

March 8, 2020

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 9:30 a.m. Catechism Reading Service, 6:30 p.m. Reading Service. Classes after the morning service.

This Week Friday, March 13, Prayer Day Service at 7:00 p.m. with Rev. Vergunst

Next Week: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. services with Rev. Vergunst

Advance Notices:

March 18, Midweek Service 7:00 p.m. Rev. Hofman

March 22, 2:30 p.m. Rev. Witvoet

March 20 Singalong is rescheduled for April 24

-All the Lord Willing-

Offerings Today: 1st General Fund Next week: 1st General Fund
 2nd Living Bread 2nd School Fund

We Remember in Prayer:

-Those who have been unable to gather with us for some time, our widows and widowers, our elderly, the unborn, prodigal sons and daughters, those who are under doctor's care, and all those who have hidden crosses.

MEDITATION

Praying for a Prayer

"... Lord, teach us to pray..." Luke 11:1

"Pray without ceasing." The Savior not only preached it, but He also practiced it. Mark writes: *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."* (Mark 1:35). He did not take one step without prayer and often climbed a mountain to pray. Before Jesus chose His disciples, He spent the entire night in prayer to His Father. In Scripture, at least fourteen times the evangelists speak of Jesus' prayer life. No one will ever be able to pray as Jesus did because His prayers did not need a confession of guilt and were not defiled with sin. His prayers were as sweet incense in the heavenly Holy of Holies. As Mediator, He sought strength from His Heavenly Sender because His work was so great and heavy. Strength was promised, and He prayed for it. As His Father's Servant, He bowed before God's throne as He fulfilled His Father's

will and obtained salvation for His children. Praying as their Surety, Christ always carries "His children" along with Him as He approaches God's throne.

Christ gave an example of prayer to His Church when He prayed with His disciples. His prayer made such an impression on them that they were ashamed of their prayers, even though they were not "form" prayers. By grace, extemporaneous prayer becomes indispensable for every truly converted person. The disciples also experienced this heartfelt need and desire. In the beginning of spiritual life, their prayers are more zeal than light. In time, by grace, they learn to confess their sins and beg for grace.

When the disciples heard Jesus pray, they didn't dare call their own prayers "prayer" any longer. They were just empty words and poor excuses for prayers. Jesus purposely wanted to show His disciples their "prayer poverty" so they would depend more on Him. Reader, do you realize your "prayer poverty" and does it make you ashamed? When someone prays with a stream of flowery words, we can incorrectly think they have a gift of prayer. Do you think this pleases the Lord? The Lord despises this and so do His children. A broken heart and a contrite spirit is the sacrifice that pleases Him, not hypocritical words from a proud heart. However, the gift of true prayer should not be ignored.

Has it ever distressed us that we often lack the desire to pray and when we do pray, we lack true prayer in our hearts and miss the substance of what we pray. This is the lesson we are taught here. People of God, do you sometimes pray in Jesus Name without needing His work? When the Spirit reveals this to you, your heart desires a prayer for a prayer. Even your prayers will not make you righteous before God. This brings more dependence on the Spirit of grace and supplications as in the short prayer in our text.

In childlike simplicity, one of the disciples asked: *"...Lord, teach us to pray..."* Which disciple asked this is not important, but two things are important. First is the way in which he addressed Jesus. The disciple realized to Whom he was speaking because he, with deep reverence, used the name "Lord", a name of authority. Jesus could say: *"I and My Father are one."* (John 10:30). This disciple deeply felt the distance between the Creator and the creature. Not everyone feels the same. Some think it necessary to point out in their prayers their so-called close communion with the Lord. Such a prayer lacks humility and reverence which is the basis for all true prayer, as the Bible teaches. Abraham, the father of all the faithful, was called a friend of God, yet in his prayers to save Sodom, he said: *"...I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am*

but dust and ashes..." (Genesis 18:27). Also, Moses' prayers were reverent, even though he could speak to God as a friend to a friend. In our text, this disciple saw the greatness of the Lord and his own worthlessness which made him humble.

Secondly, we note that the disciple included the other disciples in his prayer: "...us..." because there is a bond between God's children. When the Lord teaches His people to pray, He teaches them to include the entire Church in their prayers. "*Lord, teach us...*" does not mean, "Lord, I need to be taught, but the others need it more". God's people sometimes pray like this, putting themselves above others of God's children. Not so with this disciple. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he realized that true prayer is given by God Himself and thus he requested "prayer lessons" for his fellow disciples as well, although he felt he needed it most.

Reader, I wish you such a Prayer Day. Such a prayer the Lord will surely answer!
~ Rev. R. Boogaard

Notes

Netherlands Reformed Congregation

Sioux Falls, SD



Lord, teach us to pray...
Luke 11:1

Consistory

Mr. Craig Timmer, President Mr. Norm DeWit, Treasurer

Contacts

Bulletin announcements: Mr. Craig Timmer craigtimmer@ymail.com or (231) 942-1389
Sermon recordings: Mr. Ryan Rozeboom

Church Times: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.