**First Presbyterian Church Tucumcari**

**Worship 11:00AM**

**Sunday, July 28, 2019, Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Call to Worship (please see bulletin)**

**Prayer of the Day**

Saving God,
you are a God who has made it a habit to stick with us through thick and thin.
Thank you for calling us your own
even in moments when we haven’t been the best investment.
Help us, in our worship of you this day,
to be turned in a direction that pleases you. **Amen**.

**Call to Confession**

When we sit still we have time to consider the things we have done and the things we have left undone. This is hard work, but it is necessary for our relationship with God. Let us open our hearts in prayer.

**Prayer of Confession (please see bulletin)**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, Believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 85:1-13 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

O God our Father,
we pray for the world you love so much.
Let all things reflect your goodness and glorify your name.
Let your promises be fulfilled,
so that all people share right relationship with you and each other.

We pray for ourselves,
and we recognize our desires for all the things we think we need.
In your wisdom and love, give us what we truly need today.
Give us the will and the opportunity to share what we have with others.
May all be fed, and filled, and healed.

We acknowledge our sin before you,
and we humbly pray for your forgiveness
and for the forgiveness of those we have wronged.
More than that, we pray for those who owe us an apology,
and we declare our intent to forgive them.

We pray for our lives,
for the life of this church,
and for the life of this world.
Let suffering cease, doubt and fear be conquered,
and guide us always in the right path.

We pray in the name of our great Teacher,
the one who gave us prayer in these words:

The Lord’s Prayer

**Time Out For Teaching: Meet Hosea**

Hosea is one of those minor prophets of the Old Testament. We are about to hear the beginning of the Prophet Hosea, who lived and ministered in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. I want to prepare you for what you’re about to hear, for it will sound kind of strange to you. Often the Lord calls these prophets to do some unexpected things as a way of showing forth a message or example for Israel. Jeremiah had to bury his undergarments in a wet river bank and then wear them, as a metaphor for Israel to understand that they had become soiled with sin.

Hosea is told by the Lord to get married. Do you hear the doom and gloom already?

Just kidding.

Hosea is told that he has to marry a prostitute and that they shall have children. Their children have terribly sad names – the first born was called Jezreel, named after the valley where God will punish Israel. The second was named Lo-Ruhamah, showing that He shall no longer have pity on Israel and the third was named Lo-ammi, which means “you are not my people.”

Our reading does end on a hopeful note today, which says eventually God will allow Israel to flourish again and God will one day call Israel “My People” again. But in the meantime, God chose Hosea and his wife Gomer to symbolize the faithfulness to Israel, even though Israel was not faithful to God. Hosea sends this message in 14 chapters. The good news is, throughout this tumultuous story, which combines the story of Hosea’s rocky marriage with the rocky relationship God has with Israel, God is faithful still. This may be not just a story of Israel. It’s a story of God’s faithfulness even to us.

**Prayer for Illumination**

God, you have come to us again and again,

Calling us to listen

And follow you.

We face many things in this life

And you continue to bear us up

Like on eagles’ wings.

Bear us up again

With the strength and staff of your holy Word.

Amen.

**Hosea 1:2-10**

2When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD." 3So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4And the LORD said to him, "Name him Jezreel; for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

6She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the LORD said to him, "Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. 7But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen."

8When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9Then the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God."

10Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.'

**Colossians 2:6-15**

6As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. 9For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. 11In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; 12when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, 14erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. 15He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

16Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. 17These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, 19and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

**Luke 11:1-13**

1He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

2He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.

3Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."

5And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;  6for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7And he answers from within, '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.'  8I 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.

9"So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.  10For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

11Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? 12Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?  13If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

**Sermon:**

Has this ever happened to you? You’re gathered at a table for a meal with the family. It’s a big holiday and lots of people are there. Everyone is ready to eat and someone says to you, “Will you say the blessing?”

Usually that question causes instant anxiety in us! How do we begin? What can we say that’s not too long, not too short, and doesn’t come out sounding like a disaster. It’s okay if you might feel that way. I feel that way too! So, after we attempt to put words together, which we hope are acceptable to everyone, and we squeak out our “Amen!” others open their eyes and say, “Thank you,” as if genuinely pleased with your prayer.

Maybe they’re just pleased because they weren’t the ones put on the spot and are relieved that someone else said the prayer. Or, we actually did a good job and what we said touched a chord in them. Maybe it’s both.

Prayer is not a performance. But it also calls for us to do something, say something and requires our utmost attention to that moment in time. Attention to God’s presence, attention to asking for that which is truly important helps to become immersed in power greater than ourselves. Sometimes we lose track of just what to pray for or even where to start. In our reading from Luke this morning, it all begins because Jesus’ disciples want to pray as John the Baptist and his disciples pray.

Why? Well, we don’t have a clear explanation in this reading, but his disciples probably heard and saw other forms of prayer, and some which looked like a performance. In Matthew, Jesus critiques others, saying, “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others.” They had surely seen Jesus pray, knew they didn’t want to be like those hypocrites. Whatever their reason, they express the desire to pray, and to pray as a regular practice. So, Jesus provides them that all-famous prayer, “The Lord’s Prayer,” teachings on being persistent and to expect God will respond faithfully. In other words, Jesus gives them the words and a lesson on approach and attitude.

So many good things can be found in this reading from Luke, but what is most noticeable to us church folk is that the words from the Lord’s Prayer in Luke are not quite like those we say in church. It’s also in Matthew’s gospel, but that version is not just like what we say on Sundays either. However, Jesus tells them “pray like this,” meaning, it doesn’t have to be exact, but an example or guideline for us, covering several big topics.

1. It recognizes God’s holiness “Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”
2. Then prays for the Kingdom of God “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” – meaning, we are praying for God’s will to be done, and may it be reflected in our earthly ways.
3. Give us each day our daily bread…a prayer that “we” collectively have enough to eat each day.
4. Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. A prayer that we be forgiven for our sins and the statement that we forgive everyone!
5. And do not bring us to the time of trial… A prayer that we do not have to undergo testing, and if we do, that we be delivered from evil.

These are big statements, when we think about them, and they cover several important areas. But the prayer itself is short. It has no extra words that don’t have to be there. It’s not impressive as a performance piece. It’s simple, yet it prays for everyone in the world. There were during Jesus’ time and thereafter, in Jewish traditions, suggested prayers which were very similar to what Jesus teaches here. They are all very short, private prayers, mostly designed to be said during times of distress or fear. They are similar, for they not only pray for one’s own deliverance, but they pray for God’s will for the entire Universe.

There is something rather freeing to know that even in our prayers for ourselves, we are encouraged by Jesus to also pray for God’s will, for all the world to find healing. We become a part of the larger plan God has for us all. Notice that in Jesus’ instructions, the prayer is all in first person plural. “Our Father,” not just “My Father…” “Forgive us…” “Give us our daily bread…” All of the words here are “us” and “we,” not “I” and “me.”

So, when we pray, which I hope is persistent and regular, remember that our prayers are connected to God’s larger plan to heal the world. When you don’t know where to start, or feel funny praying for our own personal needs, you have guidelines endorsed by our Lord Jesus Himself. And it is a moment in time when we should give all of our attention to God’s powerful presence. Thanks be to God for making it simple to talk to Him. Amen.

**Announcements:**

**Next Sunday is Holy Communion Sunday.**