

The Great Privilege of Prayer

Encouragement and Power!

17th Sunday after Pentecost / 16th Sunday after Trinity – 2012

Sunday, Sept. 23 → 8:00 & 10:45 ♦ Monday, Sept. 24 → 7:00

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, in my last sermon we looked at a Trinitarian prayer diagram: With ★God the Father at the top, ★Christians at the bottom, ★Jesus – *the One Mediator* – in between, and ★the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Today, we continue with the topic of prayer as God – *through His Word* – → encourages us to pray AND → shows us the power of prayer!

1. **Encouragement to Pray:**

- a. **The Lord's Prayer Introduction:** Our Father who art in heaven. *What does this mean?* With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that **He is our true Father** and that **we are His true children**, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.¹ // *Wow, could that really be true that GOD is our Father?* To us it may seem impossible, *incomprehensible*, yet God's Word of Truth proclaims: ^{ESV} **1 John 3:1** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
- b. ^{NAS} **Psalm 34:15** The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry.

¹ Martin Luther's Small Catechism Explanation.

¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth.

¹⁷ The righteous cry and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. //

Remember, because God has united us to Christ alone as our Savior, *we are **righteous** in God's sight*; therefore, ♦the eyes of the LORD are watching us, ♦His ears are open to hear us, and ♦He will deliver us *from every trouble!*

- c. ^{ESV} Luke 18:1 And Jesus told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart [*become weary, become tired, despair*]. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man [*that sounds like the 21st century*]. ³ And there was a widow [*"She was vulnerable because she had no companion to advocate (plead in favor of, offer support) for her (Acts 6:1)." (LSB, 1753)] in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect [*the ones He has chosen to be His very children (Ephesians 1:3-6)]*, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. // God loves us and will help us!*

- d. **P U S H** – Pray **U**ntil **S**omething **H**appens

2. **Power of Prayer:** Some examples:

- a. ^{ESV} **Genesis 25:20** ...Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah...to be his wife. ²¹ And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. // God *hears* and *answers* the righteous!
- b. ^{ESV} **2 Kings 6:15** When the servant of the man of God [*Elisha*] rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” ¹⁶ He said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” ¹⁷ Then Elisha prayed and said, “O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. // “No matter how invincible the forces of evil may appear, they never are a match for the heavenly hosts at God’s command.” (LSB, 589)
- c. ^{ESV} **Acts 4:18** So they [*the Jewish leaders*] called them [*Peter and John*] and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.... ²³ When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they [*the disciples*] lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them... ²⁷ ...truly in this city there

were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. // May we also pray, be strengthened, and share God’s Word with others!

- d. ^{NIV} James 5:16 ...The prayer of a righteous man [a person who believes in Jesus as Savior] is **powerful and effective.** ¹⁷ Elijah was a man just like us. **He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain** on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ **Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.** //

Conclusion: Now, ♦knowing that we are God’s forgiven children in Christ, ♦having been encouraged by the prayers of others, and ♦having been made aware of the power of prayer, *let us be at peace and let us pray!* And all God’s people said: **Amen!**