

## Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 27, 2025

**Abraham pleaded.**

**Buried with Him in baptism.**

**Lord, teach us to pray.**

**-rvb**

Reading one

Genesis 18:20-32

In those days, the LORD said: "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave, that I must go down and see whether or not their actions fully correspond to the cry against them that comes to me. I mean to find out."

While Abraham's visitors walked on farther toward Sodom, the LORD remained standing before Abraham.

**Then Abraham drew nearer and said:**

**"Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty?"**

Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it?

Far be it from you to do such a thing, to make the innocent die with the guilty so that the innocent and the guilty would be treated alike! Should not the judge of all the world act with justice?"

The LORD replied,

"If I find fifty innocent people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

**Abraham spoke up again:**

"See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes!

**What if there are five less than fifty innocent people?**

**Will you destroy the whole city because of those five?"**

He answered, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there."  
But Abraham persisted, saying "What if only forty are found there?"  
He replied, "I will forbear doing it for the sake of the forty."  
Then Abraham said, "Let not my Lord grow impatient if I go on.  
What if only thirty are found there?"  
He replied, "I will forbear doing it if I can find but thirty there."  
Still Abraham went on,  
"Since I have thus dared to speak to my Lord,  
what if there are no more than twenty?"  
The LORD answered, "I will not destroy it, for the sake of the twenty."  
But he still persisted:  
"Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time.  
What if there are at least ten there?"  
He replied, "For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it."

### **A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.**

In the reading from Genesis, Abraham highlights the importance of praying with perseverance and persistence. However, I offer you a caution,

*"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words." - Matthew 6:7 NIV*

We often hear that long prayers are better, but is this really the case? Jesus warned against praying with empty, repetitive words just for the sake of length. A short, genuine prayer can be just as powerful as a lengthy one. It is better to have a heart without words than to have words without a heart.

**So, there should be a balance. It is not the words or length that is important.**

**It is believing God is good and will do all He says He will do, which is paramount. Patience is important.**

**Abraham bargains with God and God listens as evidenced in today's responsorial psalm, "Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me."**

**Now, the real test is if the answer is different than that for which I prayed.**

**Whose will be done? Mine or God's?**

**Responsorial Psalm**

**[Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8](#)**

**R.(3a) Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.**

**I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with all my heart,  
for you have heard the words of my mouth;  
in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise;  
I will worship at your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name.**

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.  
Because of your kindness and your truth;  
for you have made great above all things  
your name and your promise.**

**When I called you answered me;  
you built up strength within me.**

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.  
The LORD is exalted, yet the lowly he sees,  
and the proud he knows from afar.**

**Though I walk amid distress, you preserve me;  
against the anger of my enemies you raise your hand.**

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.  
Your right hand saves me.**

**The LORD will complete what he has done for me;**

your kindness, O LORD, endures forever;  
forsake not the work of your hands.  
R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.

Reading two

[Colossians 2:12-14](#)

Brothers and sisters:

You were buried with him in baptism,  
in which you were also raised with him  
through faith in the power of God,  
who raised him from the dead.  
And even when you were dead  
in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh,  
he brought you to life along with him,  
having forgiven us all our transgressions;  
obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims,  
which was opposed to us,  
he also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross.

**A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures**

In this reading from Colossians, Paul stands fast against those who want to impose laws of the Old Testament on Christians. We are not saved by observing religious laws such as circumcision, but by God's grace given to us because of Jesus' death on the cross having new life in Christ because of his cross and resurrection which is more within the realm of spirituality. Let us seek a balance between religion and spirituality. The spiritual writer Rumi says "There are a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground." The intensity of our spiritual yearning is

matched by a diversity of religious approaches to fulfill it. On any given weekend you might go to hear a presentation on the rosary, teach Sunday school, attend a Bible study class, sign up for a meditation retreat, attend Eucharist, and the choices are endless; and no matter what you choose, be aware that, until you have found spiritual peace, you will never know the true balance between religion and spirituality.

Alleluia

[Romans 8:15bc](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

You have received a Spirit of adoption,  
through which we cry, Abba, Father.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

[Luke 11:1-13](#)

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished,  
one of his disciples said to him,

**"Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."**

He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread  
and forgive us our sins

for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,  
and do not subject us to the final test."

And he said to them, **"Suppose one of you has a friend  
to whom he goes at midnight and says,**

'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,  
for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey  
and I have nothing to offer him,'

and he says in reply from within,  
'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked  
and my children and I are already in bed.  
I cannot get up to give you anything.'  
I tell you,  
if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves  
because of their friendship,  
he will get up to give him whatever he needs  
because of his persistence.

**"And I tell you, ask and you will receive;  
seek and you will find;  
knock and the door will be opened to you.**

For everyone who asks, receives;  
and the one who seeks, finds;  
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.  
What father among you would hand his son a snake  
when he asks for a fish?  
Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?  
If you then, who are wicked,  
know how to give good gifts to your children,  
how much more will the Father in heaven  
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

### **A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.**

In the Gospel of Luke, we are offered three dimensions of prayerfulness: 1. Luke presents this prayer in the setting of Jesus' own praying as a model for us to pray and to address God as ABBA (dad); 2. The parable of the friend at midnight is a rabbinic argument about a moral conflict to respond or not and how much more will God respond

to our pleas and requests? And 3. We are given the assurance that our prayers will be answered and not always to our expectations.

**“Lord, teach us to pray...Just as John taught his disciples.” How so?**

Have you ever wondered if you are praying right? You are not alone. So many of us have questioned whether we are doing it correctly or saying the right words, as if prayer is some ritual that should be perfected.

We have allowed unscriptural beliefs, human traditions, misconceptions, and assumptions to shape our understanding of prayer. When our prayers are not rooted in the truth of God’s word, they lose their effectiveness and power. We are to pray in alignment with God’s will as be revealed in the scripture.

**Here are ten common misunderstandings about prayer and what it truly means to have a heart-to-heart with God.**

### **1. Believer’s Spiritual Power is Rooted in Christ, Not Measured by Prayer.**

A believer’s spiritual power and authority are not determined by their prayer life. Our prayers don’t come from the quantity or intensity of prayer. Scripture teaches that while prayer does release power, a believer’s true spiritual power comes from their union with Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. Our authority in Christ isn’t based on how long, loud, or fervently we pray but on our relationship with Jesus.

However, this doesn’t mean we shouldn’t pray often. In fact, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 urges us to “*pray continually*.” Prayer remains essential for maintaining our relationship with God.

### **2. You Have to Pray with Perfect Words.**

Honestly, if prayer were about perfect words, most of us would have been disqualified. Thankfully, God is not after flawless sentences. He is after sincerity, our raw, unpolished hearts. If we had to pray perfectly to be heard, even the simplest cry for help would fall short.

God, in His marvelous grace, listens to messy, stumbling words just as much as eloquent ones. It's about connections. Think about it like when talking to a close friend and sharing your deepest thoughts. You do not worry about getting the words right. You are being real, opening up, and trusting that your friend will understand.

Prayer is the same way with God. Even though you cannot see Him, He is present and listening. He is not waiting for you to get it “just right;” He simply wants to hear from you, as you are.

### **3. Group Prayers Are More Powerful Than Individual Ones.**

While it is great to pray with others, individual prayers are just as powerful. God does not prioritize group prayers over private ones. Jesus often went off by Himself to pray, “*But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed*” (Luke 5:16). This shows us that personal, one-on-one time with God is deeply valuable.

It is a misconception to believe that the effectiveness of prayer increases with the number of people praying for the same issue. The power of prayer does not depend on gathering a large group of people at the same time and place. Scripture clearly states, “*The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective*” (James 5:16).

Corporate prayers are valuable and required, but the Bible never suggests that more people praying equals more power or faster results. God answers prayers based on His will.

### **4. You Should Always Know What to Pray for.**



***“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”- Romans 8:26***

The Bible says the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us when we do not have the words. It is easy to feel discouraged when you do not know exactly that for which to pray.

Remember that God understands your heart. Do not be afraid to come to God with your confusion or silence. And in moments when you lack words, simply sit in God’s presence and let your heart speak. God hears you even when you cannot express your thoughts.

#### **5. Prayer is All About Asking for Things.**

It is a carnal mindset to make your prayers solely about yourself, focusing only on what you desire, want, or need. The primary purpose of prayer is to foster fellowship, communion, and intimacy with God, but not only to ask for things. God desires to spend time with us, so we must also listen to what He says and align our hearts with His will.

If your prayers feel like a shopping list, take time to focus more on gratitude, praise, and seeking His guidance.

One of the biggest misconceptions is that if God does not answer our prayers the way we expect, we must be doing something wrong. This is not true. There is no reluctance or unwillingness on God’s part to answer the prayers of His children.

God’s ways are different from ours and beyond our understanding. The way He chooses to answer is not based on our worth or faith. He sees the bigger picture and has a greater plan for something better. Trust His timing and wisdom.

#### **6. Prayer is a One-Way Conversation.**

Often, we rush through prayers, treating them as monologue instead of a dialogue. It is easy to think of prayer as merely talking to God, but it is just

as much about listening. A true conversation involves two-way communication. We should take time to pause and be still, and in doing this, we create a space for God to speak into our lives. He does respond, but we miss it because we lack patience.

### **7. Prayer Always Changes Circumstances.**

One of the most humbling truths about prayer is that it does not always change the situation, rather, it changes us. God sometimes uses prayers to transform our hearts, perspectives, or attitudes rather than our circumstances. In [Philippians 4:6-7](#) (NIV), Paul encourages us not to be anxious but to present our request to God in prayer, promising that His peace will guard our hearts and minds. Here, we see that this peace does not always alter our circumstances but equips us to face them with renewed strength and clarity.

### **8. You Should Only Pray When You Feel Like it.**

Our emotions can be very unpredictable, and if we limit our prayers to those moments, we feel inspired or based on our desires, we risk missing the rich blessings that come from consistent communication with God. Think of prayer as exercising a muscle, the more you engage in it, the stronger your faith becomes. Prayer should be a regular part of our lives regardless of our feelings. As you remain steadfast, you will find that your perseverance opens the door to deeper faith, greater understanding, and a stronger relationship with God.

Just as discipline is required for every other thing, and so is the case with prayer. Allow God to mold and strengthen you through every season by making prayer a constant rhythm in your life.

### **9. Listening and Growing.**

Prayer is about communication with God. It is not something to check off a Christian to-do list, nor is it a way to earn God's attention or manipulate

Him into giving us what we want. True prayer invites God to shape us into who He wants us to be.

### **10.The Beauty of Prayer.**

As Christians, we are called to love God, which involves sacrifice. Through prayer, we align our hearts with God's will, surrendering our desires and embracing the transformation He desires for us.

Prayer is a beautiful personal journey, not a rigid formula to get right or wrong. As you let go of these misconceptions, you will find more freedom and authenticity in your conversation with God. God is always ready to listen. -The Internet.

**Final prayer:** Lord, help me to consciously pray the Our Father, taking it apart, line-by-line, and reflecting on the implications of each line for me in my daily life. "Teach me your love to know; That this new light, which now I see, may both the work and worker show. Then by sunbeam I will climb to you." – George Herbert, 1593-1633.

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