

## **Hello God, this is David calling**

He 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.”**

Jesus had always prayed. His times alone with God were what sustained Him. His times alone with God were what allowed Him to speak so clearly, with such authority, on the will of God. In prayer, Jesus and God were one.

The day of Jesus’ baptism – he enters into a period of intense prayer. After the Godly affirmation, after the confirmation through His spirit, Jesus went into the wilderness to pray. He prayed there for 40 days – a long time – a time of oneness with God, a time of temptation by Satan – both necessary – both needed in Jesus’ spiritual journey – both needed in our own spiritual formation.

It was through Jesus’ communion, his oneness with God, that Jesus does so powerful reject the temptations of Satan and affirm that He is indeed the Son of Man.

Jesus, soon after emerging from the wilderness, spends a day in Capernaum. There at Peter’s house, Jesus brings healing upon Peter’s mother in law. The crowds soon bring their lame, their sick, and their deaf – and to each of these Jesus heals, restoring to health of body and mind and spirit for each of these. It is in the morning, very early in the morning that Jesus escapes the crowds, the demands, the expectations, and goes off by himself to pray – to be one with God

Jesus, mourning the death of his good friend Lazarus, is taken to his place of burial. He had already been confronted by Martha, Lazarus' sister, but now in His grief, He cries – and then begins to pray aloud

**And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"**

Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, not only goes off by himself to pray, but he asks His closest friends to join him in pray – to pray for Him and for themselves that they will not fall into temptation.

Yes, throughout the life of Jesus, we see Him in prayer – but more importantly for the Gospel story, the disciples see him praying. Lord, teach us to pray – they ask – we ask.

Learning to pray seems so difficult – we sometimes can wonder if we could ever pray by ourselves. Yet remember back to times when you were learning – learning from someone you trusted, someone who loved you enough to allow you to make mistakes without holding you to account. God is like that with us.

I remember when I was 13 and 14 years of age – my Grandfather taught me how to drive – and when I look back I realize just how illegal it was. We were at his cabin on Lake Huron. He would take me down to the beach or on a deserted country road, and we would practice – me sitting on his lap, steering the car and he, with his feet on the breaks or gas, with his hands just over mine to begin with – and I would drive – or I thought I would drive.

Did anyone else learn to drive like that? I know I have never told my children this story for fear that they would want me to do the same – and though I long for the day it could happen they have to suffice with a dad who calls (pesters) from the side seat – but really, I feel as if I should still have them sitting on my lap, whispering encouragements to them, allowing them to drive with the firm knowledge that I can help at a moment's notice.

I like to think that this is the way God is with us – especially with our prayer life. He is there, already knowing what it is we are thinking and wanting – He also knows what we truly need for our wellbeing – not just what we want, but need.

As we sit on His lap, He allows us to steer our own course – but if we listen, we can hear Him whispering into our ears – affirming His love for us and giving us guidance – if we but listen. And like my grandfather, He is there with his hands over ours, allowing us to steer – gently steering, if we don't resist, so that we can learn from our experiences, our failings and our mistakes – just as I did when I learned how to drive.

I like to think that this is what Jesus did when He prayed in Gethsemane – perhaps the hardest prayer of His life. I like to think that God, His Father/our Father, allowed Him to experience fear and anxiety – and in His depressed state, that God could and did allow Him to realize that He was indeed there with His son, guiding Him through the valley of the shadow of death. That is why Jesus was able to say, not my will be done, but yours.

When Jesus told this parable accompanying his teaching on prayer, He wanted us, His hearers, to fully appreciate just how

deep is His love for us and how great His desire that we should come to Him with our problems – for in His love He can help.

I have sometimes felt that listening to this reading from a different perspective can be truly illuminating – allow me to read this passage from the Message – a paraphrase of scripture.

Read from the message – **“Ask for what you need.”**

***“When you pray say;***

***'Father,***

***Reveal who you are.***

***Set the world right.***

***Keep us alive with three square meals***

***Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.***

***Keep us safe from ourselves and the devil.'***

***'Imagine what would happen if you went to a friend in the middle of the night and said, 'Friend, loan me three loaves of bread. An old friend travelling through just showed up and I don't have a thing on hand.'***

***'The friend answers from his bed, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked and the children are all down for the night: I can't get up and get you anything.'***

***'But let me tell you, even though he may not get up because he is a friend, if you stand your ground, knocking and walking around the neighbourhood, he'll finally get up and get whatever you need.'***

***'Here is what I'm saying,'***

**'Ask and you'll get;  
Seek and you'll find,  
Knock and the door will be open.'**

**'Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This is not a cat and mouse, hide and seek game we're in. If your little boy asks for a serving of fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? If your little girl asks for an egg, do you trick her with a spider? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing – you're at least decent to your own children. And don't you think the Father who conceived you in love will give the Holy Spirit when you ask Him?'"**

Prayer is meant to be that personal – that intimate – that special.

When Abraham met with the angel preparing to go to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, he prayed – it was a conversation with his creator.

When Paul wrote his letters, it was with prayer in mind – it was his talking to people he deeply cared about – helping them in their faith journey – and in his words his readers knew of his constant prayer for them.

When Jesus prayed – whether being by himself, in communion with God, or praying over a child who is deathly sick or at the grave of a friend – his prayers were but the reflection of His Father's great and abiding love for us. His words brought new life, opening an avenue to allow the love of God entrance into the life of whom he prayed for.

When you pray, do as Jesus taught – and pray from your heart to a Father who is revealed in our faith.

Pray for that everything that is of concern to us may be put right.

Pray that He may meet our needs as they exist – even when we are too afraid to voice them.

Pray that He will allow us to forgive others and we are forgiven.

And do all of this in the knowledge that our Father, His Father is listening, is responding, and is making His love known to us through the very words we utter in pray.

Amen

Allow your prayers to be guided by our Father. Think of those moments in your life when you learned – like my illustration of driving a car – and