

**JULY 25 2010**

**PRAYER:THE SEARCH WE REFUSE TO GIVE UP  
LUKE 11:1-13**

**WHEN THE TELEPHONE OR DOORBELL RINGS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, WE AUTOMATICALLY WORRY. IT CANNOT BE GOOD NEWS AND SO OFTEN IT ISN'T. SOME OF THE WORST CALLS OF MY LIFE HAVE COME AFTER HOURS. OFTEN WE NEEDED TO MOBILIZE; SOMEONE NEEDED HELP.**

**THE MAN AT THE DOOR IN JESUS' STORY ONLY WANTED TO BORROW A FEW LOAVES OF BREAD. WE WHO ARE ACCUSTOMED TO HAVING PLENTY MAY READ IT AS ANNOYING, LIKE WANTING TO BORROW A CUP OF SUGAR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. BUT IT WAS MORE THAN THAT. IN THOSE DAYS IT WAS AN EXTREME EMBARRASSMENT NOT TO HAVE PROVISIONS FOR YOUR GUESTS. CHANCES WERE THAT YOUR GUESTS HAD TRAVELLED FOR HOURS IN THE DESERT AND ARRIVED EXTREMELY HUNGRY AND THIRSTY. NOT EXTENDING HOSPITALITY WAS A DISGRACEFUL ACT IN JESUS TIME. SO THIS WAS A GENUINE NEED.**

**LIKEWISE, THE FIRST HEARERS OF THIS STORY WOULD HAVE ACTED PERPLEXED. NO DECENT MAN SLEEPING IN BED WOULD SAY, "DON'T BOTHER ME!" IT WAS A REQUIREMENT TO GET UP AND HELP YOUR NEIGHBOR. HOWEVER, IT WAS INCONVENIENT. TO OPEN THE FRONT GATE MEANT WAKING UP ALL THE CHILDREN AND ALL THE ANIMALS IN THE COURTYARD. EVERYONE WOULD HAVE BEEN STIRRED AWAKE BECAUSE OF THE PERSISTENT NEIGHBOR. ADD TO THAT THE CONSTANT KNOCKING AND EVENTUALLY THE WHOLE VILLAGE WOULD KNOW THAT THE MAN OUTSIDE NEEDS HELP AND THE MAN INSIDE IS SLOW TO GIVE IT. I BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS TELLING US THERE SHOULD BE AN URGENCY IN OUR PRAYERS AND AN URGENCY WHEN WE SPEAK TO GOD AND AN URGENCY TO RESPOND TO THE PRAYERS OF THE NEEDY.**

**ALTHOUGH WE HAVE IN LUKE A SHORTER VERSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER—THE FAMILIAR ONE IS IN MATTHEW, THIS PRAYER TAUGHT BY JESUS HAS AN URGENCY ABOUT IT. "YOUR KINGDOM COME....GIVE US EACH DAY....FORGIVE US...DON'T BRING US TO THE TIME OF TRIAL..." THERE ARE NO BUFFERING WORDS. NO, LORD PLEASE DO THIS, IF IT BE YOUR WILL DO THAT. JESUS WOULD HAVE US PRAY THIS PRAYER EVERY DAY WITH AN URGENCY. JESUS WOULD HAVE US PRAY AS IF OUR FAITH LIVES DEPENDED ON IT. THE LORD'S PRAYER ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE WE ARE ORDERING GOD AROUND, DO**

**THIS, DO THAT. WHAT IT IS, THOUGH, IS THE URGENT NEED TO CONNECT WITH THE PRESENCE OF GOD EVERY DAY.**

**WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HARDLY PRAY AT ALL. WHEN WE DO IT IS OFTEN IN TIMES OF DESPERATION OR WHEN WE NEED SOMETHING. OCCASIONALLY WE WILL PRAY A GRATEFUL PRAYER FOR OUR BLESSINGS. SOMETIMES WE ARE SO FAR FROM THE URGENCY OF DAILY PRAYER THAT WE SPEND MORE TIME ASKING WHAT PRAYRE IS, WHETHER IT WORKS OR NOT, HOW WE SHOULD REALLY DO IT...WE ANALYZE IT MORE THAN WE DO IT. JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY BOLDLY, LIKE BANGING ON A DOOR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. JUST DO IT WITH CONFIDENCE AND WITH PERSISTENCE.**

**JESUS, OUR ROLE MODEL, LIVED SO DEEPLY IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD THAT NOTHING GOT IN THE WAY OF PRAYER. HE JUST KNEW GOD WAS PRESENT LISTENING. JESUS WAS TOTALLY GOD-CENTERED. GOD WAS AS REAL TO HIM, EVEN MORE REAL THAN ANYTHING WE SEE OR FEEL. THIS IS SOMETHING TO TAKE INTO OUR HEARTS: WITH JUST A FLIP OF THREE WORDS, THE WHOLE CONTEXT OF OUR PRAYING CHANGES. WHEN WE FINALLY SWITCH FROM “IS GOD LISTENING?” TO “GOD IS LISTENING!” JESUS TELLS US PRAY BOLDLY AND URGENTLY, LET NOTHING GET IN THE WAY, NO QUESTION, NO DOUBT, NO WORRY...GOD IS LISTENING. JUST PRAY. JUST TALK TO GOD.**

**JESUS CONTINUES WITH WORDS OF URGENCY---“ASK, SEARCH, KNOCK ON GOD’S DOOR, TRUST THAT GOD WILL ANSWER AS GOD SEES FIT. GOD WILL GIVE US WHAT WE NEED. IF WE, WHO ARE NATURALLY INCLINED TO BE SELF-CENTERED, WOULD MAKE SURE THAT OUR CHILDREN ATE THE RIGHT DIET AND PLAYED SAFELY AND LEARNED HEALTHY THINGS, IMAGINE WHAT OUR HOLY PARENT GOD WHO LOVES US WILL DO FOR US. THIS WAS JESUS’ BELIEF. HE LIVED THAT, EVEN IN HIS TIMES OF TRIAL. AND WE FIND IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE MORE OCCASIONS OF JESUS’ PRAYING THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE GOSPELS. JESUS WAS VERY PRESENT-ORIENTED ABOUT HIS PRAYING. GOD THE FATHER WAS ALWAYS RIGHT THERE WITH HIM. JESUS BELIEVED WE WHO FOLLOWED COULD HAVE THAT GIFT OF THE SENSE OF GOD’S PRESENCE.**

**THIS LESSON OF THE URGENCY AND BOLDNESS OF DAILY PRAYER HAS ANOTHER DIMENSION. OUR WHOLE LIVES SHOULD BE SPENT, SEEKING AND SEARCHING FOR THE WISDOM GOD HAS PUT WITHIN AND AROUND US. THE OLD WESTMINSTER CONFSSION STATED THAT THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF HUMAN BEINGS IS TO GLORIFY**

**AND PRAISE GOD, THAT IS, TO BE IN CONSTANT COMMUNICATION, IN CONSTANT RELATIONSHIP.**

**WE WANT GOD TO CORRECT OUR WAYS. WE WANT GOD TO TRAIN US IN THE WAYS OF CHRIST AND THE WAYS OF LOVE. WE WANT GOD TO REMOVE OUR SINS AND FAULTS AND LEAD US TO A PEACEFUL INNER LIFE. WE WANT GOD TO THROW DOWN THE OBSTACLES THAT KEEP US FROM LOVING EACH OTHER AND HELPING THE SUFFERING. WE WANT GOD TO TEACH US AT EACH STAGE OF LIFE WHAT HIS WILL IS FOR US. WE WANT TO KNOW OUR PURPOSE IN THE HERE AND NOW IN REGARDS TO GOD'S DESIRES. PRAYER IS THE ONLY WAY. PRAY AND LET GOD LIVE WITHIN US. GOD WILL LISTEN. GOD WILL ANSWER. PRAYER IS THE SEARCH FOR FAITH AND WISDOM THAT WE WILL NOT GIVE UP.**

**ONE MORE THOUGHT ABOUT THE STORY TODAY. LET'S BE HUMBLE ABOUT OUR PRAYING. YES, WE ARE TO BE BOLD AND PERSISTENT AND FEEL THE SENSE OF HOW URGENTLY WE NEED GOD, BUT TODAY JESUS PUT US IN THE POSITION OF BEING A PERSISTENT BEGGAR. WE NEED THINGS WHEN WE ARE AT THE DOOR. WE NEED TO AWAKEN GOD. I DON'T MEAN GOD IS ASLEEP. I MEAN THAT GOD IS ASLEEP WITHIN US MOST DAYS. PRAYER IS THE URGENT CALL TO AWAKEN THE CHRIST WITHIN. THE MOMENT WE SAY, "OUR FATHER OR GRACIOUS GOD AND KNOW DEEPLY WE ARE IN THE GLORIOUS PRESENCE OF GOD....WE ARE IN AN AWESOME SEARCH FOR FAITH, FORGIVENESS, AND WISDOM.**

**GOD DOES NOT GIVE UP ON US. MOST LIKELY WE WILL GIVE UP ON GOD. PRAYER IS TO ENGAGE IN THE SEARCH AND RELATIONSHIP THAT WILL NOT LET THAT HAPPEN. JESUS SAYS KEEP AT IT! KEEP AT IT WITH BOLDNESS, PERSISTENCE, AND CONFIDENCE. I DON'T THINK I EVER BELIEVED THAT GOD NEEDS OUR PRAYERS, BUT, OUR GOD LONGS TO BE IN A LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH US. GOD WANTS TO HEAR FROM US. THEN GOD KNOWS THAT WE KNOW GOD IS. PRAYER IS OUR CERTIFICATION THAT WE KNOW GOD. WE ARE BOLD, PERSISTENT AND URGENT, BUT HUMBLE, BECAUSE WE KNOW GOD LOVES US AND WE KNOW WE LOVE GOD THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.**