

Coaldale Mennonite Church

2316 – 17 St., Coaldale, Alberta

***“Rooted in Jesus, Growing in Grace, Connected in
Community, Branching into the World”***

Keeping in Touch – July 16, 2021



- ✓ As of July 1st, the Alberta Government has lifted all Covid protocols. At CMC, we are taking a more gradual approach to moving forward. We are highly recommending that masks continue to be worn in church. We will continue to physically distance in the sanctuary. Every other bench will be available for seating. Hand sanitizing stations will remain throughout the church. Registration ahead of time is no longer required.

Please do not attend in person if you are experiencing the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat).

- ✓ **Starting this Sunday, July 18th, our Sunday Worship Services will be returning to a 10:45am start time.** The **Live Stream** will also start at **10:45am**. Our Zoom time of Sharing and Announcements will be discontinued but we will be having a time of Sharing and Announcements during the service. The Sharing and Announcements will only be seen during the actual livestream. They will not be put on YouTube to be seen on a later date.
- ✓ **The Live Stream of the Sunday Service will begin at 10:45am.** You will be able to find the Live Stream on **You Tube** and searching **Coaldale Mennonite Church**.



PRAYER FOCUS



Pray for:

- † **David Giesbrecht** who is recuperating at home.
- † **Our seniors at the various lodges and those in their homes.**
- † **Street's Alive**
- † **Safety as people travel for vacation and summer adventures.**

(If you would like to have a prayer request in this weekly update, please contact Jodi at cmchurch@telusplanet.net or 403-345-3363.)

Leading us in Worship Next Sunday (July 25th)

Worship Leader: Eric Giesbrecht

Music: Doris Janzen

Speaker: Dave Wiebe

Scripture Readings: Romans 4:1-8, 13-25

Sermon: "The Rest of Faith"

Sound: Bill Chapman

Media: Nic Groenheide

Usher Team: Team 2

Note from Pastor Gary

“On Our Journey with Prayer: The Simple Prayer”

Philip Yancey in his article, on “Grappling with God”, in Christianity Today, October 20, 2006, told a brief story of a young lady breaking politeness protocol, during a time of sharing personal needs during their church service. "God, I hated you after the rape! How could you let this happen to me? And I hated the people in this church who tried to comfort me. I didn't want comfort. I wanted revenge. I wanted to hurt back. I thank you, God, that you didn't give up on me, and neither did some of these people. You kept after me, and I come back to you now and ask that you heal the scars in my soul." What a gutsy prayer, a prayer many of us might want to pray (with different circumstances) at some time or another but are afraid to because 'it is just not done' or we may think that God cannot handle the anger in this kind of a prayer.

Richard Foster in his book, Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home, in his chapter on the “Simple Prayer” says, “In the most natural and simple way possible we learn to pray our experiences by taking up the ordinary events of everyday life and giving them to God. Perhaps we have a crushing failure that gives us more than one sleepless night. Well, we pace the floor with God, telling him of our hurt and pain and or disappoints. “Why me?” we cry out, “why me?” for frustration and tears and anger are also the language of Simple Prayer...We should feel perfectly free to complain to God, or argue with God, or yell at God...We must never believe the lie that says that the details of our lives are not the proper content of prayer” (pp 11-12).

In this context, read the parable that Jesus told in Luke 18:1-8 (NIV). Try to comprehend the emotion of the widow who constantly harassed the judge to give her justice. As you reflect on the parable think how the conclusion fits with the parable “when the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth?” How does the persistent engagement with God (like the widow with the judge) expressing our concerns and struggles help our faith?

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Luke continues with another parable in Luke 18:9-14 (NIV) that also records a Simple Prayer. As you read this parable notice the difference between the two persons and the prayers that they offered at the temple. A Pharisee who is supposed to know how to pray and engage with God, offered a prayer of superiority, putting himself above the tax collector. To say the least his prayer did not convey a deep connection with God. The tax collector was an “outcast” and had to stand at a distance but

prayed an honest prayer from his heart “asking God to have mercy on him, a sinner.” His honest prayer connects his heart to the heart of God.

⁹ *To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable:* ¹⁰ *“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ ¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”*

Lest we think that we are above this kind of prayer Foster says, “There is a temptation, especially by the “sophisticated,” to despise the most elementary way of praying...What these people fail to see, however, is that Simple Prayer is necessary, even essential to the spiritual life. The only way we move beyond “self-centered prayer” (if indeed we ever do) is by moving through it, not by making a detour around it...But when we pray, genuinely pray, the real condition of our heart is revealed. This is as it should be. This is when God truly begins to work with us. The adventure is just beginning” (pp. 10-11).

Perhaps we have learned to pray the Simple Prayer without really understanding that this prayer is important in our spiritual development. It is important because in praying this prayer we stay engaged with God who cares deeply for us and stays with us through the struggle. Before going to bed it might be helpful to reflect back over the day and answer the question “have I prayed the Simple Prayer today? And how did I encounter God in this prayer?”

Foster ends this chapter with a simple prayer (p. 15).

“Dear Jesus, how desperately I need to learn to pray. And yet when I am honest, I often do not want to pray.

I am distracted!

I am stubborn!

I am self-centered!

In your mercy, bring my “want-er” more in line with my “need-er” so I can come to want what I need.

In your name and for your sake, I pray. Amen” (p.15).

Pastor Gary Giesbrecht



To Contact the Church

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