**Our Father: The Way of Prayer**

**The Word**

Read together Luke 11:1-13

**The Big Idea**

Jesus invites us into his life of prayer in which we trust implicitly in our Father’s love for us and his delight in providing what we need.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. On Sunday, we discussed a lot of the images of God that make prayer a challenging experience for us. For example: God is annoyed with us, or God is disappointed in us, or God is disinterested in us, or God plays mean tricks on us, or God has to love us but he doesn’t particularly like us, etc. Do you relate with any of those? When you sit down to pray, what do you imagine is God’s posture and heart towards you and why?

2. Jesus has a lot to say about prayer in Sunday’s passage. As you consider the different sections of the passage, which part stuck out to you most and why?

3. Can you share a time in your life when you experienced a rich and meaningful prayer life? If so, what was that season like, and why do you think prayer was so significant at that time?

4. At the end of Sunday’s message, we prayed through the Lord’s prayer together from v. 2-4. What was that experience like for you? And was there any particular part of the prayer that stood out to you for some reason?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Jesus’ own practice of prayer leads to his teaching on prayer

A. The disciples see something compelling and attractive about Jesus’ prayer life, and they want to experience what he experiences (v. 1)

B. Our own experience of prayer may fall far short of Jesus’ for several reasons:

1. We don’t daily recognize our fundamental need for God

a. “If you are not praying, then you are quietly confident that time, money, and talent are all you need in life. But if, like Jesus, you realize you can’t do life on your own, then prayer makes complete sense.”

–Paul Miller

b. This is particularly common in Orange County with so many human resources available to us

2. We don’t get excited about the idea of talking with God

 a. We don’t imagine God excited to talk with us

1) Consider a dinner party in which you got an obligatory invite and then everyone else canceled

2) We think God puts up with us, is disappointed in us, not interested in us, etc.

3) “God has been looking forward to this time together with you.” We don’t believe that.

 b. We don’t imagine God to be a person we’d be excited to be with

 He is stern, cold, distant, etc.

3. Jesus’ teaching on prayer is not a technique or strategy but rather an invitation to a different kind of relationship with God

II. Jesus’ teaching on prayer

 A. Father (v. 2)

 1. This word sums up Jesus’ teaching on prayer

 2. Addressing the Creator of the universe as “Abba”

3. For those of us with broken relationships with our earthly fathers, we will have to unlearn certain things and trust that Jesus’ picture of God as Father is the true one.

 B. How Much More!

 1. The friend at midnight (v. 5-8)

a. Given the obligation towards hospitality in a shame and honor culture, even though the guy inside the house isn’t a good guy, the pressure of the moment will force him to get up and help with bread out of obligation, pressure, and feeling put out by you.

b. How much more will God respond to his children. As a loving father, he is not annoyed or feeling put out by the requests of his children

c. Yet some of us feel like God is annoyed or put out by our requests.

2. Earthly fathers (v. 11-13)

a. Even earthly fathers, in all their “evil” and brokenness, desire to give good things to their kids (the kids are simply asking for a good thing such as food)

b. No earthly father would play such a mean trick as to substitute food with a snake or scorpion. How much more would God never play such a mean trick.

c. Yet some of us feel like God does play mean tricks on us. We feel like we’ve opened up our hearts and asked for good things, and he’s provided harmful things instead. So we are being invited by Jesus to trust that, even in painful circumstances, there isn’t a God beneath the surface playing mean tricks, but rather a God who loves us, grieves with us, and walks with us through life’s challenges.

 C. In light of that, we are invited to ask away (v. 9-10)

1. The Psalms are wonderful examples of people who kept asking, seeking, knocking, shouting, pressing in to God with passion

2. What do we do with unanswered prayers?

a. Sometimes God’s answer will be no, or not yet, or not in the way you think (even Jesus received a “no” from God in Gethsemane)

b. Yet God always provides the Holy Spirit (= more of Himself) to those who keep pressing in (v. 13), and he is the greatest gift of all

III. Praying the Lord’s prayer

A. The Lord’s prayer is not so much a formula but rather a foundation and structure on which to hang all of our prayers

B. The first 3 foundations focus on God and the second 3 focus on our needs.