

July 24, 2022

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 11:1-13

About three ago I was able to take in a lecture on the gender of God. It was by the rabbi I listen too. So it was an Orthodox Jewish perspective. I thought it would be helpful to share some of the lecture with you. It certainly shed much light on this topic. This is also the context Jesus would have been working with in this morning's gospel. Buckle in!

Jews refer to God as a He. Simple reason is that we are in a relationship with God! So if God is a She then we would be the he. We would rather God be the He and we be the she. God was the One who started this relationship and we are responding to it. So we take the feminine role as the responding party to it, and God who is the initiator of this relationship takes the masculine. It is much better for us to take the feminine and God the masculine.

The female psyche is a hunger for life. Looking for something more that is missing. The masculine psyche is the mentality to provide that what is missing. This is why a man and a woman can make a marriage work.

If they both did the same thing there would be clashes. The hunger for life and the responsibility for life is what male and female are all about. This way of thinking is very Jewish. Yet it gives us an insight into their relationship with God. This relationship was born out of the Mt. Sinai experiences with God. So it is no surprise that Jesus would refer to God as Father. Being a rabbi, Jesus would be very familiar with this concept.

Teach us to pray, is a very basic request. However it is loaded with much deeper realities. The disciples are actually asking Jesus, how can we know God better or in a deeper way? They want to be able to talk to Him and know Him more closely. When you know a person's name it changes the conversation completely. Remember that last week's sermon was about talking and listening to God.

Having a curious nature, I wondered if there was a different or deeper way to pray to God. Could you do it without words and long prayers? After thinking much about it, I realized that I did not want to spend money on an air- line ticket to sit on a mountain in the Himalayas. There is a much cheaper way to pray deeply and keep my luggage! The answer will amaze you because it can be done anywhere and by anyone. Age is not a restriction. Do I have your attention now?

The answer is to make your life a living prayer. Keep in mind that actions speak Louder than words. Flowery words only tickle your ears if there are no actions to back it up. So what do you have to do to make

this happen? Start the day off, before your feet hit the floor, and say to God, “Lord, I am dedicating this day to You and may my actions and thoughts be a living prayer.” We all want our prayer to be good if we are offering it to God. We are really saying in our prayer that we are going to try and be the best person I can be. Then we will try to be good, kind, thoughtful of others we meet, merciful and compassionate. This physical stuff is much easier than trying to control our thoughts.

This type of prayer is not easy. God accepts it all as long as we try with real effort in our hearts. This type of prayer requires that we are aware of our actions and thoughts. Remember that we do not do good things to be saved. We are saved and that inspires us to do good things. One of the closings for liturgy is, “Praise God by how you live your life.” This is encouraging us to make our lives a living prayer.

What to take away from this rant. Pray and talk to God and listen when He speaks. The idea of God as a He is a cultural thing. It helps us to define our relationship with Him. The Orthodox Jewish explanation was interesting. That is why we refer to God as He.

There are deeper ways to pray to God. They do not have to be with words. Another way is to do good things and helping others. When we do this we are changing our lives into a living prayer. Talk about another form of transfiguration. This is not easy to do, and may not be for everyone. As long as we try. God appreciates and accepts all our efforts. We could start off with what we can do. It might only be one

or two days a week, but that is a start and we tried. God still accepts our trying. Good luck with this if you decide to give it a try. God will bless your efforts. I'm still working on this myself. It's more like a prayerful comedy, Pastor D