



Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. **AMEN**

Today, we live in an age of communication, instant communication. There are many methods of communicating that were not available or even thought about a century ago, or for that matter even 25 years ago.

How many of you have email? Do you get spam on a regular basis with your email? I usually get 100-150 spam emails every day.

Do you ever use Facebook, twitter, Instagram or snapchat? All ways to send and receive messages and photos.

How many of you have a cell phone? Do you have voice mail? How many messages do you get each day that are unwanted, spam or phishing calls?

Now I know most of you get US Mail, right? Snail mail as it is called today. Do you get junk mail and advertisements in with your bills? Do you ever get actual letters from a friend or family member?

Probably most of you have TV's. Does it seem like the ads are increasing even on the cable or satellite TV we pay for? And every time we come home from Park Falls, Rodney

comments on a billboard. It just speaks to him and in not such a nice way. Butternut Café, our food is OK. What's that about? OK?

All these are ways that others communicate with us, wanted or unwanted. But how about the times when you want to communicate with others?

You send an email and no response.

You leave a phone message and do not get a return call.

Lately, this has been one we have had our feathers ruffled over. You go to a restaurant, decide on what you want to order, and the server is nowhere in sight. Lost in space and you are still on planet earth.

Communication is a necessity of human life. But it can be so very upsetting, uncomfortable, and down-right maddening. And as human nature has it, we all experience communication both receiving and giving in many ways. And today, I want us to think about our method of communicating. In particular how we communicate with God. Do we let our disappointment with human communication get in the way of communicating with God? Do we find that we are beset with the same problems or attitudes when we communicate with God?

Think we all know that the way we communicate with God is through prayer. Our Scripture text today tells us stories in an effort to help us realize that communication with God is not like our human communication. Prayer is something God wants with us. He wants us to be in touch with Him, and not just at bedtime or mealtime, but throughout the day. And certainly, most of us have felt the need to become closer to and to speak with our creator. I see and feel the need when I look out into the world, when things don't seem to go right for our congregation members. People ask for prayers all the time. Once in a while, I wonder if people think that I have some magic words to say or a special phone line directly to God.

Although I do believe that there is tremendous power in prayer, I do know that just because I am a pastor, I don't have a direct line to God. In fact, I too often feel inadequate when asked to pray out loud in a group or alone in my bedroom. I think that is what the disciples were feeling in our text for today. They asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray!" The disciples realized the need for prayer and the tremendous power in prayer. And Jesus was willing to give them a model prayer. And folks it is a wonderful model for prayer. However, it should not be the only prayer that we pray.

I am well aware that Lutherans are not really good at praying. Maybe it is the quiet nature of the Scandinavian people's influence, but I have found it true in many churches. If you have ever been around when a Southern Baptist prays you will understand what I am saying. They can pray about anything at any time. Their prayers come as naturally as breathing. And whole community comes together and shares in praying. But us Lutherans seem to find it difficult to find the rhythm and beauty of prayer. Maybe we are too liturgically minded?

Prayer is not just asking God to fill all our needs and then going about our busy lives until he answers. Prayer has a rhythm to it and a spirit and needs our full attention. So yes, we do need to learn to pray. Some of us learned as children to pray before meals and at

bedtime. Those prayers still are rolling around in our heads and hearts and are still appropriate as we are all children of the heavenly Father. One thing we must learn as adults is that we have to stick around for the answer. God is not some machine that answers prayers “poof”. One of the hardest things to learn about prayer is to wait around for an answer. We need to let God be part of the conversation and contribute to it. And we must believe that God will answer our prayers.

We pray for so many different reasons. I find that we mostly pray when we are in trouble or need something. We should keep that childlike manner of asking a parent for something. In fact, how does this model prayer Jesus taught us start? Our Father, right? Think with me a minute about a child asking her daddy for something special. She loves her daddy and knows that he would probably do anything for her. I know as a child people said that I had my dad wrapped around my finger. All, I had to say was “I love you” and all was forgiven, or all would be OK. So, from our childhood charm, we know that it is good to start a conversation with God with adoration.

Another thing we learn as children is to say we are sorry. I know my mom and dad drilled it into my head to apologize when I did something wrong or hurt someone. Another good act we should remember then is to confess and ask for forgiveness.

Going around in my head as I was writing this was the famous parental statement, “What do you say?” Bet I heard it a thousand times when I was young and used it with my children too, to teach them to say, “thank you”. God gives us so much and has done so much for us that we should show our gratitude to Him. What other Father do you know that would give up His only son to give us the great gifts of grace: forgiveness, abundant and eternal life?

Another thing I learned as a child was that when I needed something my parents would always be there to sooth the hurt or help me out of a jam. All I needed to do was to ask them. God will bear that same burden for us as we live through trying times or when things go wrong. One of the most difficult things about losing a parent is feeling that there is no one left to help us when we are in need. But not true. Our heavenly Father will be there to walk with us as we face unpleasant situations.

We have just covered the ACTS of prayer: Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Some of you might have learned that in confirmation years ago. Some of us were taught that if we included all these four points in our prayers, they would be perfect, just right. But I know that God is not looking for a perfect prayer or a perfect prayer. God wants our prayers to be sincere. God wants our prayers to come to Him out of love. And folks it is Ok if you have trouble finding the words or if they come emotionally through tears. And remember that Jesus gave us a wonderful prayer to pray anytime and anywhere we want.

And remember his words in our text today, “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened.” Our Father in heaven is an awesomely powerful God who can move mountains. And I have found that God is always

more ready to hear than we are to pray. It is also true that God is ready to give us more than we desire or deserve. We just need to believe in the power of prayer.

Pray with all your heart and God will be present, just as earthly father hears the words of his children. Prayer is a gift that is only possible because our God has such intense love for us. You don't need fancy words, the latest model of smart phone or even email. Your heavenly father is waiting to hear from you.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior and in God our Father who listens when we pray and walks with us in all ways. **AMEN**