

**Lord Teach Us**  
**January 23, 2011**

**Scriptures: Psalm 119**

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<sup>1</sup>Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart,

<sup>3</sup>who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

<sup>4</sup>You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.

<sup>5</sup>O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!

<sup>6</sup>Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

<sup>7</sup>I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous ordinances.

<sup>8</sup>I will observe your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

**Luke 11:1-10- The Lord's Prayer**

He (Jesus) 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.' 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 indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

**Perseverance in Prayer**

And 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; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." And 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." I 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.

'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 for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

**Proclamation of the Word**

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(Introduction from Laura Conrad)

Sportscaster John Madden was in Denver to cover a football game and down by the Bronco's bench he saw a telephone and he asked the head coach what that was for and the coach said, "That's a hotline to God." Madden said, "Can I use it?" and the coach said, "It'll cost you \$100." Madden scratched his head and said, "What the heck I need help with my picks every week," and he paid the \$100 and sure enough his picks were perfect that week. Next weekend Madden was in Green Bay and there was another phone just like the one he'd seen in Denver, down by the Packers bench. And he asked the head coach what that phone was for and once again he was told that that was a hotline to God, but if he wanted to use it, that would cost him \$100. This time Madden gladly forked over the \$100 and again his picks that week were perfect. The next weekend he was in Dallas at Texas Stadium to cover a Cowboys game and noticed another one of those phones right by the Cowboys bench. And so Madden went up to the head coach, Chan Gaily and said, "Is that one of those hotlines to God?" Gaily said, "It sure is; but if you want to use it, it'll cost you 35 cents." Madden was stunned, he said to Gaily, "I had to pay \$100 in Denver and Green Bay to use that phone." And Gaily rather matter of factly said, "Well of course. We're in Texas. That's a local call."

Prayer is our connection, our hotline to God. And for us it is a local call. These weeks ahead we will be learning about prayer by praying. I don't know about you, but I learn best by doing. You may have heard the educator's mantra:

Tell me and I'll forget  
Show me, and I may remember  
Involve me, and I will understand.

Prayer is lots of things...it is listening, it is speaking, it is beseeching/pleading, it is action and seeking...but most of all prayer is an orientation.

Prayer is orienting our lives towards the one who is the source of our lives. Jesus prayed at all times and in a variety of ways. In Luke's gospel alone Jesus' praying is mentioned a dozen times.

The first mention of Jesus praying is Luke 3. While Jesus is baptized he is praying and the heavens open. The Spirit of God descends on him and speaks "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Jesus' whole life and ministry was oriented toward the will of God and in God, Jesus found his identity. You are my Son...That intimacy is one we offer when we begin to pray as Jesus teaches his disciples to pray in the very first word, "Father". In the Psalm today, the way of seeking God is about following the law, Jesus says seeking God is following me- it is a way of life.

Baptized into a way of life, a ministry, a mission, Jesus is sustained by prayer:

He withdraws the Bible says to a lonely place to pray  
He prays all night when he calls the disciples to follow  
He is praying right before Peter confesses him to be the messiah  
He prays and sees Moses and Elijah upon the Mountain  
He prays at Gethsemane when he is about to be arrested and crucified  
He prays at the table over the bread and wine  
He prays on the cross for forgiveness for those who kill him

Jesus prays and keeps that connection to God his source, his guide and comfort- in life and in death.

And if we are seeking to be disciples on this journey of faith, we will pray as Jesus did.

We learn by listening, seeing, and being involved, but we also learn by example. In the passage today, the disciples witness Jesus praying and ask, "Lord, teach us to pray" So today I have asked some members of the Transformation Team to share how God is teaching them and our church to pray. Art Williams is an elder-elect and member of the team.

ART:

Laura asked me to talk today. So at first I thought I would be talking about the Pray Daily Initiative, but about the nuts and bolts – you know the how it works. I can usually do that kind of speaking. Then she told me she wanted me to talk about my prayer life, that's when I started to get a little uncomfortable. Then she tells me that it will be part of the Sermon – and I then new I was in trouble.

I confess that I have not always had a daily prayer life, and when I have, it has not been a traditional one. However, off and on since my college days, I have been in a relationship with God, but it is only in this later part of my life that I have been more intentional about being in communications on a regular basis. You will notice I did not say "daily". And I wish this was not the case.

My prayer life starts with my assumption that God knows all that I need and want. I've also learned over the years, through conversations with other believers, that our pray life can take many different forms. It can be

traditional prayer; it can be conversation or doing God's work with our hands, music. It can take place in many different ways.

But for me it's about being in "conversation" with God. And that often is me asking God to opening my eyes and ears so that I am can understand what he is leading me to do. And sometimes it is about specific things that I am "not" doing with my life, other times it's about issues, good and bad, or about things happening around us that I just do not understand. And then there are other times, I just get really mad and yell at Him about things happening around us, and that's OK with God and as Randy and Rodney will attest I do it a lot on the golf course!!!

But seriously, most of the time my prayers are about "Thanking" God, thanking Him for all the abundance that He has given me and my family.

And so the most important thing to me is to be in touch with God everyday. And I am trying to do just that. Because I know there is one thing that I have learned from my relationship with God. He wants to be in a relationship with each one of us. Not on our time, but all the time!!!!

So let me close with this: Paul writes in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:16 – 18: *Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

RANDY MOORE: (Chair of the Transformation Team and Elder)

We are now asking for YOUR help!

Some of you are now saying, "Uh-Oh, here we go". But this is for each of us – and for us as a whole.

I am Randy Moore and an active serving Elder heading the Planning Ministry. As part of our responsibilities, we are to help lead the development of a Long Range Plan for FHPC. I won't go into the whole sequence of events, but in searching for a process to prepare a LRP, we found that the Foothills Presbytery was just beginning to sponsor a new process called "Acts 16:5" This is based on the passage from Acts which says "So the Churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers". Oh, by the way, this was about the time Laura was coming on board as our new minister.

After several of us attended information meetings on this process, we determined that it was a good path to help us with developing a guide for the future of FHPC. We developed a core team (the Transformation Team) and got started. Early on we discussed and agreed that a key focus must be to find a way to understand and do God's Will in this endeavor. But, the issue was how to hear and see God's Will. We believe that FHPC's fundamental mission is to "Glorify God, Make disciples, and Meet human needs". But how do we do this?

We pray together each time we meet for this understanding.

During this time, I also read a book entitled "Experiencing God" by Henry and Richard Blackaby. The entire book relates life adventures and challenges that were guided through their relationship with God. I would like to relay a few points made in this book.

1) The fundamental message is that a relationship with God will lead you and those around you to do great things. You develop that relationship through prayer.

2) Prayer is a conversation – not a one-way comment about what I want from God. I speak to God, and He speaks to me. Prayer also includes listening. In fact, what God says to me in prayer is far more important than what I say to Him. After all, God already knows what I'm going to tell Him, but he has amazing things to reveal that I don't know.

3) Prayer is a relationship, not a religious activity. Through prayer I adjust to God, God doesn't adjust to me. When the Holy Spirit reveals a truth to me in Prayer, He is present and actively working in my life.

SO, we need your help to allow God's Will to guide FHPC. We are asking you to participate with us in the Daily Prayer initiative so that we as individuals and as a whole body receive God's direction and help.

Laura concludes:

Disciples are students, are learners. The three of us are learning about prayer, even if we have been pray-ers for a long time. In the weeks ahead we will consider the Lord's Prayer in worship. We will sing it, say it, pray it and live it. For the prayer Jesus teaches his disciples is about the Christian's way of life.

Will you pray with me???

Prayer: (deep breath)

Holy Spirit, you blow among us, calling us to turn our hearts and attentions towards you and what you are doing. So yank us up out of our sleepy malaise. Draw us near out of our over-scheduled, over anxious lives into the adventure of faith.

Hear our prayers, O Lord. Amen.

*Lord, Teach Us*

Laura Smith Conrad, Art Williams, Randy Moore  
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