

## THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD

- The fatherhood of God (and His loving care for His children)
- The holiness of God (and His holy sacrifice for us)
- The kingdom of God (and His reign over all of life)
- The will of God (and His perfect plan for us)
- The provision of God (day by day for all our needs)
- The forgiveness of God (from temptation and from Satan's power)
- The reality of His kingdom, His power, and His glory forever

### OUR FAMILY PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is a family prayer for all God's children. There are three important ways in which this is true.

#### FIRST

In the Lord's Prayer we pray to our Father. No one can learn to pray who does not learn to call God "Father". That is what prayer is: It is talking with our heavenly Father. Our fundamental identity as Christians is as sons and daughters of the Most High God. Therefore when we pray we address God as Father.

#### SECOND

The Father to whom we pray is called *our* Father.

Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray not what to pray. He did not say, "Pray this:" and then give the exact words we always have to use in our prayers. Instead he said, in effect, "Pray like this, or "Pray in this manner."

Even though Jesus gave His disciples a prayer to imitate rather than a prayer to memorize, He did give us specific words to use when we pray, the first-person plural pronouns "our" and "us".

"Our Father." "Give us." "Forgive us." "Deliver us."

You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer

And even once say "I."

You cannot pray the Lord's Prayer

And even once say "My."

Nor can you pray the Lord's Prayer

And not pray for another,

For when you ask for daily bread

**You must include your brother.  
For others are included  
In each and every plea-  
From the beginning to the end of it,  
It never once says "Me!"**

**Since the Lord's Prayer is a family prayer, we not only pray with one another, but we also pray for one another. In the last three petitions we do not pray for ourselves primarily but for the whole church.**

**Our daily provision – "Give us today our daily bread"**

**Our daily pardon – "Forgive us our debts"**

**Our daily protection – "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"**

### **ABBA, FATHER**

**Jesus was the first to employ the precise word that He used when He addressed His Father. It was the word Jewish children used for their fathers: abba.**

**The word abba was picked up by the apostles and used by the first Christians when they prayed.**

**When we pray to God as our Father, we draw near to Him with confidence. This confidence comes from intimacy from knowing that our Father is also our friend.**

### **PRAY WITH REVERANCE**

**Jesus teaches us to pray "Abba Father" so that we will come to God with confidence of a child. But we do not approach God without reverence. He is our Father in heaven. He dwells in a high and lofty place of majesty, power, and dominion, where He is worshiped by myriads upon myriads of angels. Revelation Ch. 4 & 5. This fact ought to make a great difference when we pray. Christians sometimes forget that the fatherhood of God demands their reverence. It is often said that the best translation of the Aramaic word abba is something like "daddy." After all, "daddy" is the word small children use for their fathers in English. If abba is the word small children used for their fathers in Aramaic, then "daddy" it is.**

However, abba does not mean “daddy.” The Oxford Linguist James Barr has proven that abba was not merely a word used by small children. (Journal of Theological Studies, 39 (1988): 28-47. It was also the word Jewish children used for their parents after they were fully grown. Abba was a mature, yet affectionate way for adults to speak to their fathers. (Robert H. Grundy, Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed).

The New Testament is careful not to be too casual in the way it addresses God. The Aramaic word abba appears three times in the English New Testament (Mark 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). In each case, it is followed immediately by the Greek word pater. Pater is not the Greek word for “daddy”. The Greek language has a word for “daddy” – the word pappas – but that is not the word the New Testament uses to translate abba. Instead, in order to make sure that our intimacy with God does not become an excuse for immaturity, it says, “abba, pater.

The best way to translate abba is “Dear Father,” or even “Dearest Father.” That phrase captures both the warm confidence and the deep reverence that we have for our Father in heaven. It expresses our intimacy with God, while still preserving His dignity. When we pray, therefore, we are to say, “Our dear Father in heaven.”

We come to God with both reverence and confidence. But what do we come for? We come for what children usually come to their fathers for.

**PROVISION – Daily Bread**

**PARDON – Forgiveness**

**PROTECTION – From The Evil One**

**HOLY IS YOUR NAME**

The Lord’s Prayer compels us to acknowledge God’s bright and burning holiness. From the very beginning, it directs our thoughts toward God and His perfections. **FIRST** comes the address, in which we cry to our Father in heaven. Yet lest we approach Him too casually, the first petition reminds us that He is a holy Father: “Hallowed be your name.” As we begin the asking part of our prayer, then, the first thing we beg God to do

is to make His name holy. The Bible says that “the holy God will show himself holy by His righteousness” (Isa. 5:6b). Holiness refers to everything that distinguishes the Creator from His creation. It is the infinite distance between His deity and our humanity. Holiness is the very Godness of God, the sum total of all His glorious perfections. God is so holy that everything associated with Him is holy, including His name. The name is God Himself, as He has made Himself known to us. It reveals His divine nature and His eternal qualities. God is who His name is, and His name deserves the highest praise. Jeremiah said, “No one is like you, O Lord: you are great, and your name is mighty in power” (Jer.10:6). David sang, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Ps. 8:1a). He was echoing the seraphim, who always sing, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa. 6:3).

We are starting to understand what Jesus meant when He taught us to pray, “Hallowed be your name.” What does it mean to be holy? To be holy is to be set apart in purity. What is God’s name? It is the sum total of His character. But what does it mean for God’s name to be hallowed?

What we are asking God to do in this petition is to satisfy His own chief end, which is to glorify Himself. God is hallowed whenever He shows that He is holy. When we ask Him to hallow His name, therefore, all we are doing is asking Him to reveal that He is exactly who He is. Since God is holy, and His name is holy, to ask Him to live up to His name. “Hallowed be your name” means “Make yourself known as the Holy One that you are.” It is a prayer for God to display the Godness of His Godhood. What better way to begin our prayers? When we get on our knees, the first thing we ask God is to glorify Himself, to show that He is utterly transcendent in His holiness. We pray that God would be given that unique reverence that His nature and character demand.

Once it was God’s holiness that separated us from God, the holiness of His being. Now it is God’s holiness that brings us to God, the holiness of the perfect sacrifice Jesus offered for our sins on the cross. God displayed His holiness by making us holy through His holy Son.

**We are holy because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. But we must continue to be holy by what His Spirit does in us. When we worship God properly, we leave off seeking a name for ourselves and begin to seek the honor of His name. To summarize, we are to pray that God would make us holy in everything we do, say, think, feel, and adore. "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:15). This is the whole task of the Christian life: to become what God is in His holiness. In other words, to hallow His name.**

### **THY KINGDOM COME**

**In one sense, God has always been the King: "The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all" (Ps. 103:19); "His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation" (Dan.4:34b). This universe has never been a democracy; it has always been an absolute monarchy, for God has always been on the throne. Yet God's kingship has also been a matter of endless dispute. God has always had to fight to defend His sovereign rule against the kingdom of darkness.**

**By performing these kingdom miracles, Jesus was overthrowing Satan's kingdom. Every time He cast out a demon, healed a disease, or raised the dead, He was undoing the work of the devil. "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God," Jesus said on one occasion, "then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12:28). In this way God's King began to restore God's rule over God's creation.**

**Although the people of Jerusalem were longing for God's kingdom to come, they did not understand what kind of kingdom it was.**

- 1. People misunderstood God's plan for His kingdom.**
- 2. People misunderstood the kingdom's purpose.**
- 3. People misunderstood the progress of the kingdom.**

### **God's Plan**

**The very fact that we are to pray for the kingdom proves that it is not the kind of thing we establish through our own efforts. It is something we must ask God to do because only He can do it.**

**God's plan was to establish His kingdom through His Son. His kingdom comes mainly through proclamation, through the announcements that Christ, who was crucified, is now King. The reason the church tries so many other things besides preaching Christ is because it suspects the kingdom can be established in some other way. When we hear the glad news that Christ is King, the thing to do is submit to His rule.**

### **Kingdom Purpose**

**We pray, "Your kingdom come" reminds us that the kingdom is not here yet, at least not in all its fullness. Otherwise, why would we still pray for it to come? Also it reminds us to ask for God's kingdom to come, not our own. The kingdom of God is simply the rule of God.**

### **Kingdom Progress**

**We should not be surprised if the kingdom seems to come slowly. But it will come. Make no mistake about that! Jesus even promised that it would come soon (Rev.22:12). As we wait for its coming, the prayer we often find on our lips is the last prayer in the whole Bible: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).**

### **Thy Will Be Done**

**When we pray the way Jesus taught us to pray, we ask God to help us do His work on earth the way the angels do in heaven: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). This is the third petition in the Lord's Prayer. It is the last of the "Thy" petitions: "Hallowed be THY name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." Up to this point, the prayer has been all about God. We have prayed for God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will. But from this point on we will pray for ourselves – our provision, our pardon, and our protection. For the Bible teaches that God is the one "Who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will" (Eph. 1:11).**

### **My Will Be Done**

**In the meantime, God's revealed will is not always done. Otherwise, why would we need to pray for it. We need the third petition of the Lord's Prayer to show us how wrong it is to think of prayer as a way of getting something from God. Imagine what**

**a mess our lives would be in if God always did what we wanted Him to do! For unlike God's will, our own wills are evil, displeasing, and imperfect. It is much better for us to yield to the sovereign purpose of our loving heavenly Father, who really does know best!**

### **Have Thine Own Way, Lord**

**Submitting to God's will means accepting the way God made us, with all our strengths and weaknesses, and thus embracing who we are in Christ. Submitting to God's will means going wherever He sends us, to do whatever He calls us to do. Really, the first question about God's will is, "Am I willing to do it?" There is no sense asking God to reveal His will unless we are committed to doing what He wants done. What pleases God is nothing less than our total surrender. Are you ready to submit to God?**

### **Give Us Today Our Daily Bread**

**Give . . .**

**First, there is the word give, which shows that even the most basic necessities of life are a gift from God.**

**Us . . .**

**When we pray for God to give us bread, we are also committing ourselves to share it when we get it. Otherwise our prayer is insincere. How can we pray, "Give us our daily bread." And then refuse to provide what the rest of us need?**

**Today . . .**

**The Greek word for "daily" bread is used only once in the New Testament, and was found part of the word in an old manuscript. There have been discussions for centuries by scholars on the exact meaning of the word translated "daily" bread. Isn't it a strange debate, over a common word translated "daily" bread. What has been more common than daily bread, in no matter what form it takes in the lives of people, from tortilla to pita bread. (God is sovereign. Why is something as common daily bread, "so rare"? I wonder if it is a message to us not to take daily bread for granted. Jim Logan)**

# **Forgive Us Our Debts**

## **In God's Debt**

**There is a sense in which we owe everything to God. We owe Him our existence. Our very lives are on loan from Him, for He is the One who made us and sustains us. We are indebted to God for our gifts and talents, for our daily bread, and for every other good thing. Since we are God's creatures, we also owe Him our perfect obedience.**

## **More Than We Can Pay**

**The truth is, however, that forgiveness is not something we can work for; it is only something we can ask for. The debts we ask God to forgive when we pray the way Jesus taught us to pray are the very debts that were crucified with Christ at Calvary. When Christ died on the cross, all our debts were cancelled. The Greek word for "cancel" (exaleipho), which Paul used in Col.2, means "to blot out" or "to wipe away." It means that the mountain of debt we once owed to God because of our sin has been completely removed.**

**The fifth petition is joined to the fourth petition by the conjunction "and": "Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:11,12). We need God to "forgive us" as well as to "Give us" every day. We are asking Him for daily pardon as well as daily provision.**

## **As We Forgive Our Debtors**

### **Forgiven And Forgiving**

**We have debtors of our own, people who owe us something for what they have done to us. And we are to forgive them. The prayer for forgiveness is the only petition in the Lord's Prayer that comes with a condition attached to it. The unforgiving are unforgiven. Those who are truly forgiven, truly forgive. The ability to forgive is one of the surest signs of having been forgiven.**

## **Lead Us Not Into Temptation**

### **A Real Temptation**

**Peter's downfall shows that the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer is crucial for the Christian Life. We always stand in danger of sinning against our Savior, the way Peter did. We are in danger for two reasons.**

**First, our enemy is strong – deadly strong, for our adversary is Satan himself. This is clear from the second half of the petition: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13).**

**The second reason we are in mortal spiritual danger is because we are so weak. We are sinners; therefore, sin is a real temptation for us. When we pray, therefore, we are asking God to keep us from being tempted.**

### **The Power And The Glory**

#### **Yours, O Lord, Is The Kingdom**

**First we praise God for His kingdom, declaring that He is ruler over all.**

#### **Yours, O Lord, Is The Power**

**Having prayed for God's name, God's rule, and God's will, we begin to pray for our own needs.**

**We confess the omnipotence of God every time we say "For Thine is . . . the power.**

#### **Yours, O Lord, is the Glory**

**The word glory comes from the Hebrew term for "heavy," and thus "signifies gravity, heaviness, greatness, and abundance."**

**First, glory is the inward majesty of God.**

**Second, it is the brightness God shines out into the world.**

**Third, it is the worship we offer to God.**

**When we see God's glory, the proper way for us to respond is to give Him the glory – to offer Him all honor and praise He deserves.**

**To God alone be the glory! Forever and Ever, Amen!<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *The Prayer of Our Lord*. Crossway Books