

Sermon Title: **“Teach Us to Pray!”**

Bible: **Psalm 85 & Luke 11:1-13**

When: on Sunday, July 24th, 2022

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

### **Opening Prayer**

O Lord, your love is steadfast and your love never fails. Your faithfulness is with us. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

#### **1. How Should We Pray?**

How do you pray? The United Methodist Book of Worship explains many ways of praying. These are some of the ways: “Persons may kneel, stand, or sit for prayer, with their eyes either open or closed. Prayers may be led by a layperson - a child, a youth, or an older adult - or a pastor...From the time of John Wesley we have encouraged both formal, written prayers and free, spontaneous prayers...[Prayers] are intended to encourage worship leaders and congregations to find their own styles of speaking and listening to God. (445, the UM Book of Worship)”

Koreans do Tongsung Kido or pray aloud. This is from the United Methodist Book of Worship, number 446. “TONGSUNG KIDO (PRAY ALOUD) In Korean congregations, among others, Tongsung Kido is popular and an important part of prayer life. Usually the congregation is given a specific time period, with a common theme of petition or

supplication. Then all pray aloud at the same time. The voices of others will not bother them when they concentrate on their own earnest prayers, longing for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.” This Tongsung Kido is still popular in most Korean congregations, and sometimes, at our Cal-Nev Annual Conference, we pray aloud, or do Tongsung Kido. Unfortunately, as a Korean, even though I am a pastor, I am somewhat not that good at prayers. I do Tongsung Kido, but I am shy. My favorite prayer is silent prayer, or centering prayer. But I really understand the core of Tongsung Kido. Crying out to the Lord is the key. Crying out with all of our hearts and our minds is the key. Have you cried out to the Lord before? Then, it is not a matter of being shy. It is not a matter of the voices of others. It matters only the Lord our God. When I did Tongsung Kido, I cried and cried out to the Lord with a lot of tears, with all of my strength.

## **2. Jesus Taught Us To Pray**

Today’s Gospel of Luke from the lectionary shows that Jesus taught the disciples to pray. This prayer became the Lord’s Prayer. Every Sunday we say the Lord’s prayer. After Jesus taught us what to pray, Jesus taught us how to pray. There is a person, who has a friend. But he has nothing for his friend. So, he goes and asks for bread from the other friend even at midnight. Can you understand this person, who begs for bread at midnight? If you were in this person’s shoes, could you beg for bread at midnight? Thankfully, Jesus described this person’s begging action not as his shamelessness, but as his persistence. Like this person who needs bread at midnight, Jesus taught us to pray persistently. Jesus taught us to ask, search,

and knock persistently.

### **3. Honest Prayer**

When we read the Lord's prayer, I found that no "please" was included. Who is the Lord? Who is the boss? Who should give orders to whom? Should God order us? Or should we order God? Do we dare to give orders to God, to give, to forgive, to lead, and to deliver, rather than asking with "Please give, please forgive, please lead, and please deliver"? We just pray to give, forgive, lead, and deliver. Without "please," I see how persistently we beg. I see how desperate we are. We thought that we were independent. But we are dependent on God. So, we pray for God to give us this day our daily bread. We thought that we were perfect. But we are imperfect. We need to pray for God to forgive us. We are lost in many ways and many times. So, we want to pray for God to lead us. We are so vulnerable. We pray for God to deliver us. As we are so desperate, there is no time to say "please." We need the Lord. We want the Lord. We are desperate for the Lord! So, we ask the Lord. It does not matter about our shyness, our shame. It does not matter about others' points of view. It only matters to the Lord! Our Lord knows our honest, deepest, and desperate prayers.

### **4. The Holy Spirit**

When I visit our church members who are sick, I pray for their healing. I know that God does not promise that we shall be spared suffering. I know that God does not promise that we will be cured of all illnesses. Nevertheless, I pray for their healing. I know that we cannot avoid our suffering in our lives, and death at the end, but I pray persistently for their healing.

That's because it is my honest and desperate prayer. Jesus taught to ask, search, and knock! I ask, search, and knock persistently, because I am weak. And Jesus taught us to ask the Holy Spirit, because sometimes I do not know what and how to pray. I ask for the holy presence of the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:26 says "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." When we pray, let us pray honestly and persistently. When we pray, or even when we cannot pray, please remember that our Holy Spirit is with us.

### **Closing Prayer**

O Lord, we pray and pray, because we are dependent, because we are imperfect, because we are lost, and because we are vulnerable. We are weak, O Lord. When we pray, please show us your holy presence through the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.