

***THE LORD'S TEACHING
ON PRAYER
Bible Studies on
Matthew 6.9-13***

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Mount Zion Baptist Church, Ashford
by Pastor Christopher Buss
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1. A PATTERN FOR PRAYER GIVEN BY THE LORD JESUS FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS

Matthew 6.9-13

In this manner, therefore, 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 this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory
forever. Amen.'*

'Our'

The first point that Jesus teaches is to pray to our Father in Heaven with reverence and humility. But we should always remember this prayer is in the context of the one praying being a member of His family. It is both personal and in partnership. The Lord Jesus uses the words 'our' and 'us' throughout.

'Our Father'

God is the Father of all mankind in a creative sense. All humanity experiences the goodness of God the Father in creation in some measure. However, in terms of relationship, God is the Father of His children in a special and unique sense. They experience:

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a. Personal drawing

'No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day' John 6.44.

b. Special love

'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him' 1 John 3.1.

Addressing God as our Father is a privilege reserved only for born-again believers.

'But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name' John 1.12.

This is one of the reasons it is wrong to call upon unbelievers to pray the Lord's Prayer while, at the same time, they are wilfully denying His Lordship over their lives.

This is a prayer for Christian believers. Its pattern is to be followed either audibly or silently in the heart and mind. Only Christian believers can properly address God as their Father in Heaven. Remember Jesus was teaching His disciples as believers how to pray!

'Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples"' Luke 11.1.

We should pray to God the Father as His children, adopted into His family. As adopted children we enjoy the privileges of being sons and daughters, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ!

2. 'OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN'

Matthew 6.9a

The origin of fatherhood comes from God.

'For this reason, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named' Ephesians 3.14-15.

This is important because we have a natural tendency to derive our understanding of God as our Father from our experience of our human father. Now while some of us have been blessed with kind and even godly fathers, some of you may have had the opposite experience. Therefore the concept of father can raise negative emotions.

We must look beyond human relationships, whatever our experience here on earth. We should consider our Father in Heaven as perfect, and as eternally reigning in glory and majesty in Heaven. Faith believes this, revels in it and is comforted and assured by it.

Let us encourage ourselves with what the Word of God tells us, about our perfect Father in Heaven.

A prayer to our Father in Heaven

There are many references to the character and work of God our heavenly Father in the Bible. To understand more of the depth and beauty of 'Our Father' to Whom we are praying, we will now consider some of these references.

a. Our Father – the Father of mercies

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort' 2 Corinthians 1.3.

b. Our Father – the Giver of good things

'And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world' 1 John 4.14.

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'If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!' Matthew 7.11.

'Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' Luke 12.32.

c. Our Father – the sovereign Instigator

'No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day' John 6.44.

'At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes"' Matthew 11.25.

'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him' 1 John 3.1.

Our Father – the all-knowing One

'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace to you and peace be multiplied' 1 Peter 1.2.

Conclusion

'Our Father in heaven', reigns in glory and in majesty and condescends to hear the prayers of His children.

'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne' Revelation 3.21.

3. 'HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME'

Matthew 6.9b

The meaning of the word 'hallowed'

It has the meaning of being set apart, someone uniquely special. It refers specifically in this prayer to the absolute truth that God is supremely holy.

The word 'holiness' has to do with separation from sin, so when we pray, '*Hallowed be Your name*', we are acknowledging that the Father is holy, and that, as God, deserves our utmost respect.

Derek Prime, in his excellent book entitled 'The Lord's Prayer',¹ sees this phrase as the call of Jesus for reverent worshippers. One of the surest signs of conversion is showing reverence for God.

'Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear' Hebrews 12.28.

a. The sign of the born-again person

'But when he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will hallow My name, and hallow the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel' Isaiah 29.23.

b. The example of Jesus

'Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are' John 17.11.

c. The capacity of God

The start of this prayer encompasses the awesome capacity of God, His intimacy and holiness.

¹ *The Lord's Prayer*, Truth for All Time Series, Derek Prime, Day One Publications ISBN: 9781903087565

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d. The law of God and the grace of God

This reality is found in the words of *Psalm 85.10* describing the effect of the work of Christ. In Christ, God's mercy and His truth meet; and His righteousness and peace meet.

'Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.'

This quote from *The Joy of Fearing God* by J Bridges² illustrates the point helpfully.

'In the physical realm there are two opposing forces called "centrifugal" and "centripetal." Centrifugal force tends to pull away from a centre of rotation, while centripetal force pulls toward the centre. A stone whirled about on the end of a string exerts centrifugal force on the string, while the string exerts centripetal force on the stone. Take away one and the other immediately disappears. These two opposing forces can help us understand something of the fear of God. The centrifugal force represents the attributes of God, such as his holiness and sovereignty, that cause us to bow in awe and self-abasement before Him. They hold us reverently distant from the One Who, by the simple power of His word, created the universe out of nothing. The centripetal force represents the love of God. It surrounds us with grace and mercy and draws us with cords of love into the Father's warm embrace. To exercise a proper fear of God we must understand and respond to both these forces.'

e. Taking the name of the Lord in vain

One of the dangers which besets a Christian is that of carelessly taking the name of the Lord in vain. It is easy to pray, '*Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name*', while at the same time not taking seriously our commitment to His name. These are some examples:

² *The Joy of Fearing God*, Jerry Bridges, Bantam USA, 1 April 1998, ISBN-13 978-1578560295

Hallowed Be Your Name

- We may pay lip service to the words, while at the same time determining our own interests in our life;
- We may say to someone, ‘I will remember you in prayer’, and then forget to pray;
- We may describe a situation as ‘of the Lord’ without proper support for doing so;
- We may say the Lord has spoken when really it is our own thoughts and ideas;
- We may say we are trusting in Him, but at the same time we are working things out according to our own plans.

An example from the Bible of someone taking the Lord’s name in vain is found in *Genesis 27.20*. Jacob used His name lightly in the midst of his deceit of Isaac.

“But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because the Lord your God brought it to me” Genesis 27.20.

The point I am making is to beware of taking the name of the Lord in vain. If you say from your heart, ‘*Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name*’, God will mean more to you than simply being a rubber stamp on your ideas, your will and your ambitions.

The meaning of the name of the Lord

What is meant by the name of the Lord? It means everything about Who God is. To illustrate, a company may build a business based on service and quality, and over a period of time build up a good reputation. When referring to the company people may say they have a good name.

The writers of the Word of God give various descriptions of God when referring to His name, so that when we pray ‘*Hallowed be Your name*’, we are helped to consider what it means.

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This name must be revered because of Who God is. We are not praying to any 'Tom, Dick or Harry'; we are praying to the almighty God. The name of the Lord refers to the very being of God – Who God is and what His characteristics are.

'Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion"' Exodus 33.19.

Let us see how this works out in God's Word in the way in which men and women referred to the name of the Lord.

a. Hagar

'Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"' Genesis 16.13.

b. Abraham

'Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God' Genesis 21.33.

c. Moses

'For I proclaim the name of the Lord: ascribe greatness to our God' Deuteronomy 32.3.

d. David

'Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied"' 1 Samuel 17.45.

'Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth' Psalm 124.8.

Hallowed Be Your Name

e. Elijah

“Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” So all the people answered and said, “It is well spoken” 1 Kings 18.24.

Ancient names used for the Lord and their meanings

Jehovah Jireh: The Lord will provide. *Genesis 22.14.*

Jehovah Ropheka: The Lord heals you. *Exodus 15.26.*

Jehovah Nissi: The Lord is my banner. *Exodus 17.15.*

Jehovah Shalom: The Lord is peace. *Judges 6.24.*

Jehovah Rohi: The Lord is my Shepherd. *Psalms 23.1.*

Jehovah Zidkenu: The Lord is my righteousness. *Jeremiah 23.6.*

Jehovah Shammah: The Lord is there. *Ezekiel 48.35.*

Conclusion

‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.’

The name of the Lord gives security.

‘The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe’ Proverbs 18.10.

The name of the Lord means salvation.

‘And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved’ Joel 2.32.

‘And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved’ Acts 2.21 (quoting Joel 2.32).

‘For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” Romans 10.13 (also quoting Joel 2.32).

4. 'YOUR KINGDOM COME'

Matthew 6.10a

We have considered the privilege it is for Christian believers to pray to God in Heaven as their Father, and how the Fatherhood of God and His glorious characteristics are great encouragements for prayer. We have been reminded that we pray to a unique and holy God, Who is to be given the utmost respect. We have considered how the name of the Lord refers to all that God is, and that in His name we have security and salvation

'And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved' Acts 2.21.

We continue by considering the phrase *'Your kingdom come.'*

What is meant by the 'Kingdom of God'?

The term refers first of all to the absolute, unchanging and irresistible sovereign rule of God. The Lord is King! Consider the testimony of David.

'Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray' Psalm 5.2.

'The Lord is King forever and ever' Psalm 10.16.

'The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all' Psalm 103.19.

We must have respect for God, the King of His Kingdom. Note the advice of Paul to Timothy:

'But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of

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many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honour and everlasting power. Amen' 1 Timothy 6.11-16.

What is the nature of the 'Kingdom of God'?

a. It is everlasting

Whereas the kingdoms of this earth have a 'best before date', God's Kingdom is everlasting. Jesus taught this prayer at a time when the Roman Empire was considered to be invincible. In the contemporary situation of our day, the USA has tremendous influence throughout the world. We tend to consider such influence to be permanent, yet it may be that in fifty years time the USA will be a shadow of its former power.

God's Kingdom is the only kingdom which remains while other kingdoms come and go. The Lord is the King of His everlasting Kingdom!

b. It is spiritual with a material effect

The Kingdom of God is spiritual in its nature with a most blessed effect on the wellbeing of this world.

'For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you' Luke 17.21.

'For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' Romans 14.17.

The Sermon on the Mount depicts life as a citizen of God's Kingdom.

Your Kingdom Come

c. It has a controlling influence on the heart

The word 'heart' in the Word of God stands for our whole being and personality.

'Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life' Proverbs 4.23.

A person who has been converted, and has within them the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is a citizen of God's Kingdom. Such a person acknowledges the rule of God in their heart.

'But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear' 1 Peter 3.15.

Christ is set apart as the Lord of a converted person's heart.

What is the ultimate purpose and outcome of the 'Kingdom of God'?

a. It is for the glory of God.

In the end everything will redound for the honour and glory of God. That is the purpose of creation, that is the purpose of humanity, the purpose of life and the purpose of salvation.

'The Lord has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom' Proverbs 16.4.

'For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God"' Romans 14.11.

'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth' Philippians 2.10.

b. It is for the fulfilment of salvation

What is going to be the great fulfilment of salvation?

'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind' Isaiah 65.17.

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'Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells' 2 Peter 3.13.

'Your Kingdom come' means salvation.

c. It is for conversion

When we pray 'Your Kingdom come', we are praying that God's Kingdom will come into people's lives; that people will be brought to repentance and turn from their rebellion to serve God. It is a prayer that people will truly believe in the King Who died to be their Saviour.

For our encouragement to prayer, the Word of God gives various examples of conversion. These demonstrate how people from all walks of life can be touched: people such as the immoral woman of Samaria (*John 4*), Saul the persecuting Pharisee, later called Paul (*Acts 9*), Lydia the business woman (*Acts 16.11-15*), the Philippian jailor (*Acts 16.25-34*), the paralytic man (*Matthew 9.1-8*) and Zacchaeus the corrupt tax collector (*Luke 19.1-10*).

The Word of God also gives various examples of the effect of preaching the Gospel, from the ones and the twos, to the thousands on the Day of Pentecost (*Acts 2*).

Sanctification and growth

When we pray 'Your Kingdom come', are we prepared for God to take more territory in our lives? Are we prepared for God to really be in control?

Conversion involves a revolution in our life. This prayer is set in the midst of the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon is the teaching of Jesus regarding living in this world as a member of God's Kingdom. The sanctification of Kingdom growth in our lives means impurity, greed, hatred, discord, jealousy, aggression, selfishness, envy, drunkenness and the like are out! They are replaced by love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and the like.

Your Kingdom Come

Security – the unshakeable Kingdom

‘Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear’ Hebrews 12.28.

Serenity – the place where peace reigns supreme

This is looking to the eternal future.

‘But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them’ Hebrews 11.16.

The Second Coming – ‘Come, O Lord!’

‘Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory’ Matthew 24.30.

‘So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation’ Hebrews 9.28.

‘He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!’ Revelation 22.20.

5. 'YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN'

Matthew 6.10b

There is a common expression used in Christian terminology, which is 'God willing'. This has biblical warrant and this principle is taught in *James 4.13-15*.

'Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."

It is easy to run this saying off our lips as a type of rubber stamp, to give acceptability for what we really want to do. In other words, we make our plans and then, if God allows it to happen, it must be God's will. This is often the measure of our 'God willing'.

However, this part of the Lord's Prayer is teaching us that God's will comes before our will. We have to have the Christian mindset, which begins with God and submits to God.

This part of the Lord's Prayer also teaches us that God is the Lord of both Heaven and earth; therefore He must know all about the past, present and the future.

An illustration may help here. Imagine travelling on a very narrow road, say in the Lake District, with passing places and limited vision. You may think, 'I do not want to go down that road because if I meet another car there is nowhere to pass.' But up above is a hot air balloon. The people in it can see all along the road. God looks down from Heaven; He knows where we have come from, where we are going and what lies ahead of us.

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The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray that God's will may be done, whatever that will may be. It is a statement of faith in the wisdom of God and in the knowledge that God knows everything, and that He is sovereign. Our view of God's sovereignty is not always correct. This illustration explains what I mean.

A writer in *Our Daily Bread*³ wrote of how a Christian had providentially escaped death. An unexpected delay in New York kept him from catching Flight 191 in Chicago, which crashed in May 2019 killing all 254 aboard. God's sovereign protection was accredited for preventing the man boarding the plane. However, in a later edition he wrote:

‘That article brought this note from a reader: “I just had to let you know about one of God’s great saints who ran to make Flight 191 – and made it!” His name was Edwards E Elliott, beloved pastor of the Garden Grove Orthodox Presbyterian Church in California. His plane from Pennsylvania was late, and a friend who had accompanied him to Chicago said he last saw him “dashing forward” in the terminal to make his connection. As I read about Pastor Elliott’s fruitful ministry, the question I raised in that June devotional challenged me with new urgency: “Was divine providence operating only in New York and not in Chicago?” Immediately the words of my correspondent came alive: “At the time, Reverend Elliott didn’t know he was indeed running to Heaven.”’

We are called to submit by faith to the sovereign, unchangeable will of God, not because we understand it but because of Who God is.

‘God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?’ Numbers 23.19.

³ *Our Daily Bread Ministries* devotional, www.ourdailybread.org

Your Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven

‘So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it’ Isaiah 55.11.

‘Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it’ Isaiah 46.11.

The authority of God’s will

Our thinking and planning is so minuscule compared with God’s. Our planning is time-bound; God’s planning is eternal. It takes humility to acknowledge there is One Who knows better than us, and to be willing to moulded by the hands of the heavenly Potter.

‘But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand’ Isaiah 64.8.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord’ Isaiah 55.8.

The mystery of God’s will

The word ‘mystery’ is often associated in theology with the secret counsels of God’s will. There are aspects of the secret will of God which we do not understand, or cannot comprehend. For example, consider the mystery of creation.

A scientist once said, ‘Even though we know much more than we knew one hundred years ago, we also realise that there is actually far more to know than we ever realised one hundred years ago.’

Consider also the sovereignty of God in election.

‘..just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will’ Ephesians 1.4-5.

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When we pray *'Your will be done'*, we are asking God to save and reveal Christ to those He has chosen from the foundation of the world.

However, there is an amazing mystery which He has revealed to us. The way of salvation, the Gospel, is a mystery which fascinates the angels as they desire to look into it.

'Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began' Romans 16.25.

'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory' 1 Timothy 3.16.

When we pray *'Your will be done'*, we are praying that Jesus Christ will be revealed to needy sinners and that they will believe in Him.

The revelation of God's will

God has provided His will for Christian living for us in Scripture. This prayer is in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon Jesus is revealing to us His will for lifestyle.

The New Testament epistles are full of instructions for Christian living. So when we pray *'Your will be done'*, it should be an acknowledgement of our willingness to apply ourselves to the Word of God, and to find out the will of God for living.

All the principles for living are found in God's Word.

'...and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work' 2 Timothy 3.15-17.

Your Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven

Doctrine – what is right; reproof – for what is not right; correction – how to get right; Instruction in righteousness – how to keep right.

Calvin said, ‘The Scriptures provide us with spectacles through which to interpret the world and to live in it for God’s glory.’

The purpose of God’s will

- To get honour and glory to God’s name.

‘For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen’ Matthew 6.13.

- To build God’s Church.

‘Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession’ Psalm 2.8.

‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek’ Romans 1.16.

- To sanctify our lives.

‘But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption’ 1 Corinthians 1.30.

‘And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God’ Romans 12.2.

- To use us in Gods service.

‘...with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men’ Ephesians 6.7.

‘For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men’ 1 Peter 2.15.

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The personal application of God's will

Now while the Word of God gives us the principles of God's will for life, there are times when we need God's personal and particular direction. Having applied the principles, there is a need for a special direction from God. We need a willingness to accept the fact of a closed door; a willingness to acknowledge an open door; the application of God's Word with the power of the Holy Spirit; and a receptivity to the preached Word. This illustration from *Wisdom Stories*⁴ helps us.

'A Native American and his friend were walking near Times Square, New York. The streets were filled with people, across multiple lanes cars were honking their horns, taxicabs were squealing around corners, and sirens were wailing. Suddenly, the Native American stopped and said, "I hear a cricket." His friend was astounded. "What? You must be crazy. You couldn't possibly hear a cricket in all of this noise!"

"No, I'm sure of it," the Native American said, "I heard a cricket."

"That's crazy," said the friend.

'The Native American listened carefully for a moment, and then walked across the street to where some shrubs were growing. He looked into the bushes and sure enough, he located a small cricket. His friend was utterly amazed.

"That's incredible," said his friend. "You must have super-human ears!"

"No," said the Native American. "My ears are no different from yours."

"But that can't be!" said the friend. "I could never hear a cricket in this noise."

⁴ *Wisdom Stories*, Sacinandana Swami, 'The Cricket', sacinandanaswami.com

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“Yes, you could,” came the reply. “Here, let me show you.”

‘He reached into his pocket, pulled out a few coins, and dropped them on the sidewalk. And then, with the noise of the crowded street still blaring in their ears, they noticed every head within five metres turn and look to see if the money that tinkled on the pavement was theirs.

“See what I mean?” asked the Native American. “It all depends on what’s important to you, on what you’re listening for.”

Conclusion

For our example of submission to the will of God we need only go to Jesus in Gethsemane.

6. 'GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD'

Matthew 6.11

The first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer reflect a proper concern for the honour and glory of God. Jesus teaches us that we should start with God in our prayer, and be aware of His Kingdom and holiness. In this way we are taught to respect the privilege of coming to God as our Father in Heaven. In doing so we are to desire the growth of His Kingdom and the implementation of His will. Such an emphasis at the outset teaches us to respect the Giver first, and then the gifts of the Giver.

Jesus now teaches us to move from the 'Your', referring to God, to the 'us', referring to our needs. This next petition, I believe, refers to both a material and spiritual need. It demonstrates the reality that our Father is concerned to provide His providence and grace in our life. This petition teaches us that our Father in Heaven is concerned about our total welfare; it refers to all that affects our whole being as a person.

It is with this assurance we pray to our heavenly Father Who can provide providentially and spiritually. It is with such a realisation that David prayed.

'You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off' Psalm 139.2.

Material needs

a. Dependence – 'Give us'

Here we are taught to appreciate that we are totally dependent upon our Creator God. Everything we receive for our wellbeing physically and spiritually has its source in God. For example, the air that we

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breathe, and the force of gravity that stops us floating up into the sky both have their source in our Creator God. The original source of a major river in Romania has been traced to an unfailing spring coming out of the side of a mountain. The source is all important!

'Give us' is an acknowledgement of our dependence upon our Father in Heaven to provide as the Source. Martin Luther commented⁵:

"Give us this day our daily bread." What does this mean? Answer: God indeed gives daily bread to all men, even to the wicked, without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to acknowledge our daily bread as His gift, and to receive it with thanksgiving.'

We live in a sophisticated, user-friendly world where provisions can be easily obtained. Food in the supermarket is just so readily available, or other goods via the Internet at the touch of a button. The reality of our dependence upon our Father in Heaven in the 'Give us' of the Lord's Prayer can be blotted out in the ease of our accessibility to goods. However, the 'Give us' should be, in truth, an affirmation of worship. As we say these words from the heart, we are acknowledging our dependence upon God.

'...also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour—it is the gift of God' Ecclesiastes 3.13.

'Man, despite his artistic pretensions, his sophistication and many accomplishments, owes the fact of his existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that there is the sun and that it rains' (Anonymous).

b. Continually – 'this day our daily bread'

What is meant here by 'daily bread'? Around four hundred years ago Luther wrote⁶ that it means:

⁵ Based on Luther's *Small Catechism*

⁶ *Ibid*

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

‘Everything that is required to satisfy our bodily needs; such as food and raiment, house and home, fields and flocks, money and goods; pious parents, children, and servants; godly and faithful rulers, good government; seasonable weather, peace and health; order and honour; true friends, good neighbours, and the like.’

Derek Prime, writing more recently, agrees. He states:

‘The meaning of bread sums up our daily needs. It stands for all the daily benefits we require, such as food and clothing, housing and heating and so forth.’⁷

c. Our daily bread

One of the lessons Jesus teaches us in the Sermon the Mount is to take a day at a time for our needs!

‘Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble’ Matthew 6.34.

Jesus is teaching in the same manner to trust our Father in Heaven on a day-to-day basis for our needs. This was the experience of the Children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years. The daily manna came down from God, with the exception of an advance amount given for the Sabbath day.

When I was a boy, before the days of freezers etc, shopping was a daily routine for my mother. Daily bread really meant daily bread. It is difficult for us nowadays, with full freezers and convenience food, to remember not only the dependence factor, but also the daily factor.

‘Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation! Selah’ Psalm 68.19.

As we pray this petition, always remember we are acknowledging our material daily dependence. We need to remember daily our

³ *The Lord’s Prayer*, Truth for All Time Series, Derek Prime, Day One Publications ISBN: 9781903087565

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dependence upon God within the confines of the teaching of God's Word.

d. The assurance

'Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass' Psalm 37.5.

While we live in this world, when we understand our dependent and vital relationship with God our heavenly Father, our lives and creation around us takes on a greater depth and wonder.

*Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green,
Something lives in every hue,
Christless eyes have never seen.*

George Wade Robinson, 1838-77

Spiritual needs

a. Dependence – 'Give us'

What is true about our material dependence upon God is most certainly true about our spiritual dependence upon God. Everything about our new nature as Christians has its source in our heavenly Father. 'Give us' acknowledges that God is the Giver of every good thing for us spiritually as well as materially.

'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' Romans 6.23.

'But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift' Ephesians 4.7.

'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning' James 1.17.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

b. Continually – ‘this day our daily bread’

In two recent surveys of professing Christians in the UK and Australia, only 19% stated that they read the Bible every day. 27% stated they read the Bible occasionally, and 37% actually acknowledged they did not read the Bible at all. Needless to say, such devastating statistics go some way to explaining the weak state of the Church.

Now while it is important we do not become legalistic about this, it is essentially important to read the Bible regularly. It is our daily bread for the soul. A daily intake of God’s Word can only prove beneficial spiritually. Even if we are only able to consider a few verses, this is better than disregarding the Word altogether. ‘Little and often’ is not a bad practice for Christian people with unavoidably hectic lives.

‘Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors’ Proverbs 8.34.

The problem of depression through Seasonal Affective Disorder, known as SAD, is due to a lack of sun in the winter months. Our relationship to light is similar to our relationship to God. Scripture tells us that we are dependent upon God for our life and for the continued existence of our universe. However, we too frequently forget this, declare our independence from God and go our own way. The result could also be called SAD – Spiritual Affective Disorder.

To walk in the Christian pathway we need daily grace.

‘Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”’ Luke 9.23.

To obtain grace we need to respect the means of grace. The Word of God is one of the means of grace through which the Father feeds His children spiritually.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, notice the expectation in this prayer – ‘*This day*’! Not tomorrow, or next week, but ‘*this day*’.

There is something very definite in the tone of this petition. God does not deal in vagueness. It reminds us of our immediate needs.

God only deals with needs. It also reminds us of our consideration for others – ‘*Give us*’.

Derek Prime gives this illustration on this point.

‘A telling story from the life of John Wesley reminds us of the beauty of caring for others. There was a respected Wesleyan preacher named Samuel Bradburn. At a time when he was in difficult financial circumstances John Wesley sent him a note as follows.

“Dear Sammy, Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou be fed. Yours affectionately, J Wesley.”

‘With the letter he enclosed two five pound notes. Sammy replied swiftly as follows.

“Rev and Dear Sir, I have often been struck with the beauty of the passage of Scripture quoted in your good letter. But I must confess that I never saw such useful commentary notes on the passage as the two notes you sent. I am, Reverend and Dear Sir, your obedient and grateful servant, S Bradburn.”⁸

⁸ *Ibid*

7. 'AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS'

Matthew 6.12

This petition teaches us the absolute importance and significance of forgiveness in the Christian life, not only of the essential need of forgiveness from God, but for us to forgive others also. The theme of forgiveness lies at the heart of the Gospel message. We will consider its relevance to us personally and to others.

When the Gospel message was first preached in the New Testament times, forgiveness was a prominent feature.

'John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins' Mark 1.4.

'So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled and glorified God, who had given such power to men' Matthew 9.1-8.

It is interesting to note also in the Old Testament that when David urged his soul not to forget all God's benefits, first in that list of benefits was the forgiveness of sins.

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*'...Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases'
Psalm 103.3.*

Forgiveness of sins comes at the top of the list of blessings flowing from Jesus Christ.

'Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins' Acts 5.31.

'Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins' Acts 13.38.

'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace' Ephesians 1.7.

Forgiveness is vital because without it –

- there can be no reconciliation with God;
- there can be no true peace in our mind and heart;
- our spiritual growth is hindered;
- we become hardened and bitter in our spirit;
- our own spiritual lives and our fellowship with other Christians is hindered.

A born-again believer who has repented of their sin and put their trust in Jesus Christ is justified before God. This justification is a once-and-for-all act that has come about by faith.

'Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' Romans 5.1.

A Christian is justified by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ. This is a Christian's eternal position in Christ, secure eternally in Christ. So why is it that Jesus tells us to regularly and daily ask God to forgive our sins?

This total cleansing needs daily application for the simple reason

And Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Forgive Our Debtors

that we sin every day. Christ has merited for us a total inheritance of forgiveness for all our sin, but we receive the blessing of that inheritance on a daily basis. The forgiveness of sin is a renewable blessing.

Our ongoing fellowship with God is dependent upon constant cleansing for our daily sin. By sinning as believers we do not lose our salvation, but if we fail to confess our sin we do forfeit the blessing of fellowship with God. This is one of the reasons Jesus is teaching us to pray daily for forgiveness. Derek Prime states:

‘The merits of our Saviour’s blood guarantee our restoration to fellowship with God every time we confess our sins.’⁹

‘Forgive us our debts’

This is a daily acknowledgement that we are not perfect and that we do make mistakes. Every day we need to remember this fact before God. Sinless perfection as an experience will only be known in Heaven. As each day we need to wash physically, so each day we need to wash spiritually. Derek Prime says again:

‘Sin is not eradicated altogether from our lives when we are born again. While we hate sin as never before, and its power is broken, nevertheless day by day we still sin and fall short of being the people we ought to be. We do not lose our salvation, but if we fail to address sin in our life we forfeit our experience of fellowship with God. All the time unforgiven sin is in our life we fail to know the happiness God intends through forgiveness and cleansing. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” Psalm 66.18.’¹⁰

Jesus would never deceive us, and when He teaches us to ask our Father in Heaven to forgive our sins, we can be sure He is able and willing to do so. Jesus knows the mind and will of the Father perfectly.

9 *Ibid*

10 *Ibid*

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'As we forgive our debtors'

The significance and importance of this second phrase is best explained for us by Jesus in *Matthew 6.14-15*:

'For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'

God's forgiveness of our sin places an obligation upon us to forgive others. One of the fruits of a saved and forgiven person is demonstrated in their forgiving others. Forgiving others is not easy, but one of the great obstacles to Church fellowship and growth is a spirit of bitterness, a refusal to forgive. Our profession of faith is a sham if we stubbornly refuse to forgive those who have wronged us. If the Holy Spirit of God is working in our lives, then forgiveness of others will evidence itself. If we have been forgiven by God it will influence and impact upon our lives.

One of the effects is gratitude to God which evidences itself in a forgiving spirit. See the parable of the unforgiving servant in *Matthew 18.21-35*.

'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you' Ephesians 4.30-32.

This illustration is helpful.¹¹

'Corrie ten Boom told of not being able to forget a wrong that had been done to her. She had forgiven the person, but she kept rehashing the incident and so could not sleep. Finally Corrie cried out to God for help in putting the problem to rest. "His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor," Corrie wrote, "to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks."

¹¹ Quotation taken from <https://bible.org/illustration/corrie-ten-boom>

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“Up in the church tower,” he said, nodding out the window, “is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there’s a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive, we take our hand off the rope. But if we’ve been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn’t be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They’re just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down.”

‘And so it proved to be. There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversations, but the force – which was my willingness in the matter – had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at the last stopped altogether: we can trust God not only above our emotions, but also above our thoughts.’

Conclusion

The Word of God can be intensely challenging at times. Forgiveness can be described as being like two sides of one coin: God forgiving us, and us forgiving others. Forgiven and forgiving are the hallmarks of a true Christian.

We are saved by God’s grace, but amazing grace brings its responsibilities. It is like faith and works. James says, ‘Let us see your faith by your works’ (*James 2.14-26*).

8. 'AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE'

Matthew 6.13a

The heart of this petition teaches us how important it is for us to know ourselves! These two dependent requests – ‘*Do not lead us into temptation*’ and ‘*Deliver us from the evil one*’ recognise our vulnerability and weakness in an inescapable battle. A biblical example of this is found in the life of Peter, who did not realise his vulnerability at that time.

‘And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me”’ Luke 22.31-34.

A scene from Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* portrays Interpreter bringing Christian to a wall where fire is blazing from a grate. A man is trying to douse the fire with water. Then Interpreter shows Christian the other side of the wall, where another man is secretly pouring oil on the fire to keep it ablaze. Interpreter says, ‘You saw the man standing behind the wall to maintain the fire, teaching you that it is hard for the tempted to see how this work of grace is maintained in the soul.’ Satan tries to quench faith, but Christ keeps it alive.

At this point, in the Lord’s Prayer, we are acknowledging to our Father in Heaven that we cannot cope without His help. Is this in your thinking when you pray? The reality of our vulnerability should

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lead us to ask our Father in Heaven to strengthen and defend us. Our weakness and vulnerability is not an excuse for sin, but a reason to pray for strength.

'...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man' Ephesians 3.16.

'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might' Ephesians 6.10.

'...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy' Colossians 1.11.

'You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus' 2 Timothy 2.1.

There is another aspect here with respect to sensitivity to the problem of sin in our lives. We live in a world which has succeeded to a large extent in de-sensitising us to sin. What shocked society fifty years ago as a sinful lifestyle is now an accepted part of life as we know it. But the truth of the Lord's Prayer remains.

This petition underlines a serious and sensitive approach to the problem of evil and its source. Notice the order here – forgiveness of sin is followed by sensitivity to sin. Habitual sinning is something which should be foreign to a born-again Christian. An appreciation of forgiveness will show itself in sensitivity to sin.

'And do not lead us into temptation'

It is important that we do not misunderstand what Jesus is teaching us in this part of the prayer. God is never the Author of sin. This prayer does not imply that God would at any time entice His people into temptation for evil ends.

'Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt

Do Not Lead Us into Temptation ...

anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed' James 1.13-14.

Tertullian, the second century theologian, said: 'But away with the idea that the Lord should be thought to tempt, as if He either did not know each man's faith or was eager to dethrone it.'¹²

The word 'temptation' in the original has two particular meanings. The first means 'an enticement to sin' which either comes from the devil or ourselves, never from God. The second meaning of the word refers to us being tested. Both the meanings of this word – tempted and tested – are within this petition.

An example of this is seen in the Holy Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

'Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry' Luke 4.1-2.

God allowed His Son to be tested under temptation, but the temptation came from the devil. So while God never entices to evil He does, in His permissive will, lead His people into a place where they are tested by temptation. Whether testing or enticement of the devil, God can overrule the experience for our sanctification.

When we consider this petition let us remember the connection between testing and temptation. When we enter trials ordained by God for our spiritual growth, Satan comes at the same time and tempts us to doubt God's love and God's wisdom. So while God tests to mature us, Satan tempts us to destroy us.

'In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness

12 *Tertullian's Treatises Concerning Prayer*, paragraph 8, www.tertullian.org

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of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls' 1 Peter 1.6-9.

But we may ask the question, 'If God can use such experiences for our sanctification, why is it that we are being taught by Jesus to ask not to be led into such an experience? Are we not praying against a good thing?' We come back to our introduction. We noticed that this petition is an acknowledgement of our own vulnerability and weakness: 'Do not lead us into temptation where we will fall in our own strength.' It teaches us that we cannot overcome temptation in our own strength.

The second part of the petition provides the answer; we need God's help to deliver us from evil. It is a prayer for God's keeping power.

'...who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time' 1 Peter 1.5.

'But deliver us from the evil one'

Satan is the greatest enemy of the Christian. He comes as:

- a roaring lion

'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour' 1 Peter 5.8.

- an angel of light

'For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light' 2 Corinthians 11.14.

- a liar

'You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does

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not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it' John 8.44.

Deliver us from evil situations and experiences

John Paton was a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific. One night hostile natives surrounded the mission station, intent on burning out the Patons and killing them. Paton and his wife prayed during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see their attackers leave. A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, Paton asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, 'Who were all those men with you there?' Paton knew no men were present – but the chief said he was afraid to attack because he had seen hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords circling the mission station.

Again, like the testing and the temptation, we can notice a double meaning to this phrase: deliver us from us from evil – deliver us from the evil one.

Satan was permitted by God to attack Job with evil, but in God's time He delivered Job.

Application of the Lord's Prayer for today

When we consider the Lord's Prayer, and we speak the words sincerely in prayer, we may be sure Satan will from time to time tempt us regarding its content.

- Is God really our loving heavenly Father?
- Is holiness such a pressing priority?
- Is there really an everlasting Kingdom?
- Is God's will good and for our good?

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- Can we trust God to meet our daily material needs?
- Is it really necessary to be sensitive to sin?
- Do we literally have to forgive others if we are to be forgiven?

Remember our vulnerability, and remember how much we depend upon the grace of God in our life. Remember also our own need of discipline.

'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak' Matthew 26.41.

9. 'FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN'

Matthew 6.13b

The doxology at the end of the prayer is like a shining jewel, which is placed on the teaching of Jesus. In the early New Testament Church this doxology was adopted for the regular conclusion to public prayer. Its content should be the desire of every Christian. It is totally God-centred.

'For Yours is the kingdom'

The end of the prayer unites perfectly with the beginning. The prayer starts with the praise of God and for the furtherance of God's Kingdom. Now we are being reminded of God's rule and authority.

This is a doxology of praise and assurance: God is in control! *'For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.'* God is building His Church and the gates of hell (Hades) will not prevail against it (*Matthew 16.18*).

The Kingdom of God refers to the absolute, unchanging, irresistible, sovereign rule of God. C H Spurgeon said¹³:

'There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that sovereignty overrules them, and that sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought to more earnestly contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation – the Kingship of God

13 www.gracegems.org/08/07/sovereignty.html

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over all the works of His own hands – the throne of God and His right to sit upon that throne...for it is God upon His throne Whom we trust.’

‘And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen”’ Matthew 28.18-20.

The Apostle Paul spoke of this when he was at Athens (see *Acts 17.16-34*).

At the end of this prayer we are called to bow the knee and acknowledge that all things are in God’s hands. Before conversion we are a bit like the supporters of Manchester United Football Club when Malcolm Glazer took control of the club. The supporters resisted and protested, but in the end this man got to own the club in a legal manner. See *Psalm 2*.

Before conversion the unbeliever resists the fact that God is the King of His Kingdom. A Christian is a person who has a totally changed perspective. He now positively delights in the knowledge and belief that the Kingdom belongs to God.

In his book, Derek Prime says:

‘His is the Kingdom. Rule and authority belong to Him, so that we may be sure in our prayers that, no matter how great the conflict with the evil one, our Father will have the last word.’¹⁴

‘Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is

14 *The Lord's Prayer*, Truth for All Time Series, Derek Prime, Day One Publications ISBN: 9781903087565

For Yours is the Kingdom ...

Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all' 1 Chronicles 29.11.

'The power'

'God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God' Psalm 62.11.

To put this in perspective, currently 'Google.com' and 'AllTheWeb.com' are competing to take and hold the position as the largest search engine on the Internet. Developing ever-expanding indices referencing over two billion pages, both sites are able to return results for a complex search within seconds. God searches routinely and instantly through billions of hearts!

a. Power in creation:

'Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: "I am the Lord, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself"' Isaiah 44.24.

'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created' Revelation 4.11.

'And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"' Revelation 19.6.

b. Power through the Gospel:

'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God' 1 Corinthians 1.18.

c. Power in the testimony of a believer:

'God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect' 2 Samuel 22.33.

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d. God's power working in His people:

'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us' 2 Corinthians 4.7.

'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us' Ephesians 3.20.

'Kept by the power of God' 1 Peter 1.5.

As an illustration, I read of a sailor in a shipwreck who was thrown upon a rock to which he clung in great danger until the tide went down. Later a friend asked him, 'Jim, didn't you shake with fear when you were hanging on that rock?' 'Yes, but the rock didn't,' was the significant reply.

'The glory'

The chief objective of man is to glorify God. All credit and praise and honour belong to Him.

'To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen' Ephesians 3.21.

J S Bach the composer (1685-1750) said:

'All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hubbub.'

He headed his compositions: 'J J', 'Jesus Juva', which means 'Jesus help me.' He ended them 'S D G', 'Soli Dei gloria', which means 'To God alone the praise.'

On March 23, 1743, when Handel's 'The Messiah' was first performed in London, the king was present in the great audience. It is reported that all were so deeply moved by the 'Hallelujah Chorus' that with the impressive words, '*For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*' the whole audience, including the king, sprang to its feet, and remained

For Yours is the Kingdom ...

standing through the entire chorus. From that time to this it has always been the custom to stand during the chorus whenever it is performed. With spontaneous joy the soul stands to salute Him who 'comes in the name of the Lord!' (*Matthew 23.39*). He is 'King of kings, and Lord of lords' (*Revelation 19.16*), and to Him we pledge allegiance.

'That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' Romans 15.6.

'Amen'

This is the sealing word of affirmation: 'So be it, Lord! It ought to be so, Lord.' The 'amens' on earth are a foretaste of those that will be said in Glory.

'Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped Him who lives forever and ever' Revelation 5.14.

Jerome (347-420) said that in his day the congregation showed its approval of the sentiments and petitions expressed in prayer so enthusiastically that it sounded like a clap of thunder.

Where do we find the Lord Jesus in the 'Amen!' of the Lord's Prayer? The word is even a title of Christ Himself. The last of His letters to the seven churches in *Revelation* begins with a remarkable salutation by the glorified Lord:

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God' Revelation 3.14.

We can be pre-eminently certain that His Word is always faithful and true, because He is none other than the Creator of all things, and thus He is our eternal 'Amen'.

'For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us' 2 Corinthians 1.20.

To say 'Amen!' is to say 'So be it, for Christ's sake!'

The Lord's Teaching on Prayer

Conclusion

All our prayers all our desires and service for the Lord need to go through this doxology funnel.