

Sermon: July 18, 2021
"Our father, who art ..."

How many times have I said "The Lord's Prayer" over the years???
I can crank out "the our father" over and over again ----- but what does it mean to me??
This morning ... across "the great divide" called LaGrange Road ----- another insane sunrise!!
I stand in the middle of the parking lot ...and begin saying "The Lord's Prayer" ----- very slowly.

"Our Father, who art in heaven" "Hallowed be thy name"
"Thy kingdom come" "Thy will be done" Not just in heaven ... but here on earth.
Forgive me, Lord ... as I need to forgive others.
Lead me not into temptation. Please, deliver me from evil.

I like what Jesus says before this ...
When you pray, don't babble. Don't try to impress others with long prayers and loud voices.
God knows what you need. Be humble. Be quiet.

I'm thinking today about the Beck-Morris-Roberts-Sallay family.
Dayna who died. Her kids left behind. All they are going through.
All we can do is somehow let them know ----- THEY ARE NOT ALONE.
Yes ----- we pray for them. Yet we know: prayer is more than words.
Sometimes prayer looks like a car wash ... maybe prayer looks like the "love bucket."
A phone call. A knock on the door. A handshake or a hug

Ultimately ----- prayer is about making a difference.
Prayer may not change the world. It doesn't always make things better.
It's not about wishes coming true.
Prayer is about being connected. It's about not being alone. It's about saying the words ...
and then doing something about it.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done: not just in heaven, but on earth."
This is our calling: to make God's kingdom "come alive" right here. Today. Tomorrow.
In life's ordinary moments.

I look at our world ... and I sometimes get sad.
*The culture of violence taking over so much of our world.
*Covid numbers going back up.
*And the Olympics. So much of the innocence and joy of competition is getting buried
beneath the fear of getting the virus.
Yet I hear that voice: WE CANNOT GIVE UP OR GIVE IN.
We gotta keep praying and working for the common good!!

Are you ever at a loss for words?
I shared in Amanda's wedding Friday evening. Her brother is Adam ----- whose picture graces the wall
just outside my office. When I do a wedding ... there are some basic things I say ... especially when I don't
know the family really well.
But this is Adam's and Amanda's family. We have traveled many roads ... shared the journey.
But since Adam died 27 years ago ... a lot of us have gone our separate ways.

I walk out front. Look over the folks gathered. Whatever I had planned to say --- it goes blank!!
I see all these folks whom I haven't seen in years. What I was going to say doesn't matter. All that matters is the "moment of now."

Amanda and Kevin ----- all these people are a part of who you are today.
We have all shared the same sunrises and sunsets. Yet our paths are so different.
You two have brought us together ----- thank you!!

For Thursday night worship ... I usually don't say much. (Hey, I don't say "much" on Sunday mornings.)
Just before worship is about to begin ... Mark and Lori Nussle walk in the door.
Mark ---- our choir director for 40 years. They haven't been back since the pandemic began ... as Mark has been dealing with lots of health issues. And Lori ---- she looks amazing.

After worship ... Mark, Lori, and I are sitting on the benches just outside the back door.
"Would you like a bit of brandy??"

Yes!!

Mark looks at me. "Don, we watch every "thought for the day." From our place in Wisconsin ... we tune you in every Sunday.

But right now ----- "IT FEELS SO GOOD TO BE HERE!!!!"

I keep thinking of those words. "It feels so good to be here."

Our church. This space.
It's just a "speck" in the cosmic stream of things.
And yet ... in a spiritual sort of way ... this place is a connection to a "humble carpenter" whose spirit knows no boundaries.

Lord ----- "may your kingdom come."
And help us to do what we can to make your kingdom more real here on earth.

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