

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, July 24th, Pentecost VII
Hosea 1:2-10, Psalm 85, Colossians 2:6-19, Luke 11:1-13

Is prayer valuable? In some sense it feels like a waste of time. Not productive time and feels like its very passive. Someone who is a lot holier than I have said when asked, is it a waste of time to spend it praying at the beginning of the day, or would your time be better spent doing other things? The answer is, it seems when I spend the hour in prayer at the beginning of the day my day goes a lot smoother, and I seem to get a lot more done.

When I mentioned the Keith Green song and the chorus, do your best, pray that it's blessed, and let God take care of the rest. It's not only God blessing our initiatives because it's God's success not ours but God guiding us in the direction of our focus and action and energy. In other words, God in prayer can direct our focus and give us insight on how to spend our day and how to solve the problems we may face and help us through the issues we may face during the day. And help us to feel like we are not alone dealing with problems and issues.

Joseph Donders suggests, something new and different about looking at the Lord's prayer. A new insight. We tend to think of the Lord's prayer as a prayer for us as individuals. We pray the Lord's prayer in worship services when we are together, but we tend to think of the prayer as for individuals. And it is prayed when people are alone.

But the Lord's prayer begins with our father and not my father. This means we are praying to the father, the creator of all, and not just ourselves and people like us.

And when we are praying for thy Kingdom, it is different from the Kingdom of power and violence. But a Kingdom of justice and care for all.

Give us this day Our Daily Bread, again is not about me and people like me but for all of us that we all get Our Daily Bread. So, it's not just for some but for all.

The idea of forgiveness as well as we forgive all and ourselves.

The Lord's prayer then does not take sides. It's a call to relationship with all. It's also a call to action. It's a call for us to care for all for whom God is father and creator. It's a challenge for us do not only pray about but find ways to strive to bring about justice

for those without justice and those facing violence. For us to be a part of bringing about peace, true peace for all.

And for us to do our part in helping to provide daily bread for all not just those in our inner circle.

So, to truly take the Lord's prayer seriously is to combine prayer with action and to ask ourselves where can we help bring about God's Kingdom and peace, and who today needs bread which we can help to provide? And who do we need to forgive?

I'm always challenged by Jesus' comments at the end of the passage when he says when fathers are asked by their sons for fish not give a snake instead an egg and not give a scorpion.

Yes, God provides for what we need, but I'm often reminded of what the Reverend Glenn Empey once said to me. He said there is a difference between what we want and what we need, and we sometimes confuse the two. We think what we want is what we absolutely need. Sometimes, maybe more often than not, we get the two confused. I cannot help thinking of this when I read this passage. It is so easy and comfortable when we ask for and get a fish or an egg. But maybe there are times when we need to deal with snakes and scorpions in our lives.

For us to truly follow Jesus may mean stepping out of our comfort zone, and truly put into practice our prayers and the Lord's prayer.

Amen

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing ...