

“Is Your Radio On?”
Genesis 18:20-32; Colossians 2:6-19; Luke 11:1-13

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For the last several weeks we have been traveling with Jesus and his followers on their way to Jerusalem. For Jesus, this will be his last trip. He is going to Jerusalem to be crucified.

Along the way, he explains to his followers what it means to follow him. He wants everyone to know ahead of time what following him entails. He is very clear that following him, walking the way of the cross, is not a part-time or once-in-a-while project. Foxes have dens to hide in, but followers of Jesus have no vacation homes where they can stop being Christians for a while. Nor can we put it off until a more opportune time. No. If we are going to follow Jesus, we have to do it right here, right now, 24/7.

We learned from the story of the Good Samaritan following Jesus means loving God with everything we have and our neighbor as ourself. Who is my neighbor? Anyone in distress is my neighbor. Even my enemy. Even my enemy.

Last week we looked at Mary and Martha. One is busy, busy, busy. The other sits at Jesus’ feet and learns about him and from him. We who follow Jesus have to strike that balance. We honor Jesus both by caring for others and through our worship, Bible study, and prayer life. The time we take to sit and get to know Jesus as a person. As our savior.

This morning, we look at what it means to be in relationship with Jesus. What’s it all about, having a relationship with Jesus?

I think it’s safe to say all of us here today know someone who is in a ‘relationship’. We all know someone who has a spouse or

partner or significant other in their lives. We all understand about being in a 'relationship'.

When people are in a relationship, how often do they talk? What's the norm? Let's say someone tells us they're in a relationship. "That's wonderful! How often do you talk to each other?" "Twice a year." "What? Really?" "Yep, twice a year. That's all we need."

"Do you go somewhere special? Somewhere you can be alone and it's just the two of you?" "No. We don't need that. Twice a year we meet somewhere in public, usually a big building with lots of other people around. We hang out for an hour and then go our separate ways."

If someone said that to us, we'd say that was rather odd, wouldn't we? People in a loving, caring relationship who only talk to each other for an hour, twice a year? Pretty strange.

Talking, communicating, sharing with each other, is an important part of a relationship. We know this. Communicating back and forth matters. A lot.

With God, we call this talking back and forth 'prayer'. That's what prayer is, it's talking back and forth with God.

Unfortunately, prayer and praying make some of us of nervous. We think there are special rules. We think there are special formulas and styles and things we should or shouldn't do or say when we are talking back and forth with God.

Actually, there are no rules. Seriously, there are no rules. Some people like to pray standing up. Some people like to wave their arms and feel excited. Others prefer to pray sitting down. They fold their hands and sit in silence. Others prefer to pray kneeling, sometimes weeping or perhaps with sighs too deep for words. Some people like to have their prayers written out ahead of time. Others prefer to wait for the nudging of the Holy Spirit.

It doesn't matter. Do what works for you. There is no one way, there is no right way, to pray. Look at Abraham. He stands up and has a running dialogue with God. It almost sounds like he's haranguing God. But hey, it worked for him.

I get asked to pray a lot. I don't mind. In fact, I enjoy it. I've been fortunate enough to pray for a wide variety of people in a lot of special places. I'm honored to do it. But I know some people feel uncomfortable praying around me. They don't sound like me.

Of course you don't sound like me. You're you. I'm me. No one needs to sound like me. Sound like yourself. And remember, when you're listening to me praying, I'm praying in public. What you're hearing is my public style. But it's nothing like my private prayers. My private prayers, when I'm enjoying my devotions in the morning, are full of stutters and stops, meanderings and repeats.

Don't judge your prayers by anyone else's. Do what works for you and God. The main thing is to be persistent. Be persistent. Pray and pray often. God wants to give us good things, the things we get when we're in a loving relationship with God.

How often should we pray? I can't say. That's personal. But if you don't like your prayer life, if your relationship with God isn't what you want it to be, you're probably not praying enough.

Praying is good. Talking back and forth to God helps us be in relationship with God. We should do it often, persistently. But what do we say? What do we say to God?

Jesus gives us an outline. Jesus gives us a good starting point to get us going in the right direction. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus gives us a good place to start.

'Lord, give us our daily bread. But what is the bread I really need? Am I angry because I keep getting whole wheat when I ask for donuts? Do I have some bread I should be sharing with someone else? Lord, do you want me to share my bread today?'

'Lord, forgive our sins. But Lord, I'm having a hard time forgiving my neighbor. Yes, I started that argument, but she didn't have to push it that far! Lord, help me forgive my neighbor.'

If we don't know what to say, the Lord's Prayer is a good place to start.

And while we're on the subject, are we doing all the talking? Are we doing any listening? What's that old saying, we all have two ears and one mouth for a reason?

Are we listening for God? God is talking to us all the time but are we listening to God's wavelength?

Do you remember when radios had dials and you had to tune that dial just right to hear your favorite station? Do you remember those old radios?

Listening to God is a lot like those radios. We have to tune ourselves to God's wavelength. Prayer is about talking to God, sure. But prayer is also about tuning ourselves to God's wavelength. It's about tuning ourselves to hear what God is saying to us and receiving all the good things God is giving to us.

In the 1970s there was a popular Gospel song called Turn Your Radio On. It had these lyrics,

**Come and listen in to a radio station
Where the mighty hosts of heaven sing
Turn your radio on, turn your radio on
If you want to feel those good vibrations
Coming from the joy that His love can bring
Turn you radio on, turn your radio on.**

Friend, is your radio on? Are you tuned to God's wavelength?

Communication is something we all struggle with. We all struggle with it, both in our human relationships and our divine relationship. There is no one, right, perfect way to communicate.

We all have to stumble along until we find the one that works for us. Including in our relationship with God. But once we have that way, that style that works for us, we know once or twice a year won't cut it. Good relationships need a LOT of communication. We have to work at it. We have to be persistent. We have to do it all the time.

However we speak to God, know this. Know this. God is speaking to us. God is speaking to us. Friend, is your radio on? Are you tuned to God's wavelength? Amen.