10-19-2025 Sermon

I am sure that most (if not all) of you pray. Can you give me some examples of certain circumstances that almost always prompt you to pray?

I must admit that most of my prayers are for my children. Especially if they are out and about in bad weather. Snow storms are the worst! Especially when they come home safely, yet tell me that they almost got hit headon because the oncoming vehicle couldn’t tell where their side of the road was! It’s times like that when I am very glad I prayed for them.

In Luke 5:16, we are told that “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Some people are confused by this as they question why Jesus would pray to God the Father if Jesus was also God. But, let’s not forget that Jesus was fully God AND fully man. Who knows, maybe Jesus went off to pray and said, “Father, I know you said this wouldn’t be easy, but I thought you meant the ‘sacrificial stuff’, not the day to day stuff. Do you realize how stubborn these people are? Do you realize how difficult it is to get them to see things from OUR point of view?”

It had to be very challenging for Jesus to know all of the mysteries of heaven and earth, yet not be able to reveal it all to his followers because they just couldn’t wrap their brains around it all like Jesus could. So, Jesus would go off to pray and talk to the Father and receive strength and reassurance that all of his efforts were not in vain, showing us that we need “me time” but we also need “me and God time”.

In our Gospel reading today, Jesus assures us (and, of course, his disciples) of the importance of prayer in our daily lives. He provided the example of a widow who went before a judge who didn’t care about her, her problems (or anyone else’s problems for that matter). The judge refused to provide the woman with justice for a while, but he could see that she was very persistent (and also probably getting quite agitated by his continued refusals to help her), so with only self-preservation in mind, he granted her justice against her adversary.

So, let me ask you this: If I say to you, “God is good” what might your response be? “All the time!” right? And if God is good all the time, then God is nothing like the judge in our story. God cares about us. In fact, God LOVES us. So how much more will God grant us justice than the self-centered judge in Jesus’ parable?

However, there is a thing we refer to as God’s timing. Naturally, we want our prayers answered immediately, but God is not a vending machine. We can’t just put in a prayer and receive what we ask for right away. Sometimes, we need to be persistent with our prayers like the widow in our lesson today, asking over and over again for what we perceive to be justice.

Be assured, God’s justice comes in its time. We might not even live long enough to witness it, but it will come. How do I know this? Faith. I believe with all my heart that our God is a just God, and His justice will prevail no matter what.

****Don’t stop praying. As I said in the Children’s Message, I have seen these yard signs all over the place and I am glad to see them. They’re a good reminder that no matter what we are going through, God is still with us. God still wants to hear from us.

King David, the author of Psalm 121 which we heard earlier, was SURE of God’s presence in our lives. He said, “*where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth! The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*” Thank you for that reminder, David!

Be assured that God is listening to our prayers and God loves us even when our specific requests aren’t answered the way we want them to be. That can be the greatest example of God’s love for us as we need to remember that God sees all things. God knows what hardships can be endured and what hardships require His mercy.

I know that is hard to hear when we are mourning the loss of a loved one, but if I could use my mother as an example, Mom told us that she didn’t want to be hanging on, with nothing but hospital and nursing home care the rest of her days, so God taking her as swiftly and gracefully as He did was a blessing of mercy for her. It was (and is) a horrible loss for those of us who mourn her presence in our daily lives, but I think we all realize that she is in a far better place now, free from pain and soaring like an eagle.

I’m sure we’ve all lost loved ones and asked why God didn’t save them, but as I pointed out earlier, we just can’t wrap our heads around all of the mysteries of heaven and earth. That’s why we cling to our faith that God, in all of His wisdom, knows what is best and grants mercy and comfort in times of strife.

Don’t stop praying is good advice for all of us. Our prayers are a sign to God that He is our priority and we trust in His benevolent blessings. Prayers can be long and drawn out or, at times when we are in such despair, they can be a humble breath of release… And God listens to them all with his heart of compassion. Thanks be to God. Amen.