



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

August 14, 2022

Pastor Randy Ott

10th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Genesis 18:20-32](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 6

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [James 5:13-18](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 11:1-13](#)

The Believer Follows Christ... Followers of Christ Pray Boldly

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father, through our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen.

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

I know it's a while ago but when you think back, how did your Tuesday go? Last Tuesday, how did things work out for you? My Tuesday didn't go so well. I decided I was going to get to my shut-ins in the morning so I'd have time in the afternoon to rest and work on some other things I wanted to get done. So I go down into the garage, get in the car, turn the key... nothing. No sound. Not a thing. I pulled the key out and put it back in and tried again. Same thing happened. I looked around to see if I had left something on, but it wasn't making the clicking noises like the battery was dead, so I couldn't figure it out. Finally I called Jeff. About 15 minutes or half hour later, he got there and looked at it and worked on it. Finally the guy that was with him said, "Hey, maybe put it in 'Park.'" He put it in "Park" and it started like a jet.

So what does that have to do with anything about prayer? It should teach you this... I don't care how boldly, how persistently and how confidently you come to me for advice on cars; it's not going to do you any good. All I'm going to do is say "Hey, put it in 'Park.' Try that." I know nothing about cars. So you aren't going to come to me for advice. You aren't going to come to me for help on cars.

If you want help, you go to those that you know can give it, right? So think about every time that you and I as Christians pray, what we really are saying about our God. We are

saying He has the ability, the power to help us and to answer this prayer. We're saying that He loves us and He desires to give us what is best for us when we go to Him in prayer.

When you think about how God invites us to pray, it's amazing. He tells us in what we read today that ***The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*** I find that amazing, that God tells us He is going to listen to and fully consider the things we offer up to Him. The prayer, the praise, the confession, the thanksgiving, the requests, the things that we bring to Him in our prayer life, He is going to consider them even though He is infinitely wiser than we are. He sees a much bigger picture than you and I see. He knows absolutely what is best, yet He still invites us to come to Him in prayer. I find that absolutely fascinating.

So today we see how we, as followers of Christ, can pray boldly, like we saw Abraham. We heard that in the First Lesson today. That's an incredibly bold prayer. You parents that are here, if your kid keeps coming to you and doing that, are you going to listen all the way from 50 down to 10? Or are you going to tell them to go away a lot earlier? I know I would have. Yet this is what our God invites us to do—to be bold and persistent.

James talks to us about this. These are some of the last verses of his letter. There are actually only two verses after this that say if you lead anyone back from sin, you can save them and have covered over a multitude of sin if they've wandered from the truth and you would lead them back to the truth. That's how the letter ends. But right before what I read to you, he had talked about being patient as you wait for the Lord to return because the Lord would do this in His time and in His way. Trust that He has your best interest at heart. Be patient. Then he said to the people he was writing to (to the Jews) that were probably scattered after the persecution in Jerusalem (James was the head of the church in Jerusalem and the brother of Jesus), "Be patient in suffering" because that's what they were going through. Then he said "Don't swear. Don't use God's name to witness the truth and punish the lie. As Jesus had said, 'Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and 'No' be 'No.'"" Then he kind of transitions from misusing God's name to using God's name the right way, by calling on Him in prayer.

One of the things I teach the kids every year about prayer is an acronym that reminds us what should be parts of our total prayer life. Our total prayer life should consist of four different parts. I use the acronym "ACTS." I use it because PCTR doesn't make a word, but ACTS does make a word. The first thing is "adoration." Like we sing at Christmas time, "*O Come Let Us Adore Him*," adoration is praise. Praise God in your prayer life. Praise Him for who He is and what He has done for you. C is pretty straightforward—"confession. Then the T is "thanksgiving"—thank God for His blessings. The S is a big, fancy church word—"supplication," which means requests for yourself and others.

In these few short verses that I read to you from James, three of those four things are there in what he teaches about prayer. He talks about praise. ***Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.*** Songs of praise are prayers that we put to music. Then he talks about confession. ***Therefore confess your sins to each other*** because ***The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*** God will forgive your sins.

He talks about requests. If you are sick, pray. If you are in trouble, pray. Requests for yourself and then he talks about having others from the church, the leaders in the church come and pray with you when you are sick. He talks about intercessory prayers, requests for the others. The only one he doesn't really talk about is thanksgiving, but he teaches us a great deal about prayer.

We come to God and we bring Him our troubles, our joys, our failures, as we confess our sins to Him. We bring Him our requests. We do this not just for ourselves, but as we see as he talks about it in here, we do it for one another. We do it with one another. The Lord delights in our solo prayer life as we come to Him. When we get up in the morning, when we go to bed at night, when we are going through our day, the Lord delights in it. He invites us to do that.

But He also invites us to prayer together—a corporate prayer where the body of Christ comes together and prays or where Christians come together and pray. He talks about that in here as the people come and pray. He says if you're sick, have the elders come ***and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.*** I don't think he is instituting another Sacrament here.

Last week we had the Parable of the Good Samaritan as the Gospel. Remember what the guy that helped (the Good Samaritan) did before he took him to the Inn and paid for his care? He anointed his wounds, or oiled his wounds, with olive oil we'd assume. We read from historians that applying olive oil was common medical practice at this time. So as I read this, I kind of think the Lord is telling us to come together, use the resources God puts at your hands, medicine for your body—the physical resources He puts at your hands. But also make use of the spiritual resources He puts at your hands, and that's prayer.

Prayer means praying in faith, as he talks about. Prayer means that when I pray in faith, I trust that God is going to answer in the best possible way and I have to fully acknowledge that I might not know the best possible way. God is wiser than I am and is looking at a bigger picture than I am and He sees the whole thing. I'm just seeing what is right in front of me. So sometimes when I say "Lord, this is my will," God says "That's nice, but this is what is best." And His will is going to be done. So praying in faith means we pray "Lord, this is what I want to happen but may your will be done and may I have the strength of faith to accept whatever your will might be. Lord, keep me from

being that kid in the checkout line that didn't get a candy bar from mom and dad and is lying on the floor screaming and kicking. Don't let me be that in my daily life, in my prayer life." Pray in faith trusting that God will hear and answer in the best possible way.

One of the things I think that's interesting is intercessory prayers are mentioned here not just for the physical requests. They are intimately tied in what the Holy Spirit had James write as spiritual requests. ***If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*** I read that and I think about my own prayer life at times. My own prayer life at times is full of specifics for some of the people I know that have asked me to pray for them and are going through physical difficulties. I pray for them and try to remember to pray for them regularly. More of my spiritual prayers for other people, intercessory prayers for others, are much more general. "Lord, bless our congregation. Bless the Gospel work we seek to carry out. Bless those who seek to serve you, Lord. Give them your strength and your Spirit so that they may serve faithfully." Those are regular parts of my prayer life.

But I wonder if here the Holy Spirit (through James) is telling us to get a little more specific about our spiritual requests for one another. Pray by name not just for those that need physical healing but those who appear to need spiritual hearing, who have said or are doing things that make you wonder if they are strongly connected to Christ or if they are drifting away. Pray for them specifically, by name. I think there is wisdom in that because I think the more often that you and I pray specifically, by name, for spiritual needs as well, the more the Spirit will open our eyes to see how we may be an answer to our own prayers. How you and I can share the Law and the Gospel, not only with ourselves but with others. How we can be the answer to that prayer. I guess that's also part of praying dangerously. "Lord, for these things for which I am concerned, use me as you see fit." That's a dangerous prayer when we're putting ourselves on the line and not saying "Lord, send someone to this person I love to bring them the Gospel" but "Lord, use me."

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. God will bless us with His Spirit and enable us to do more than we think we could ever do. He uses frail jars of clay like you and me to share the Law and the Gospel with others so that they might be connected to Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. When you and I look at our prayer lives and see where it has become more like a list I made when I was seven, in the middle of December, when it becomes something more that is in line with God's will, we say "Lord, forgive me where I have failed you in my prayer life."

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective because the righteous life of Christ that covers us forgives us for our sins in our prayer life as well. And that's what moves us to seek to want to grow in this area of our Christian living—our prayer life.

Followers of Christ will pray boldly, persistently and acknowledge just how much they need God in their lives. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7.\)](#) Amen.