

Pentecost 16 (Proper 19)  
September 16, 2012  
Text: Mark 9:14-29  
Theme: "Preserve, Govern, Bless"

**Look at the prayer we prayed just a few moments ago.**

**"Lord Jesus Christ, our support and defense in every need, continue to preserve Your Church in safety, govern her by Your goodness, and bless her with Your peace."**

**Preserve.**

**Govern.**

**Bless.**

**That is a pretty good prayer. What more is there to ask? Preserve, govern and bless. We pray this prayer as though we believe that Jesus is the pilot of this ship and completely in control of everything. We say it and we believe it...at least until the going gets tough. Then we start to panic. The man with the demon possessed son no doubt would have agreed with these sentiments until his son was demon possessed and not even the disciples could free him. Then all of a sudden, he was asking faithless questions of Jesus – "If you can do anything." IF? IF! What is Jesus the local plumber who may or may not be able to fix the toilet? He is the Son of the God Most High – Savior of the Nations – King of Kings. He can do anything we ask of him and he desires to give us all good things.**

**It makes me think of the way we sometimes approach him in our own lives. I heard someone say this week that he felt guilty for even bothering God with his needs. I heard someone say that God does not care about our petty complaints. But, I think the prayer of the day says it all. Preserve, govern and bless.**

**We don't need to beg Jesus as though we are bothering him. He's the one who told us to pray so pray boldly. Pray loudly. Pray often. He wants to hear from us. He has already promised to do whatever we need but he still wants to hear from us. And pray assuming that he will do for you whatever you ask if it is good for you but he will refuse if it is bad for you. Obviously, he will never do anything that does not preserve, govern and bless us. We cannot lose!**

**And here is another awesome thing. We don't have to figure it all out for ourselves and then tell him what to do after we have the right answer. He already knows the answer. He already knows and is doing what preserves us, governs us and blesses us. Before we ask, he knows the answer and is already acting on it.**

**This is not a courtroom. Sometimes business people have a hard time with the Church being a family and not a business. Likewise, sometimes attorneys and politicians have a hard time with faith being a gift and not an argument. Jesus has already**

**faced the judge for us, received the sentence of death and damnation for us and he has given us a full pardon. It's a gift. Of course he preserves us, governs us and blesses us. He died and was damned for us! He will do anything for us. So we don't need to justify our prayers as though a good argument in our favor might change his mind. We don't want him to change his mind. We want him to do what he does which is always best for us.**

**We also don't need to mount an internet numeric offensive as though having 36 million people pray will get God's attention when he might overlook just one person. He gave his only son for you and if you had been the only person on earth who needed salvation, he still would have done it! I think his attention is clearly focused on us.**

**We don't need to fret and worry about the election and the leadership in this nation. Governor Romney and President Obama are two different options for leadership and good Christians can disagree as to who is a better leader, but ultimately God is in control and he has promised to preserve us, govern us and bless us regardless of who happens to sit in the White House.**

**Preserve Your Church in safety. Govern her by Your goodness and Bless her with your peace. I guess we always forget about God's role in our lives. The disciples apparently failed at exorcizing**

**the demon in the Gospel for today. Jesus told them that this kind of demon only comes out through prayer. The disciples had become so enamored of themselves that they had tried to face a demon without praying. That had not called upon the power of the Living God. How could they face a demon from Hell? They had forgotten who preserves them, governs them and blesses them. They had forgotten that we are just the tools. He is the power. What's the big miserable failure in your life recently? What demon did you face without bothering to pray? Whatever it is, that demon too can only be conquered through prayer.**

**Don't get so busy with all of the minor details in life that you forget who preserves, governs and blesses. Start with him first and everything works much more smoothly. Now understand, you will get to where he wants you to be one way or the other but there is a variety of options in life and he holds the key to the best routes. If you want to go from Chicago to New Orleans by way of Los Angeles, you can do that if you want. But straight south on 55 from the Big Shoulders to the Crescent City might be a better route. Start with God and the route is always preserved, governed and blessed.**