one message that she would like to convey to all those viewers. Her response was, "Yes, tell them to pray. And tell them to teach their children to pray." Prayer precedes good works in Mother Teresa estimation.

How do you feel about that?

Today the disciples ask, “Teach Us to Pray. Jesus gives them a prayer and he goes on to tell us about a woman who would not stop knocking and finally about a father who gives to his child.

Jesus today teaches us to how to pray and to pray with confidence.

We can pray confidently when we know our God and know ourselves. This is the first lesson Jesus teaches us about prayer.

What does that mean to know God and to know ourselves?

To know God is to know that God is holy and we are not.

To know God is to know that God is a God who loves us unconditionally and we need love.

To know God is to know that he is our provider and we need provision. He cares for us and we need care.

One might believe our livelihood, our homes, our daily bread come from us. But God is the one who provides.

To know God is to know that He is a forgiving God and we are forgiven.

To know God is to know God protects us from falling prey to temptation and that we face temptations.

Jesus teaches us today to that we can be confident when we enter into prayer knowing who our God is and how much we need Him.

A man once said that his life and faith were strengthened mightily when one night he opened his mother's bedroom door and saw her on her knees in prayer. He said, "I heard her mentioning my name to the Lord, asking that he would guide me to be strong against temptation and to lead a life that was pleasing in his sight. I realized, then, that she had been doing this every night of my life. I have not been the same since that night."

That is the second lesson today – to pray persistently.

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.

One day man was leaving for work when his wife said she wasn't feeling well. After quizzing her for a moment to find out what was wrong, he decided he should take a personal day. But she insisted everything was fine and told him to go ahead with his plans.

As he was about to leave the house, he thought, Now is an excellent time to make sure my nine-year-old son knows how to call me in case of an emergency. So he asked him to come to our bedroom where he was making the bed. He sat him down and walked him through the simple process of calling his cell phone.

To ensure he had retained the lesson and wouldn't have any trouble later on, the husband had him give it a try right there on the spot. He watched him dial the number from his home phone, his cell rang, he answered, and for just a minute or so, they had a nice, little conversation standing ten feet from one another in the same room.

After they wrapped up the conversation, his son left the room. "Okay", he thought. "If there's a problem while I'm gone, the little man-of-the-house can reach me." About three minutes later, his cell phone vibrated again, and when he glanced to check who it was that was calling, he saw my home phone number. Still standing in the bedroom, he answered the phone with a smile.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Dad," came the familiar voice. "I just wanted to call from the living room to make sure this phone works from far way!"

"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given 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."

We are confident in our prayers because we know that in our persistence God answers our prayers.

Because you are persistent and continue to knocking – expect.

Jesus teaches us a third lesson for a confident prayer.

We can be confident because Jesus today says this *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?*

How can we not be confident when we know that our Holy God who knows us and loves us would not hear and honor our prayers.

There is a story told about a 5th grade boy who wanted a motor scooter. More than anything he wanted a motor scooter but his dad said, "No!" too dangerous and you are too young!" But this boy had a friend named Roy Wilcox who had a new motor scooter. One Saturday morning, the boy convinced Roy to let me ride it. He showed me how to get it started and how to keep it going, but not how to get it stopped!

The boy circled the block five times trying to get information on how to stop that motor scooter. Each time, Roy would shout instructions, but the boy was out of earshot before he could communicate completely. Finally, the boy had to turn it over and slide it to a stop in a pile of gravel. I aged enough on that trip to last me a long time. As I got up, dusted myself off and limped home, I remember thinking, "Daddy's right? I don't really need one of those things after all!"

To expect does not mean - that God is a magic genie ready to fulfill our every desire.

To expect means - to know that God is a loving God and wants to give you the things that you need

We should pray in expectation because God knows what we need and that need is tied to the Holy Spirit guiding us into the purpose of God.

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

Saint Augustine was a wild and profligate youth. His mother prayed for him constantly. The early chapters of the Confessions of Saint Augustine are filled with references to his mother's earnest prayers that he might become a Christian. One day he told her he was going to Milan, Italy with some companions. She believed that if he went to that sinful city there would be no hope of his reform.

She prayed earnestly that God would not allow him to go to Italy. She

did all she could to prevent it, even so far as to follow him on the early part of the journey, until he tricked her and went on with the journey. It was in Milan that he came under the influence of Saint Ambrose and put his reluctant feet on the first step of the ladder that led to baptism, to Holy Orders and to sainthood. His mother's ultimate prayers for him were answered in the very place that her present prayers asked God never to allow him to go.

God's supreme gift is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

She prompts us into prayer – into a continual conversation with God.

She guides our energies in the direction of our prayers.

She keeps us sensitive to the signs God gives to change direction and ideas.

She keeps us assured of God's love, so that when the answer is "No," we are sure it is for the ultimate good of ourselves and of those for whom we pray.

Jesus teaches us to pray today - we can pray with confidence and with persistence and expectation knowing that our Holy God gives to us the best gift of all – the gift of the Holy Spirit.