PRAYER KNOWS NO LIMITS!

1. It trusts in God’s grace
2. It submit to God’s will

Each year we see more and more advances in technology and other facets of our lives. For instance, I was looking at speed records for vehicles which travel on the ground. They call these **land speed** records as opposed to records by boats or airplanes. The first record showed that an electric car in 1898 went a whopping 39 mph. By 1927 the first car would break 200 mph. Thinking this might never be broken, we see that in 1963 the first vehicle went 400 mph on the Salt Flats here in the USA. By 1965 the record was over 600 mph. Where would the limits stop? In 1997 the record for the fastest land speed was set at 763 mph which was the first land vehicle to break the speed of sound. Where is the limit? It seems that if we put our mind to it, we can continue to make vehicles with bigger engines and more powerful rocket powered motors.

As we come to God’s house today, we see something else that has no limits. We see that prayer has no limits. We can come to our Lord and Savior over and over again knowing that God can accomplish anything through prayer. We might always think that prayer is powerful, but today we’re reminded that **PRAYER KNOWS NO LIMITS!** It trusts in God’s grace and it submits to God’s will.

Last week our Scripture reading was about Abraham being visited by three men, who actually were not real men but two angels and the Lord. These men had told Abraham and Sarah that they were going to have a child, even though they were well pass the years of childbearing. After they had finished their visit with Abraham and Sarah, they were going to go to Sodom and Gomorrah. They were going there to see the wickedness that was taking root in the hearts and minds of the people living in these cities. We are told: **So the Lord said,** *Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very flagrant, I will go down now and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has come to me. If not, I will know.*

This reminds us of the fact that God does not condone sin. He did not condone the sin of sexual perversion and homosexuality going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. Even today, it may seem like people and countries are getting away with all kinds of terrible sins, but God knows what is going on and God hates sin. He tells us that sin will be punished. Yes, it is easy to point our fingers at people we know who are living horrible and sinful lives, but we first need to point the finger at our own hearts and actions.

What do we see when we point the finger at ourselves? We see people who are greedy and impatient. We see people who are selfish and hurtful. We see people who think sin is not all that bad or hurtful. It is this reminder from God that opens our hearts to see and believe that God is the only answer for sin and any spiritual problem that sin may bring. We need to believe and trust that God’s grace has saved us and that God’s grace is all around us.

That was seen when God came to us in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. Without our asking, he went to the cross to bear the wrath of God's judgment for the sin of the whole world. He did it because of his great love, his undeserved love for us. And now through God’s gift of faith, we have been washed and made holy in his sight by the blood of Jesus. By faith in the Son of God, our Savior, we can offer prayers that are pleasing to God, confidently trusting in his love for us.

Abraham shows us a wonderful example of what it means to pray to our Lord and God. Abraham’s heart was filled with faith, and Abraham knew that prayer was one of God’s
blessings for God’s children as we sit and talk with God. He knew that when he prayed to God, God would listen and God in his grace would answer his prayer in the best possible way. His prayer was for the believers who lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He wanted those righteous people to be saved and spared. We are told: The two men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Abraham approached him and said, Will you really sweep away the righteous along with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep them away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? The Lord said, If I find fifty righteous people within the city of Sodom, then I will spare the entire place for their sake. Abraham answered, See now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it on myself to speak to my Lord. What if there are five fewer than fifty righteous? Will you destroy the entire city if the number is five short? He said, I will not destroy it if i find forty-five there.

As we look at our prayer lives, do we always think of prayer as something that is so wonderful that I will want to use it as often as possible? Do we approach prayer as a privilege and joy as we sit down one on one and talk personally with the God of this universe who created us and saved us from our sin? Do we approach prayer with a confidence which fills our hearts, which says that there are no limits with God, because in his grace and mercy, he will answer your prayers just right? Are we bold like Abraham to approach God with difficult prayers which seem to push the boundaries? Are we willing to go to the well of God’s grace and mercy and ask things that might not seem possible or even wise by human standards? It is not wrong to ask for difficult things. In fact it would be wrong to not approach our God in prayer when the most difficult things come into our lives.

When we are sick, go to God in prayer. When we do not know where to turn next and our lives are falling apart all around us, turn to the Lord in prayer. When we are going through a crisis, turn to the Lord in prayer. When marriages are on the rocks, turn to the Lord in prayer. When our emotions are high and our bodies are worn out, turn to the Lord in prayer. Just like Abraham, realize that there are no boundaries when we approach God in prayer.

Abraham also teaches us to approach God in prayer with persistence. Abraham did not stop right away. He continued to plead with his Lord and Savior: Abraham answered, See now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it on myself to speak to my Lord. What if there are five fewer than fifty righteous? Will you destroy the entire city if the number is five short? He said, I will not destroy it if i find forty-five there. He said, Please, do not be angry, my Lord, but I will speak just once more. What if ten are found there? He said, I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten.

Was Abraham bothering God? Was Abraham being the spoiled brat kid in the store who after begging and begging got the candy bar at the checkout? Not at all. Abraham gives us a wonderful example of what it means to trust in God’s grace. He knew that God in grace would never cut him off or tell him to go away. He knew that God would listen to him over and over again. He knew that God had made this promise: Ask and it will be given to you. He knew that the only one who could do anything to save those people in Sodom and Gomorrah was God himself.

As we go through life, we might ask ourselves how persistent we are in our prayer lives. How often do we forget to pray, because we think that it is something so small that God does not really want to bother with it? How often have we prayed for something once or twice, but stopped when it seemed like we did not really get an answer from God? How many of us think of God as someone who is like the spoiled sport star who wants nothing to do with the fans, because he is better than everyone else and does not rally want to help the little people like
God does listen to every believer’s prayer. God does answer every prayer of his believers. But the question is how does God answer every prayer. How many of us have prayed for something and it did not really seem to be answered? If it was answered, it was not anywhere close to what we prayed for. We then became discouraged because we did not get exactly what we prayed for. As we look at Abraham, we need to recognize that God commands us to pray boldly and persistently, but our prayers always are going to be answered according to God’s good and perfect will.

But what does that exactly mean, according to God’s will? It means that we may not always get what we think is best for ourselves. We may think that if only somehow got a little more money, our lives would all of a sudden be good, but God may know something that we do not know and not give us the money we ask for. Does that mean God does not care or is not concerned for us? No. It means that whatever God gave us to answer that prayer was better than the money we prayed for. We always submit to God’s will, because it is always better than our will.

That is what Abraham did as he prayed to the Lord and that is what we can do. In Abraham’s case, we know that there were not even ten righteous in all of those cities and those cities were destroyed, but his nephew Lot, his wife and two daughters were spared. That was God’s will. It may not have been what Abraham wanted or expected, but it was what God knew was best for everyone involved. It takes faith to trust that God’s will is best. It takes faith to know and believe that God will hear our prayers and answer them in the best ways possible. It takes faith to know what God’s will is and know that God would never do anything to hurt one of his children.

My friends, remember prayer has no limits. We can come to him at anytime with persistence and faith and know that God is actually listening to us – we are his dear children. Prayer is powerful and beneficial. May we always use prayer and trust that prayer is God’s good and gracious gift to us as his sinful children. There are no limits that God can accomplish as we pray. Let’s continue to go to him and watch his grace and mercy flow through us and into us. Amen.

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