



Saturday, 8 July 2017 found 9 of LCOC's finest gathering to enjoy food, fun and fellowship at the monthly Men's Prayer Breakfast. We were treated to a bevy of donuts, bagels and spreads, fresh fruit, juice and coffee. Could not help but notice the one s'mores donut – chocolate icing, chocolate chunks, tiny marshmallows and crumbled graham cracker. Only thing missing was the camp fire. I won't divulge who got that one, but he's usually dressed in a cow suit hanging out at Chick Fil A! But as promised, this article is non-attributional, no names are ever divulged to protect the suspect(s).

As we were chowing down on our otherwise forbidden goodies, we were taking delight in how tasty the selections were. We then moved onto a general discussion of experiences with good and bad restaurants when one gent remarked "You don't recognize good food until you've had bad food"! Now that's insightful, you can almost hear Confucius or perhaps Will Rogers expressing that sentiment. Another gent chimed in that having fresh fruit along with our donuts and bagels was actually a well-balanced meal, as the fruit is considered as "anti-calories". Hard to argue with that logic either.

Another gent related that he is planning to move to sunny Florida (a bittersweet moment for the group, happy for him, but sad to see him leave our group – been one of our regulars for a long time). He has a house on a golf course in a senior living complex with room in his garage for a golf cart – now THAT's way cool! He apparently doesn't play golf or have clubs. But I have to remind him that many folks who do ride in golf carts have clubs costing several hundreds of dollars and still don't play anything resembling golf either! Then somehow, we drifted into discussions about child day care centers. Not sure of any connection, but given the cycle of life, and the cast of characters found in both a 55+ community and Day Care Center, under certain circumstances, it seems there's not a lot of difference at times, where habitants of one versus the other behave all that differently. You know, learning those lessons about sharing, respecting other's possessions, not invading personal space, not interrupting nap time, tattling, you know, life lessons. Just saying.

Phil had the lesson for the day, and he chose to discuss The Lord's Prayer. We would be discussing this prayer at a general and very high level, and he also interjected some of Martin Luther's lessons from his *Small Catechism*. We started off by reading **Luke 11: 1-4**, where Jesus was asked by a disciple to teach them to pray. *"He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation".* Next we read **Matthew 6: 6-15**: *"This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one".* We then discussed certain attributes of this prayer, how Luther explained some of these passages, and how we individually thought of The Lord's Prayer.

Luther taught that the Ten Commandments taught us what God expected us to do or not to do, the Law of the Lord. Next the Apostle's Creed showed us who God is and what He is like, this is the Gospel (or Faith). The Lord's Prayer is the prescription for a Christian Life, our good works. As such this order of the Commandments, Creed and Lord's Prayer makes sense: First the law, then faith, then good works and prayer. The faith we confess in the Creed is constantly challenged, so the Lord's Prayer is the prayer for those tempted by the forces of evil, the devil and our world. Each petition of the Lord's Prayer is a cry to God for his help in times of temptation.

Continuing with Luther's teachings, he broke down each petition into understandable parts. God's name is hallowed when those who distort and profane his Word are restrained. God's kingdom comes when his Spirit overcomes us and we live according to His Word. God's will be done when he hinders and defeats every evil plan and purpose of our spiritual enemies. He gives daily bread even to the ungrateful who take it for granted. Forgiveness is freely given even to those not deserving. Help in temptation is provided for those under constant pressure from powerful forces such as false belief and despair. Deliverance from evil comes not until our last hour when God takes us from this world of sorrow to Himself in Heaven.

We then learned that in the Old Testament, the great prayer warriors never once called God their father. It was new to the people in Jesus' time to think of God as our Father. By asking us to call God our Father, Jesus is telling us that we can

come close to God as if He were our earthly father as well. Jesus taught that God's will prevails on earth as it does in Heaven. And our prayers need not focus on our own needs, God already knows those, so pray for others.

A discussion followed about the Lord's Prayer passage of "*Forgive us our sins (or trespasses), for we also forgive everyone who sins (or trespasses) against us*". This is a tough one for many people. It may be easy to ask God to forgive our trespasses, but God in his infinite wisdom teaches us that in order for Him to forgive us, we must also forgive those who've hurt us. God is not being difficult, but rather He's teaching us that when there is bitterness and anger in our hearts, there's no room for His love to fill our hearts. How can we ask God to be merciful and forgive our sins if we hold a grudge or refuse to forgive someone who's wronged us? Forgiving someone is easier said than done for sure, but God does give us that strength through the power of prayer.

At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (King James translation) we say "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen". What does this mean and where did those words come from? The easy part, the words. Luther explains the words by writing that each person should be certain that such petitions of the Lord's Prayer are acceptable to our heavenly Father and are heard by Him, for he himself has commanded us to pray in this manner and has promised to hear us. Now the hard part. Not all versions of biblical translations contain this last passage, notably the more modern versions, leading to much debate. Scholars of the King James Bible claim this passage was in the original Greek works. Was it lost in translation, added by some spiritually moved translator of the bibles, always there but not properly translated and carried forward? Another explanation offers that this is simply a prayer from the believers in the early centuries of the Church whose spirits were moved by the Holy Spirit to close this beautiful prayer in grandiose fashion. Some feel it was part of early non-scriptural writings called the Didache (meaning "teachings") written between 70-140 AD from which the doxology was lifted. One reference pulls these two thoughts together by explaining that "For thine..." is technically termed a doxology, and many times in the Bible, we find the common practice of concluding prayers with a short, hymn-like verse which exalts the glory of God. The Jews frequently used these doxologies to conclude prayers at the time of our Lord. Hence a reason why the passage is found in Jewish versions of Luke. Also of interest is that this doxology was not part of the Lord's Prayer in the Church of England up until the reign of Elizabeth I (1533-1603) when a resurgence to rid the Church of England from any Catholic vestiges, the Lord's Prayer was changed to include the doxology. Bottom Line? Inconclusive as to whether or not the doxology beginning with "For thine is the glory..." was part of Luke's original writings. But it is a wonderful way to end the Lord's Prayer now isn't it!

As always, we enjoyed a wonderful discussion during this lesson, and picked up a few things we didn't know or realize about the Lord's Prayer. There were some very deep and emotional thoughts shared by the group as to the power of prayer and how especially the words of the Lord's Prayer had impacted their lives in some manner over the years.

Our next LCOC Men's Prayer Breakfast is Saturday, 12 August 2017. We hope some of you all who have not been to one of our Prayer Breakfast events consider trying it out. Yes, it is painless, yes, it is early on a Saturday morning, but it is fun, the food is almost always plentiful, and at times even nutritionally balanced (remember that "anti-calories" thing about fruit). And we believe you will enjoy the fellowship, camaraderie and light-hearted, non-structured, anything goes approach we take to make it fun and informative for all. Plus you get an insider's look at just who these anonymous characters are that our non-attribution policy protects at all costs!!!!