

## A brief look at the Lords Prayer

### *Prayer*

What are some of the reasons we pray?

- To show adoration and thankfulness to God
- To confess our failings to God and ask forgiveness and guidance
- To petition God for healing or a need
- To ask a question and listen for an answer
- To simply spend time with God

Many times Christians have struggled and asked themselves: What is the “proper” way to pray? What are the rituals involved in prayer? How do I know if I am praying properly or not? But there is a fear of looking inferior in some way or appearing less righteous should the person ask the question.

Here are the straight goods on prayer... It is simply a conversation between you and God. Usually undertaken for one of the reasons we just discussed.

Let's see how Jesus handled prayer to the Father. Turn with me to Matthew 6:9-14 NIV

*“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 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

So... a couple of notes first... The word Temptation used here has a second meaning in the Greek language. It can also mean testing. The second note here is that where it says deliver us from the evil one can mean deliver us from him. I can be interpreted to mean deliver us from the schemes of the evil one or simply deliver us from evil. All are one in the same but different aspects of the central concept here. Finally, it is interesting to note that some versions include the phrase “...for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” and others do not.

Why this passage of scripture? Jesus was doing remediation on how we should pray. Pharisee's and Sadducees put so many rituals around this simple act that

Jesus saw a distinct need to clarify prayer. This was not meant as a new ritual for prayer but rather to be instructive.

So what are we going to take away from these scriptures on prayer today?

This prayer has three primary aspects:

- 1) The preface
- 2) The petition
- 3) The conclusion

Let's look at the preface first:

"Our Father" This is interesting because of the intimidating aspect of the simple fact that we must pray not only alone or in secret but alongside and for others. Notice This is implied by the "Our" instead of "My" Jesus makes this prayer inclusive.

Second, we respect and love God and he loves us, so instead of having us address him as his majesty accords, we are instructed to call him Father. This is an intimate immediate relationship of respect and reverence that reflects trust and love without the loss of authority. God want us to understand that he is not just magnificent but beneficent. If he is our Father, then we can come boldly before the throne of Grace to make our petitions known.

He is our Father through his adoption of us and by our regeneration as new creations in him.

We read: "In heaven" This is where our Father and the throne of Grace resides. Christ is our mediator in heaven. Now we know that heaven is a reality but it is out of sight. It is visible right now only in our hearts and in our minds as a promise. So for right now our conversations with God in prayer are almost exclusively spiritual in nature.

God is omnipotent, which means he is all-powerful, but he is also omniscient, which means he knows all... So why would we need to pray if God already knows our illnesses, needs, wants and desires?

It is about approaching our Father in reverence and building relationship. He wants us to interact with him. This takes time. It takes an open heart and head to sit patiently in the presence of the Lord and wait for an answer.

Many people I know don't like to meditate or pray because they become alone with their own thoughts and when they are, they don't like what they see so it becomes avoidance. When people are alone and they have not accepted Christ's forgiveness and grace they will sit and condemn themselves over mistakes or bad choices. They will sometimes start to pray and it drifts off to mortgage payments, the hockey game, fight with the spouse, kid trouble, job issue. In fact, the enemy will try to use anything to distract you from having a conversation with God.

But if you really want to get an answer and see some change it is vital for you to win the battle for your mind. Yet we are reminded in 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 that:

*"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete."*

Did you get that? "Take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ"

So in the preface we understand who we are. Then we understand who he is and what he has done for us. We can then come to the throne of grace boldly but in reverence of who he is. We do not come timid or with feelings of unworthiness, but with a boldness because of our imputed righteousness.

Next we see that Jesus makes his petitions known to the Father. In this scripture we can identify six specific petitions. The first three speak of God and his honor, the next three are our concerns. This reflects the model of the Ten Commandments. Wherein the first commandments reflect our duty toward God and the last commandments reflect our duty toward each other. This is a good illustration of the love of Christ being vertical between man and God and horizontal between one person and another.

Let's examine the 6 petitions:

- Hallowed be thy name
- Thy kingdom come
- Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven
- Give us this day our daily bread
- Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors
- Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

## **Hallowed be thy name**

What is illustrated here is that we approach the throne boldly but with reverence. We come to God in adoration, not as a formula to get what we want but because he is worthy of our praise. If it helps, think of this petition as identifying what is good about God and then seeking that goodness in our petitions.

Let me illustrate:

God you are the great provider, you see my every need, your grace is sufficient for me, yet Lord let you be glorified in the fact that I have food for today. Let you be glorified as you have forgiven me my sins.

We call upon the name of the Lord and present our petitions... and here is a spoiler for you. I have discovered that when I call upon the Lord he hears me. He not only hears my words, he hears the intentions of my heart. God cares about why we are asking at least as much as what we are asking for.

Here is some food for thought:

Do you think God answers prayer that you really don't care about?

Let me sum up:

- Lord my Father God, please help me for the Glory of your name

## **Thy Kingdom Come**

When Jesus prayed "Thy kingdom come" what did he mean?

Jesus preached that the Kingdom of God was at hand. You see so many think of this as a reason to not pray. If the kingdom is at hand, why do I need to pray?

God's promises are given not to supersede prayer but to inspire and encourage prayer. As it become clearer and we see more of his kingdom we are not to stop there but to pray for its fulfillment even more earnestly.

There is sincerity reflecting that the will of God be established and fulfilled here on earth. We are saying God we want to make the world how you see the world should be.

This touches on evangelism strongly. "Go therefore"

Let me close this section with a quote from Dr. Whitby which sums up the heart of this section: "Let thy kingdom come, let the gospel be preached to all and embraced by all; let all be brought to subscribe to the record God has given in his word

concerning his Son, and to embrace him as their Saviour and Sovereign. Let the bounds of the gospel-church be enlarged, the kingdom of the world be made Christ's kingdom, and all men become subjects to it, and live as becomes their character."

### **Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven**

This concludes the phrase thy kingdom come in that it is established in accordance with his will. It is His will that we as his children obey the laws and ordinances established by Him. It is a prayer that heaven's will is introduced here.

You can see this section as: "Not my will but thine be done in accordance with how you have established heaven." It is a prayer that we do what is pleasing to God. It is quite simply: "God please let earth be more like heaven through our obedience to your will.

In short, I am here for your agenda God not mine.

### **Give us this day our daily bread**

We are asking God to take care of our natural needs. Not our wants here... our needs. We rely on divine providence. Notice the word OUR here. It is not give me this day my daily bread. It is not about taking from another to give to me. It is about God's provision for all his children.

Ever consider those who don't have bread today?

I also note the phrase "this day" It shows that each day is a gift. We need to pray just as much as we need to eat.

### **Forgive us our debts**

Seems like a petition to me. Many people love the idea: "Forgive us our debts" I mean who wouldn't want to be forgiven what we owe?

But it goes on... as we forgive our debtors. Just as we want to have grace, that same grace needs to be extended to those around us who owe us. I had a debt I could not pay... Jesus paid it for me. Shouldn't I in like manner forgive those around me and do for others what has been done for me.

I can't pay the price for my sin.

I can't pay what I owe so will be punished

We are obliged to pay a penalty

Except... Christ paid for us

Christ took the obligation to punishment that we bear. In suing out the pardon for our sins we must rely upon the payment made to redeem us for our mistakes. That propitiation, a redeeming payment made in the precious lifeblood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have been granted his grace; we need to show it to others.

**...And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

In this prayer we see our Lord exemplify that we need to pray for sin to be removed and its attendant guilt, we pray that God will help us not to fail again. We are shown that we are to be proactive in avoiding temptation and asking God to lead us away from those things, which would lead us into sin. We don't want the trouble or discomfort that invariably comes when we lead a life in sin. So we pray that God in his grace help us to protect ourselves from temptations.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Finally, we come to the doxology of David. In 1 Chronicles 29:11 we read:

*Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom, you are exalted as head over all.*

Jesus has clearly illustrated for us the nature of prayer. It is a reverent conversation between a person and their creator. Not as one fears a tyrant but as a child seeking the favour of his Father. We open in praise, not faint praise or flattery, but sincere praise for what God can do, then we ask him to do what he can do, finally, we praise him once again for doing it.

The word AMEN actually means: "So be it!" ...and so with a word, the very name of Jesus things are bound on heaven and on earth.

We pray:

- To show adoration and thankfulness to God
- To confess our failings to God and ask forgiveness and guidance
- To petition God for healing or a need
- To ask a question and listen for an answer
- To simply spend time with God

There is no formula or ritual, it is just a sincere and intimate conversation between you and your creator. When you pray for others, pray with expectation, believing that God hears you. When you pray for a need, pray expecting an answer. Without faith it is impossible to please God. So pray and believe!