

Poole Bay Methodist Circuit worship
Sunday 24th July 2022

A gift from God to aid our prayer - Rev Tony Cavanagh

Our worship material this week is based upon the material produced by “Twelve Baskets” on behalf of the Methodist Church

Welcome

Quiet moment

Hymn: STF 254 - Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God ([YouTube Link](#))

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
Seek, and you shall find.
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds out from the mouth of God.
Hallelu, Hallelujah!

© 1972, Maranatha! Music (admin by Capital CMG Publishing)

Opening Prayers

Hold a moment of stillness.

[Pause]

Think of a place that you love to be in, a place that brings you peace – perhaps it reminds you of God or reveals something of God’s nature to you. It might be by the sea, in your garden, at home, a favourite holiday spot, a mountain or a skyscraper.

Perhaps for many of us it will be connected to a beautiful landscape or a special view.

Let’s pause for a moment, imagine yourself into that place. What can you see? How do you feel?

Firstly, let us pause and give thanks.

Lord of our special places, we give thanks for them and all that they mean to us. We give thanks for the memories this place connects us with, and the special people associated with this place, perhaps faces, names and stories we remember when we come here.

Living God, we give you thanks for your creation and all the joy and wonder it brings us. We pause to give you thanks.

[Pause]

Secondly, still imagining ourselves in this special place, we pause to say sorry, sorry to you Lord.

As we look out on our special places, we feel a sense of connection to all the other precious parts of your creation, no matter how popular or appreciated. We say sorry.

We say sorry for the damage we have done to these places, and the ways we have been part of systems that have damaged your world, or the people who live there.

We are sorry for the pollution, destruction, and pain that we inflict on each other, and on your world.

For the sake of these special places, the people of your world, and all that we love we ask that you would move, inspire and transform us. Accept us as we are, and use us for your work to create a better, safer, fairer world.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer to say, or you may wish to listen to it in music form via this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THLDx1Ca_lc

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen

Reading: Luke 11:1-13

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

² He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

And lead us not into temptation.”

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

⁹ “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Reflection on the readings

Take a few more steps backwards and think about the scenario Luke describes for us in our reading.

The chapter begins by telling us that ‘Jesus was praying in a certain place...’. Jesus is quite often found praying in Luke, so we imagine that the disciples were familiar with seeing him at prayer – and perhaps had noticed too how Jesus drew strength and peace from this. Perhaps he was energised by his times of prayer, or given a renewed sense of purpose. Whatever it was that the disciples saw in Jesus and his prayer life something they wanted it too. ‘Lord, teach us to pray’ they ask. He responds with a simple outline prayer with about five ideas contained within it. Let’s take a quick look at the prayer.

It’s a prayer which begins by recognising the mystery and holiness of **God**, revealed as Father, then expresses a longing for the **Kingdom**, the rule of God to come. It’s a prayer which refers to that daily gift of manna in the wilderness, in a request for **daily bread**, then moves straight into a challenging two-sided approach to **forgiveness** – forgive us as we forgive others, and it finishes with a supplication not to be led into situations which might overpower us, an appeal to God’s **grace**...

God – Kingdom – Provision – Forgiveness – Grace.

That’s what’s included – but almost as interesting is what is missing when we think about the breadth of Christian theology and spirituality, so much is not mentioned in the Lord’s Prayer!

So, let’s look again at the story contained in our reading of the friend at midnight. We usually understand it to be an exhortation to persist in our prayers, to keep on asking... certainly, that meaning is there and is a valuable reminder not to give up. But what if we were to put ourselves in the shoes not of the petitioner, but of the neighbour; the neighbour who is already in bed, who has gone through their nightly rhythm of locking up and putting their family to bed and who is very unwilling to get up and respond. To them, this is a story of the unexpected, of intrusion, of interruption, of surprise. Does that approach also have something to teach us about prayer and the life of discipleship, I wonder.

The story is literally a 'wake-up call'. Do we need to wake up to the possibility of God coming to us in interruptions to our normal routines and in the disruption of our usual ways of working? In the past two years of pandemic and lockdown, we have seen people respond in extraordinary ways to unprecedented times and circumstances, in our homes, in society and in the church. In a myriad of ways people have shown kindness, compassion and creativity and have worked to provide a better environment, a kinder society, a fairer world.

The final words of Jesus in this passage again call upon an everyday occurrence if a child asks a parent for a fish or an egg, they don't expect to be given a snake or a scorpion instead. The implication is that if even foolish and sinful human parents know how to respond to their children, how much more will God give good things when asked – and in particular, the Holy Spirit.

It seems that all our praying might be summed up in a very simple request that God would give us the very best gift of all – God's own self, in the daily gift of the Holy Spirit. When did I, when did you, last ask God for that gift?

Hymn: Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God ([YouTube Link](#))

Holy Spirit, living breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Let the presence of the risen Lord,
Come renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;
Give me faith for what I cannot see,
Give me passion for Your purity;
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within,
May Your joy be seen in all I do.
Love enough to cover every sin,
In each thought and deed and attitude.
Kindness to the greatest and the least,
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.
Turn my strivings into works of grace;
Breath of God show Christ in all I do.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,
Giving life to all that God has made,
Show Your power once again on earth,
Cause Your church to hunger for your ways.
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise;
Lead us on the road of sacrifice,
That in unity the face of Christ
May be clear for all the world to see.

Keith Getty & Stuart Townend Copyright © 2005 Thankyou Music

Intercessions:

Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name.
(Offer a prayer of praise and thanks to God)

Your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
(Pray for a situation that needs God's intervention)

Give us today our daily bread,
(Pray for a person or group of people in need, those struggling to make ends meet)

And forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
(Pray for situations of conflict either in the world, or in a personal situation)

And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
(Pray for God's justice to prevail in the world)

the Kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, are yours
now and forever,
Amen.

Hymn: STF 503 - Love divine ([YouTube Link](#))

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
all Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love Thou art;
visit us with Thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all Thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see Thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in Thee:
Changed from glory into glory
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before Thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley

Blessing

Until that moment which Wesley describes as ‘casting our crowns before him, lost in wonder love and praise’, until heaven finally calls us home, we have a job to do, a role to play in bringing love and hope into a broken world. Let us go out and do that job this week.

Amen.