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Grace Episcopal Church

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The Gospel + Luke 11:1-13

Jesus 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." He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."

And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' 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.

"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to 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. 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 they give a scorpion? 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!"

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O Lord, give us courage to Ask, resilience to Search, and persistence

to Knock—that we would find our hope in You. *Amen*. Good morning, Grace.

It has been my great honor to be a seminarian with you this summer—and to learn from you, and your amazing staff, and clergy—as you've gone about doing all the wonderful things you do in this place! I am so grateful to have journeyed with you for a while...

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To prepare to preach this Sunday, I read ALL the readings appointed for this day—and I have to say, I was relieved to get to the Gospel.

The Lord's Prayer—Thank you, Jesus.

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For many of us, the Lord's Prayer is the first prayer we learned.

We are connected with Christians all over the world, and with the early church, as we pray this prayer...

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And in just a little while, we'll pray this together after remembering what our loving God did for us in His earthly life and death...

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There are two versions of the Lord's prayer found in Scripture. The shorter version is in Luke—our Gospel reading today—and the longer in Matthew.

The two versions share the same context but are addressed to different ethnic groups.

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus taught His disciples to pray in secret and to **stop** with empty phrases and

public displays of piety.

The evangelist Luke wrote **his** gospel to the Gentile Christians who had not learned to pray like their fellow Jewish brothers.

And so, the Lord's Prayer we read today, is a narrowing down of the many prayers that had been prayed as part of the Jewish faith Jesus and his disciples had long practiced.

And its message is not too complicated, is it?

God, you are the Holy One,

May this world be as You desire it to be...

Give us all we need...

Forgive us...

*Help us see the truth about ourselves and one another... And... Save us from **ourselves** and all danger.*

In other words, God, we NEED you. PLEASE help us...

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Since beginning seminary in August of 2020, I have often been asked about my prayer life.

The early months of the pandemic were especially disorienting—sometimes all I could manage to pray was, God, we NEED you. PLEASE help us...

Our nation was only **fumbling** toward an understanding of the Coronavirus—and we had become even more divided.

We could not even agree if we should **try** to **protect** one another—whether with masks and social

distancing – or from violence.

And even still, there is senseless loss of life in our communities— with help too slow or not at all—while as a nation, we're caught between outrage—and paralyzing **fear of change**.

We have denied the humanity of those we fear and disagree with. +++

God, WE need you. PLEASE help us...

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Our Father, our Creator, sees and knows all of this—God knows our nature—and God responds to our cries for help...

Much of Scripture is this—the telling of how our human nature pulls us into cycles of sin and trial—followed by God's saving and redeeming acts of love.

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So, how is your prayer life? Maybe you struggle sometimes as I have.

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Jesus taught us to pray as he made His way to the cross—His ultimate redeeming act of love.

His life is an example for us—a different way to be in this hurting world—a way to abundant life and peace—through **love**.

This prayer, the Lord's prayer, is to be our effective, and intimate prayer with God.

But we're also told a parable in our gospel—a parable to teach us that we will be rewarded by our resilience and persistence in seeking God in prayer.

His words give us hope and encourage us into action.

“**Ask**, and it will be given you; **search**, and you will find; **knock**, and the door will be opened for you”

God loves us, knows us, and provides what we need.

It won't always be on our timeline—not always what we hope for, or expect,

but we can know **this** as we pray—

that God is the Holy One.

God longs for our lives to be interconnected in love and peace.

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And It is God's love, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who sustains us now...

And so... Let us pray...

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O Lord, give us courage to ASK, resilience to SEARCH, and persistence to KNOCK—that we would find our **hope** in You. Amen.