

**Devotion:** Monday, March 30, 2020

Luke 11:1-13

11 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' <sup>2</sup> He said to them, 'When you pray, say:  
Father, \* hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.\*  
<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.\*  
<sup>4</sup> And forgive us our sins,  
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial.\*'

5 And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; <sup>6</sup>for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." <sup>7</sup>And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." <sup>8</sup>I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

9 '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 for you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. <sup>11</sup>Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for \* a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup>Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? <sup>13</sup>If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit\* to those who ask him!'

From NBC News

*We are in dire need of prayers and medical equipment!---*ER Nurse Bellevue Hospital, NYC

I like her priorities.

Whenever there's a tragedy in the world — a mass shooting or bombing, — we invariably hear that our friends and colleagues are sending their "thoughts and prayers." Politicians like to send a lot of "thoughts and prayers" these days, have you noticed? But here's my question: Does anyone know what in the world that means? I haven't figured it out. Can I actually send my thoughts to you like Mr. Spock on Star Trek?

Is that what that nurse wanted?

But, that's not how Jesus wanted us to pray. Jesus never sent "thoughts and prayers" either, though I might have missed a situation in the gospels where he did just that.

As a pastor I find myself on a lot of prayer chains. People are always asking me to pray — for that upcoming surgery, for the biopsy report, for the job interview, for a parking space. And most

of the time, I pray. I don't send anyone "thought and prayers," but I do let God know what I'm thinking and feeling.

And I'm praying for my personal family and my congregational family as well. Sending my "thoughts and prayers" to God for all of you.

I don't have a problem with those prayers, and I offer my share of them. I ask God for stuff all the time. But I think there's a different, higher purpose for our prayers. I think that when we pray we are getting closer to the person of Christ. Through prayer, everyone has an open invitation to have a conversation with God. It's an invitation to open your heart to the Lord and to say what is on your mind! How can anyone ignore that invitation, especially now.

I didn't say that, that nurse on NBC said that.

One of the challenges hospitals face in teaching their employees proper handwashing is to get them to spend enough time — 30seconds at least — scrubbing their hands vigorously with soap and warm water. A number of Roman Catholic hospitals have looked deep within their tradition to find a standard. Their advice: scrub your hands for as long as it takes to say the Lord's Prayer, slowly and deliberately.

It works — on many levels.

The Lord's Prayer is a good place to start, a way to reach out toward God when we're too numb, too much in pain, too blind, too angry, even too tired to do much else.

Praying something is better than praying nothing.

And the Lord's Prayer is really something.

Let us pray sometime today for our medical workers:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;*

*Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done*

*On earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread,*

*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,*

*But deliver us from evil,*

*For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory. Amen.*