



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

September 8, 2021

DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”

(Luke 18:1)

Did You Know?

- We learned before about the debate of scholars on the date of the Gospel of **Matthew**. Some dates it between the 50s and 70s AD. Some says its date is 80-90 AD, because the author makes a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. (The Chalice Introduction to the New Testament; pg. 152; The NIV Study Bible)
- However, the name of the author is not debated, neither it's meaning, which is **“gift of the Lord”**.
- The Jewish nature of Matthew's Gospel may suggest that it was written in the Holy Land, though many think it may have originated in Syrian Antioch. The church in Antioch had a large Greek-speaking Jewish population and was at the forefront of the mission to the Gentiles, a theme Matthew emphasizes in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) (The NIV Study Bible; Matthew)

Personal Insight

Although news coverages - most of the time - are not the source of relaxation and cheer, I regularly watch the Global Calgary News at least for a shorter period of time in the mornings. It's good to be aware what's going on around us, and I can also find some inspiring reports on this particular channel, including some cute videos that make you smile. 😊

This morning I was delighted to hear about the United Way Calgary and Area's activities, and their upcoming event, which will focus on the relationship between happiness and resilient communities. Dr. Tracy Brower Sociologist explained that when we are connected, we become more generous and supporting towards one another, and this actually also increases the level of our happiness and sense of purpose. In a society where loneliness and lack of belonging affects a lot of people, it is important to hear about the methods how we tackle this 'disease' of our era.

Whoa! Isn't it something that God has been calling us to do through millennia? Now, the idea of the importance of relationships is supported by science! I believe though, that we can leave in *right* relationship with one another when we realize that we were born to both horizontal and vertical relationships. This second is with our Creator God, with whom we are encouraged to communicate through daily prayers.

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



Man of Prayer

Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:17–18

READ Matthew 6:9–13

My family remembers my Grandpa Dierking as a man of strong faith and prayer. But it wasn't always so. My aunt recalls the first time her father announced to the family, "We're going to start giving thanks to God before we eat." His first prayer was far from eloquent, but Grandpa continued the practice of prayer for the next fifty years, praying often throughout each day. When he died, my husband gave my grandmother a "praying hands" plant, saying, "Grandpa was a man of prayer." His decision to follow God and talk to Him each day changed him into a faithful servant of Christ.

The Bible has a lot to say about prayer. In Matthew 6:9–13, Jesus gave a pattern for prayer to His followers, teaching them to approach God with sincere praise for who He is. As we bring our requests to God, we trust Him to provide "our daily bread" (v. 11). As we confess our sins, we ask Him for forgiveness and for help to avoid temptation (vv. 12–13).

But we aren't limited to praying the "Lord's Prayer." God wants us to pray "all kinds of prayers" on "all occasions" (Ephesians 6:18). Praying is vital for our spiritual growth, and it gives us the opportunity to be in continual conversation with Him every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17–18).

As we approach God with humble hearts that yearn to talk with Him, may He help us know and love Him better. – By **Cindy Hess Kasper**

REFLECT & PRAY

Father, thank You for the blessing of prayer and Your acceptance of me whenever I call on You. Amen.

How does God view the humble prayers of His children that may be less than eloquent?
How can you make prayer a part of your daily life?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Though most of us are familiar with the Lord's Prayer, the Gospels contain several other prayers of Jesus. In John 17, we read Jesus' High Priestly Prayer uttered on the night of His betrayal and arrest. After praying for Himself (vv. 1–5), Jesus prays for His disciples (vv. 6–19) and for all believers (vv. 20–26). He asks the Father to protect the church, sanctify it, and cause it to grow. Jesus also prays three short prayers on the cross (Luke 23:34; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:46).

Other prayers of Jesus include a prayer of thanks (John 6:11), a prayer before raising Lazarus (11:41–42), and a prayer after entering Jerusalem (12:27–28). Moreover, Jesus often withdrew from others to spend time in prayer with His Father (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; John 6:15). He exemplifies what it means to "pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). – By **Alyson Kieda**

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