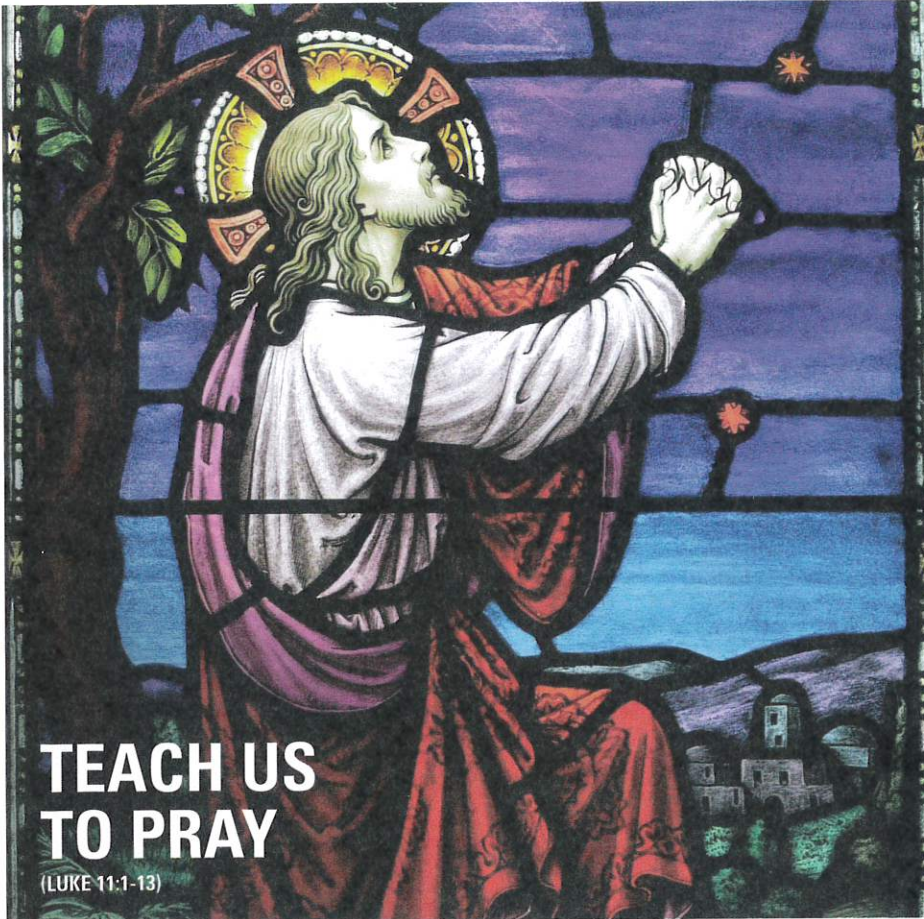


Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year C • Psalter Week 1



TEACH US TO PRAY

(LUKE 11:1-13)

One feature of the writings of Luke is his emphasis on prayer. From his first appearance as an adult, at his baptism, Jesus is shown as praying at significant points in his ministry, as well as regularly, as in our Gospel reading today.

The disciples have noticed him spending time communicating with God and ask him to instruct them how to do this themselves. They are not asking Jesus simply as an individual teacher, but one with the authority of a prophet, someone in the line of John the Baptist. Jesus the prophet is another theme running through Luke's version of the Good News.

Luke's presentation of the Lord's Prayer is shorter, less detailed than Matthew's (the one we normally use). It consists of five requests: the first two refer to God and the coming of God's kingdom; God's name being held holy and the establishing of God's kingdom are, in some ways, the same thing.

The other three petitions concern the reader and reflect important themes of Luke's Gospel. These are, firstly, asking for our daily needs to be met: the second request is that God forgives us our sins, but we might note that God's forgiveness depends on our willingness to forgive those who have offended us in some way or other; the third and final appeal asks that we may not be put to the severest test, which means standing up for what we believe in in the face of persecution, because we might well not pass the test.

The second part of our Gospel extract today emphasises the importance of keeping on praying and not giving up, even if we seem to be receiving no answer. ■

SAY

Father, may your name be held holy: your kingdom come.

(Luke 11:2)

REFLECT

Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer is shorter than the words we usually use, for example, in the Communion Rite at Mass. We might consider some of the lines which we hear today – to think about the prayer in modern speech may give us a different understanding of what we say automatically when we start off "Our Father, who art in heaven". Sometimes, archaic language, sometimes described as "traditional" or "sacred/sacral" can obscure the real meaning of the text.

In Luke's version, we ask God to "forgive us our sins, for we forgive each one who is in debt to us". Does this make more sense than talking about "trespasses"? It emphasises that the forgiveness we hope for from God depends on our willingness to forgive other people who have offended us. There is no cheap grace in the Christian life.

"Do not put us to the test" is perhaps a better translation than "Lead us not into temptation": we will see that testing is to find out what Jesus is all about, as at his baptism and then the testing scene at the beginning of the Gospel narrative – this theme returns at Gethsemane.

The Lord's Prayer has greater significance – and consequences – than perhaps we realise, and which may fade as a result of constant repetition. ■

LEARN

Jesus spent special time in prayer, in communication with God, throughout his life and ministry.

There are two versions of the Lord's Prayer in the Gospel tradition: that of Matthew and that of Luke.

God's forgiving us of our sins is in direct proportion to our forgiving other people.

"Temptation" in the Lord's Prayer is better understood as "test": the test is to be faithful to our beliefs, just as Jesus was, and which led him to the cross.

DO

Learn Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer from today's Gospel: use it for a few days and see how it influences your understanding of the teaching of Jesus.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

God is in his holy place,
God who unites those who dwell in his house;
he himself gives might and strength to his
people.

GLORIA

Glorify to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation,
nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure... Amen.

FIRST READING

Genesis 18:20-32

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord said, "How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! How grievous is their sin! I propose to go down and see whether or not they have done all that is alleged in the outcry against them that has come up to me. I am determined to know."

The men left there and went to Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Approaching him he said, "Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. Will you really overwhelm them, will you not spare the place for the fifty just men in it? Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think of it! Will the judge of the whole earth not administer justice?" The Lord replied, "If at Sodom I find fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them."

Abraham replied, "I am bold indeed to speak like this to my Lord, I who am dust and ashes. But perhaps the fifty just men lack five: will you destroy the whole city for five?" "No," he replied, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five just men there." Again Abraham said to him, "Perhaps there will only be forty there." "I will not do it" he replied "for the sake of the forty."

Abraham said, "I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak: perhaps there will only be thirty there." "I will not do it" he replied "if I find thirty there." He said, "I am bold indeed to speak like this, but perhaps there will only be twenty there." "I will not destroy it" he replied "for the sake of the twenty." He said, "I trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: perhaps there will only be ten." "I will not destroy it" he replied "for the sake of the ten."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 137

Response:

On the day I called,
you answered me, O Lord.

- I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
Before the angels I will bless you.
I will adore before your holy temple. (R.)
- I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. (R.)
- The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly
and the haughty he knows from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of affliction
you give me life and frustrate my foes. (R.)
- You stretch out your hand and save me,
your hand will do all things for me.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. (R.)

SECOND READING Colossians 2:12-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Colossians.

You have been buried with Christ, when you
were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have
been raised up with him through your belief in
the power of God who raised him from the dead.
You were dead, because you were sinners and
had not been circumcised: he has brought you to
life with him, he has forgiven us all our sins.
He has overridden the Law, and cancelled
every record of the debt that we had to pay; he
has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
The Word was made flesh and lived among us;
to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 11:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and
when he had finished, one of his disciples said,
"Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his
disciples." He said to them, "Say this when
you pray:

'Father, may your name be held holy,
your kingdom come;
give us each day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive each one who is in
debt to us.
And do not put us to the test.'

He also said to them, "Suppose one of you
has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the
night to say, 'My friend, lend me three loaves
because a friend of mine on his travels has just
arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer
him'; and the man answers from inside the
house, 'Do not bother me. The door is bolted
now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot
get up to give it to you,' I tell you, if the man
does not get up and give it to him for friendship's
sake, persistence will be enough to make him get
up and give his friend all he wants.

"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 to you. For the one who
asks always receives; the one who searches
always finds; the one who knocks will always
have the door opened to him. What father
among you would hand his son a stone when
he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake
instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if
he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil,
know how to give your children what is good,
how much more will the heavenly Father give
the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings
which we bring from the abundance of your
gifts,
that through the powerful working of your
grace
these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our
present way of life
and lead us to eternal gladness.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine
Sacrament,
the perpetual memorial of the Passion of
your Son;
grant, we pray, that this gift,
which he himself gave us with love beyond
all telling,
may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.