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10th Sunday after Pentecost
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Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita
Luke 11:1-13

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

There's a difference between those who are married with children and those who are single.
When you're single, your schedule's your own.
You eat whenever you want with no concern for naps or bedtime.
You stay up as late as you want, or are in bed before 9—it doesn't matter.

But a husband has concern for his wife, and the wife for her husband—
and both are governed by their kids.

Children are best served by a schedule:
Wake, eat, play, sleep;
wake, eat, play, sleep.
And as any mom knows, when that schedule is interrupted—watch out!

Not all who are single know about this schedule;
and not all parents remember what it's like to order pizza at 2am.

But every once in a while, these two worlds collide.

Our Lord Jesus teaches about prayer in this sort of setting; He says,
*“Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him,
'Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey,
and I have nothing to set before him';
and he will answer from within,
'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed.
I cannot get up and give you anything'?”* (Lk 11:5-7)

That is,
Your old roommate has some friends show up late and find his fridge empty, as usual.
He knows about your SAM'S membership, and well-stocked fridge.
He calls your cell, and you think there's an emergency.
Then he rings the doorbell and wakes up your youngest,
who won't go back to sleep for a half hour at least.

Then our Lord says,
It's not because he's a friend that you get up and help him,
but because you want him out of your house as quickly as possible—
give him whatever he wants!

The point is: if you, who are evil, know how to give what's needed, even through gritted teeth,
how much more does our Lord, who is good, give freely to those who ask?

Prayer isn't about getting the formula straight, or having right intentions, or saying pious things.
Prayer is entering a conversation with the One who started it in the first place.

You don't need to know Roberts Rules to speak up.
 Don't hesitate over whether God really wants me to have this or not.
 You don't need to wait until your anger passes, or your tears dry, or the alcohol wears off.

Jesus begins by saying,
"When you pray, say..." (11:2)

Just speak!
 Say something.
 If you're ticked at God, tell Him!
 If you're depressed about the test results, tell Him!
 If you're sick to your stomach about what you did last night, tell Him!

There's nothing you can tell Him that He doesn't already know.
 There's nothing new, nothing shocking, nothing that He hasn't heard before.
 Tell Him.

And when you pray for someone else, don't hold back.
 Ask God to give everything He has and more.
 Never stop asking.

*"For everyone who asks receives,
 and the one who seeks finds,
 and to the one who knocks it will be opened."* (11:10)

Prayer is simply joining the conversation that God began before the world was formed.
 It's accessing His gifts and His joy.
 It's what naturally flows from our mouths when our lips are opened.

Our problem with prayer isn't that we don't know what to say or how,
 but that we don't believe His promise to answer.

We just can't believe that it's not about us.
 We can't believe that the drunk at 2am gets what he wants.
 Or that the murderer is just as much a part of the conversation as we are.
 And that the Lord rejoices in such a conversation.

When the disciples said,
"Lord, teach us to pray" (11:1),
 they were looking for a way to be more effective in prayer.
 It was all about them.

But Jesus doesn't give them a structure or pattern to follow.
 There's no formula or method to get things out of God.
 It's not about you.

What Jesus does is invites them and us into *His* prayer.
 Only Jesus can call God "*Father*"—
 for He is the only-begotten Son.

Any attempt at prayer on our own merits, as if we had a right to pray, is useless.
 Our asking is always too short, too small, too incomplete, and too unworthy.

And yet, because of Christ—because we are joined to *His* prayer—
 He doesn't deny our prayer!

He doesn't say 'no' because we haven't asked rightly, or big enough, or with pure motives.
 In fact, He doesn't say, "No"—
 not to the rapist, or the drugee, or the girl in line at the abortion clinic.

He doesn't say no to the prayers for iPads or tax breaks.
 He doesn't say no to prayers for world peace or unity in the Church.
 He doesn't say no to the shameless request for pizza in the middle of the night
 He doesn't say, "no."

"Everyone who asks receives."

Our problem isn't that we're asking for the wrong things, or in the wrong way,
 it's that we don't believe or recognize that He gives us everything already.

This isn't *name-it-and-claim-it*, as if you had the power to speak things into existence.
 This is speaking with the God who has everything to give and more.

Prayer is what Jesus does.
 It's His conversation with the Father.
 And we're called into it because we've been called into Christ by our Baptism.

In Baptism He gives His kingdom.
 He speaks His Word and sends His Holy Spirit.
 He forgives our sins.

We're not any more worthy to enter this conversation than anyone else.
 We don't deserve to get what we ask, and have no right to speak,
 and yet he hears our prayer anyhow, all because our sins are forgiven.
 So we too will forgive and do good to those who sin against us.

Our Lord's prayer is a request for His kingdom, His bread, and His forgiveness.
 And it's all answered here today.

Where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are given out,
 the kingdom of God truly comes among us.
 Here there's bread that feeds both our bodies and our souls and forgives our sin.

And from this altar we're given the strength to forgive others as well.

Our Lord answers prayer.

He gives whatever you ask, or better.

He doesn't hold back or turn you away.

He hears and answers and forgives,

even when it doesn't seem like it at all,

because He gives Himself to you.

The point of prayer is to receive from God.

Faith gets this.

It recognizes that everything I have is in Christ,

and in Christ I have everything.

When you pray, say "*Our Father...*"—

trusting that all is yours by grace, because all is done for you.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit