

Sunday, July 24, 2022

## Scripture Reading: Luke 11:1-13

*To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing. —Martin Luther*

In the gospel reading above, Jesus tells a story in which a man who is awakened at night is compared to God, and in which persistence is contrasted with patience. Let's take a closer look.

The story concerns a fellow — let's call him John — who late one night unexpectedly receives some guests from out of town. But, alas, he doesn't have any food to feed these friends, and they are starving. But then, John has a brilliant idea: "I'll just go to my neighbor and my good friend Ephraim and he'll give me a loaf of bread or something I can use to feed my guests."

So John goes to Ephraim's house across the street. (The fact that Jesus calls Ephraim a *friend* of John is important.) John pounds on Ephraim's door, eventually getting him to the upstairs window. When Ephraim learns what is going on, he shouts at his friend John, "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" (v. 7).

Most people would have given up, disappointed. Some kind of friend he is! Won't even trouble himself to get some food for his good friend!

But Jesus adds a twist to the story: "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" (v. 8, emphasis added). Because John keeps pounding on the door, Ephraim, desperate to get rid of him, finally consents to give him some food for his guests.

Then Jesus adds another twist: "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. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened" (vv. 9-10).

Do you spot the contrast between God and Ephraim? Between persistence and patience? Jesus says that *we do not need to keep pounding* on God's door when we come to God in our hour of need. God is not hard of hearing. We don't need John's persistence; we only need patience. One knock will suffice. All we need is to ask, search or knock. Then wait. Patiently.

God will supply our need. We will find what we are looking for, and the door will be opened.

When we realize "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," as the well-known hymn reminds us, we won't hesitate to bring our concerns to him.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to remember "what peace we often forfeit, ... what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!" In your name. Amen.*

—from the hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," by Joseph Scriven (1819-1896).

*Blessings,  
Pastor Ben Miller*

## Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Acts 10-12  
**Monday:** Micah 5-7  
**Tuesday:** Nahum 1-3  
**Wednesday:** 2 Kings 20-21  
**Thursday:** Zephaniah 1-3  
**Friday:** Habakkuk 1-3  
**Saturday:** Psalms 79-81

## Verse to Remember

*Look at the proud!  
 Their spirit is not right in them,  
 but the righteous live by their faith.*

—Habakkuk 2:4

## WAR and HATE

The words *hate* and *war* have been removed from the following list of words. The letters of each word, when inserted in the same order, *but not always consecutively*, will give you a new word. Study the examples provided and then write the word in the space provided.

- |          |               |              |       |
|----------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| 1. sm    | <u>swarm</u>  | 11. anniil   | _____ |
| 2. sn    | <u>hasten</u> | 12. ind      | _____ |
| 3. eer   | _____         | 13. aspyxi   | _____ |
| 4. cpr   | _____         | 14. reabilit | _____ |
| 5. homed | _____         | 15. wver     | _____ |
| 6. posph | _____         | 16. cs       | _____ |
| 7. cod   | _____         | 17. ern      | _____ |
| 8. encnd | _____         | 18. exusd    | _____ |
| 9. den   | _____         | 19. se       | _____ |
| 10. rior | _____         | 20. sete     | _____ |

### ANSWERS:

3. wearer,
4. chapter,
5. homeward,
6. phosphate,
7. coward,
8. enchanted,
9. warden,
10. warrior,
11. annihilate,
12. inward,
13. asphyxiate,
14. rehabilitate,
15. whatever,
16. chaste,
17. hearten,
18. exhausted,
19. swear,
20. sweater.

**BIBLE BOOKS:** The answer to each clue is a book of the Bible. (You might find this easier if you have a table of contents for the Bible in front of you.)

1. The play "Romeo and Juliet" has five of these.
2. Professions of Judith Scheidlin, Neil Gorsuch and Joe Brown
3. Residents of Italy's capital
4. Before the Euro, Germans had the Duesche ...
5. He had a "cool hand."
6. His 714 home run record was broken by Hank Aaron.
7. The most famous bullfrog ever.

### Answers to Bible Books:

1. Acts
2. Judges
3. Romans
4. Mark
5. Luke
6. Ruth
7. Jeremiah