October 17
Happy Monday, everyone.

Recently, Judy and I had an unexpected visitor literally grace our doorway. Here is a picture of him (or her, we're not sure):

![Praying mantis](image)

It is obviously a praying mantis, and we have named him Peter. He has since gone on his way, but he was a curious visitor for the few days he was with us.

In any case, that got me thinking about praying and the nature of prayer, and the notion that in an increasingly secular world, the word “praying” has entered common usage in such an interesting way. He could have been called “kneeling mantis” or “crouching mantis,” but the appearance of being on one’s knees (do praying mantises have knees?) is universally recognized as the posture of prayer.

So, inspired by our friend Peter, I thought we would take a break from our year-long walk through the books of the Bible and do a series on prayer, focused on some well-known prayers and looking at how people have prayed through the ages.

A few weeks ago, we looked at “The Lord’s Prayer” during our sermon message, so we will forego that for this week. To start with, I would like to look at the prayer of the Psalmist from Psalm 25:

“Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. “O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord: therefore, will he teach sinners in the way” (vs. 2-8; KJV).
I love the beginning of this prayer: “Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee.”

So for today, allow me to encourage you. Go ahead and find a comfortable place by yourself, open your Bible to Psalm 25, and pray to your Creator.

“Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee…”

IHS,

Pastor Lou
October 18

Grace and peace to you this day.

St. Clement of Rome was one of the earliest of the church “fathers” and lived from 35 AD to 99 AD. He is considered the first Bishop of Rome and is among what are called the “Apostolic Fathers,” that is, those who knew at least some of the Twelve Disciples personally.

These early church leaders were important in working out the many points of theology for the new church, mostly centered on Jesus. They wrestled with questions like “How could Jesus be fully man and fully God?” “Is the bread at the Lord’s Supper literally or symbolically His body?” What about the wine?” “Did God the Father create God the Son?” And so on.

Reflecting on the nature of God very late in his life, this is perhaps St. Clement’s best-known prayer:

“We beseech You, Master, to be our helper and protector.
Save the afflicted among us; have mercy on the lowly;
Raise up the fallen; appear to the needy; heal the ungodly;
  Restore the wanderers of Your people;
  Feed the hungry; ransom our prisoners;
  Raise up the sick; comfort the faint-hearted.”

Here we see prayed so beautifully an appeal to the very heart of God: concern for the “afflicted, the lowly, the fallen, the hungry, the wanderer, and the ungodly.”

Clement starts his prayer with “We beseech you.” Said another way, “We implore you,” or “We plead with you.” His prayer has a sense of urgency and a certain air of insistence. That’s ok. As we have seen, Jesus encourages us to approach the Father with “shameless audacity” (Luke 11:8).

So once again today, allow me to encourage you. Go to a quiet place and pray to your Creator.

“I beseech you, Divine Master…”

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Greetings, DGCC Family.

One of the most well-known prayers prayed by our Savior took place on the eve of His death in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is what He said:

“Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will...He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done" (Matthew 26:38; 42).

Jesus reminds us here that all things and all people, including, and especially, the Son of God, are under the authority and the sovereignty of the Father. And, He reminds us that in all things, the Father’s will is to be followed and obeyed, no matter the difficulty, and no matter where it leads, even if it leads to death on the cross.

In the same way, we can be equally assured that abiding in the will of God and following His Son leads to the wonderful gift of grace that shines with eternal life. So once again today, allow me to encourage you. Go into a quiet place and pray to your Heavenly Father:

“Not as I will, Father, but your will be done…”

IHS,

Pastor Lou
October 20
Grace and peace, DGCC Family,

My favorite prayer found outside of Scripture is the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

   Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
       Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
       Where there is injury, pardon;
       Where there is error, the truth;
       Where there is doubt, the faith;
       Where there is despair, hope;
       Where there is darkness, light;
      And where there is sadness, joy.
   O Divine Master,
      Grant that I may not so much seek
       To be consoled, as to console;
       To be understood, as to understand;
       To be loved as to love.
      For it is in giving that we receive;
       It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
      And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

St. Francis opens his prayer with the same admonition Jesus speaks in “The Sermon on the Mount:” “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9)

So for one final time this week, allow me to encourage you. Find a quiet place, and pray to your Father:

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace…”

IHS,
Pastor Lou

October 21
Happy Friday, everyone.

Here’s your music devotional for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADaNGj6p890

IHS,
Pastor Lou