

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2026 // PRAYER & COMMUNION

PRAYER (MATTHEW 7:7-11) THE GROUNDING FOR PRAYER

Our Father in Heaven is **love**, is **righteous**, is **good**, and **knows our needs**. When we pray, we should always remember the **character** of God so that we are drawn to pray to Him, not as a religious ritual, but as a true conversation with someone we love and who loves us.

- **Earthly fathers will sometimes fail, while our Heavenly Father is always faithful.**

GOOD THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT WE ASKED

Jesus says His Father will give us good things when we ask, not that He will always give us **what** we asked. Not everything we ask for would be good for us. Our Father knows what's best and good for us, and graciously gives us those things.

- **God always answers our prayers with a yes, no, not now, or something better.**

MOST PARENTS DO THEIR BEST

Jesus contrasts our Heavenly Father with our earthly parents. When children ask for things, most parents don't answer by giving harmful things to the kids: stone for bread or snake for fish. Parents usually have an innate desire to show love and encouragement to their kids.

- **If your parents weren't the best, don't let them turn you away from God.**

HOW MUCH MORE

One of the ways biblical arguments are made is from the lesser to the greater. Jesus' point is that if earthly parents do good things, though still struggle with sin (the lesser), how much more will our perfect, sinless Heavenly Father do good things for us (the greater).

- **With our greater Heavenly Father in mind, we are now prepared to come to Him.**

ASK

With the grounding of our prayers being in the character of our Father, Jesus says we can ask. Knowing His character should "fence in" our prayers by making sure what we ask lines up with His Word and Jesus' name.

- The more we're in His Word, the more we'll learn, with the Holy Spirit's help, what **kinds of things we should be asking for.**

SEEK

There are times to be on our knees in prayer and times we should put our prayers into action. There are personal responsibilities attached to some of our prayers.

- If we're praying that our neighbor would come to faith in Jesus, we must be **neighborly and seek chances to build a relationship and share Jesus.**

KNOCK

Knocking is a picture of perseverance in our prayer life. We should pray and never give up. When God says no, we receive this answer humbly. But when God says not yet, **we persevere, knowing there's much to learn in the waiting.**

- God told both Jesus (Matthew 26:44) and Paul (2 Corinthians 12:8) no after they **prayed three times.**

ENCOURAGEMENTS FOR PRAYER

God is always present, so we can always talk to Him (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

- Sometimes prayer might be more formal (like when we lead others in prayer). Sometimes it's very casual and personal.
- **Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us and brings us in line with His will.**
- The Holy Spirit helps us pray (Romans 8:26).

A WAY TO P.R.A.Y.

- **P-Praise God.** Praise Him for both who He is and what He has done and is doing.
- **R-Repent.** Are there sins you need to bring to the Lord and admit to Him you blew it? Repentance shouldn't bring shame but godly relief.
- **A-Another.** Pray for family, friends, others.
- **Y-Yourself.** We admit we're needy for God.

COMMUNION (1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-32) REMEMBERING THE CROSS BRINGS HUMILITY

Paul tells the Corinthians that Communion should bring unity, not division. Why? Humanity's need for a Savior levels the ground for all of us. Ethnicity, socio-economics, gender, and politics are all laid bare before the cross of Jesus. We are all equal in our sin and our need.

- **When we come to the table, we do so with grateful hearts for Jesus' sacrifice.**

COMMUNION REVEALS OUR HEARTS

Paul also said that the way the Corinthians looked at Communion and took it revealed the condition of their hearts. The flippant, selfish way some of them took Communion showed that they may not be truly Christians.

- **While we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus alone, the table represents what Jesus did for us. It's a holy reminder.**

THE BREAD AND THE JUICE

Whether Paul received it through a vision or from a testimony (someone like Peter), Paul tells us that Communion is simple yet majestic. The bread represents Jesus' body that was sacrificed for us, and the juice represents Jesus' blood that makes the new covenant possible.

- **Jesus died on the cross as our once-and- forever sacrifice for our sins** (Hebrews 10:12).

VIEWS OF COMMUNION

- **Transubstantiation (Roman Catholic view)** – When the priest blesses the bread and wine, the essences become the actual body and blood of Jesus.
- **Consubstantiation (Lutheran view)** –The essence doesn't change, but Jesus is present spiritually in, over, and under. Some think of a sponge with water in it.
- **Spiritual/symbolic (our view)** – The bread is just bread, and the juice is just juice. However, as Christians, we have God the Holy Spirit living in us, the Spirit of Jesus, who is present as we eat and drink. He reminds us of what Jesus has accomplished for us and that one day, Jesus will return for us at the great marriage feast of the Lamb.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

During Communion, we look back to what Jesus accomplished for us through His death on the cross. We also think about His forgiveness, which is active right now. We also look forward to the day when we will see Jesus face to face, touch Him, eat with Him, and live with Him forever in resurrection bodies.

"IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER"

Paul warns that there is a way of taking Communion that makes one sick, even sick unto death. So, each should examine themselves.

- **Our hearts should be right with God and people before eating and drinking. An unworthy manner would be to have unconfessed sin, which could include hatred towards a fellow Believer.**

If we examine ourselves before Communion and confess any sins, we are judging ourselves properly by the Word and with the Spirit's help. If we are improperly taking Communion, the Lord's discipline may be illness, even up to death.

- **We must not approach the table arrogantly or flippantly, but humbly.**

AS OFTEN AS YOU EAT AND DRINK

- **We preach the gospel to ourselves at the end of every service, remembering what Jesus did for us through His death and resurrection.**
- See Communion as a time for repenting and **remembering**.
- What we think about Jesus' work is reflected in our attitudes towards Communion.
- Our services conclude *after* Communion.

A GOOD, GOOD FATHER

- God has not left us as orphans with no way to commune with Him. We have both **prayer** and **communion**, which allow us to **praise Him** and **proclaim Him**, and to **communicate with Him** and **confess Him**.
- We should have a **healthy reverence** and **respect** infused with **the joy of children with their Dad, who are loved by Him**.