

## The Way

### Growth of the Church Lesson 37: Father's Day

#### Review (Where We've Been)

#### BIG Idea

When someone famous dies, it is extremely common for a child to write a book about the life of their well-known parent.

#### If We Want to See The Father, We Can Look to The Son

- In one sense, you could view Jesus' life and ministry as a sort of biography on The Father.
  - In John 14:8 Phillip says to Jesus "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."
  - Jesus replies - **John 14:9-10 (ESV)**

**<sup>9</sup>"Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup>Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"**

- Jesus' life perfectly reflects the character of the Father because He is One with the Father.
  - We were created to be image bearers - and Jesus is the **TRUE IMAGE** of God. To see Him is to see God.
- In addition to His example, Jesus does offer specific teaching about The Father as well
  - Matthew chapters 5-7 - The Sermon on the Mount - The phrases "**Heavenly Father**", and "**Father who is in Heaven**" appear everywhere.
- What we are going to zoom in on is the way in which Jesus (The Son) teaches us to speak to His Father (Our Father).

#### **The Lord's Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13** **(Or The Disciples' Prayer)**

- This section of the Sermon on the Mount is referred to as The Lord's Prayer

- Although I think (And many across church history would agree) a better title for this prayer would actually be the Disciples' prayer.
- We see lots of places in The Gospels where Jesus prays, and they are all different from this.
  - In fact, a good case could be made that **John 17** is truly "The Lord's Prayer" - we will visit this prayer a bit today as well.
- However, Matt 6:9-13 is the prayer that Jesus taught His Disciples (and us) to pray for the purpose of changing our hearts.

### Luke 11:1-4 (ESV)

"Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, **teach us to pray**, as John taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread,

<sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation." "

- These men knew how to pray. They were devout Jews and likely would have prayed 3 times a day - reciting the **Shema** along with a series of blessings
  - They wanted to know what was different about how Jesus viewed prayer - because they had seen the way Jesus was connected to the Father.

### The Lord's Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13 (ESV)

"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,  
<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

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

Let's walk through this heart-changing, perspective altering prayer together line by line.

## 2 Important Notes

- QUESTION: Was this prayer intended to be prayed word for word, or was this given as a template meant to guide our prayers?
  - I think the answer is, “**yes**”. There is certainly value in both.
    - This prayer is not a magic formula to get God to hear your prayers, and should never be recited as a heartless ritual. Jesus warns of such prayers right before giving this example to us!
    - But it should also not be something that we feel we cannot simply pray word for word. Many Christians throughout church history have found much comfort in doing exactly that. There is so much power in what Jesus is teaching us here. It's all about your heart-posture when doing so.
    - This prayer is not meant to change anything externally, but rather it is meant to align ourselves internally with reality.
      - As you study this prayer, it will inevitably bleed its influence out into your worship, your prayers, and the rest of your life - that's exactly the idea.
- Picture this prayer like a layered filter - the beginning layers are meant to put you in the right headspace to enter into the next layer of the prayer.

## The First Layer - Our Heavenly Father

The audacity of the beginning of this prayer cannot be overstated.

“Our **Father** in heaven,

- How is it that we - the rebellious prodigals that we are - are invited to call the benevolent Creator of the Universe, Father?
- This should immediately ground us firmly in reality
  - We are children completely dependant on our Father

### ● Our Father Is **OURS**, and we are His

- Adoption: A ministry near and dear to the heart of the Father
  - There are many touching stories of parents who were brought to tears the day their adopted child first called them “Dad” or “Mom”.

- I wonder if the Creator of emotion - the One who sewed in us the ability to cry tears of Joy - feels similarly when we finally call Him “Father” for the first time.

“Our Father in *heaven*,

- **Our Father is High Above Us - Yet Desires a Close Relationship with Us**

- What a Father we have! We’ve not just been adopted by anybody - CEO of Top of the World Industries.
  - Our status as His children does not change His status as the Ruler of the skies.
  - This is not a Zeus-like god, lording over us from his cushy seat in the skies, living it up in all manor of human pleasures while taking no interest in us lowly peasant folk.
    - Jesus tells us in one sentence of a God who is *transcendent* (high above us), yet *immanent* (desires to be in a close, paternal relationship with us).

## The Second Layer - Our Father’s Name

*hallowed* be your name.

“*Hallowed*” This word only appears here and in Luke 11.

- When you don’t understand what a word means - it can be helpful to check other translations
  - The CSB says “*your name be honored as holy.*” - This gets us a little closer to home
  - I found this verse helpful from the ESV Footnote.

Isaiah 29:23 (NLT)

<sup>23</sup> For when they see their many children  
and all the blessings I have given them,  
they will **recognize the holiness** of the Holy One of Jacob.  
They will **stand in awe** of the God of Israel.

Then putting it together with the rest of the line I feel we have landed at a place that really hits home for me with this word.

*hallowed* be your *name*.

- **His Name Must be Known and Recognized as Holy**

- First by me - my family - those around me - my Nation - By All
  - Every Knee will bow
- Jesus, in His prayer before His arrest says;

John 17:26 (ESV)

“O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them **your name**, and I will continue to make it known...”

- **His Name Has Always Been, and Will Always Be**

- When Moses back in Exodus 3 asks God in the burning bush who he should say sent him, God responds, “Say this to the people of Israel: “I am has sent me to you.”

“You and I have to say, “I am that which I have become,” or “I am that which I was born,” or “I am that which circumstances have made me.” He said, “I am that I am.” All other creatures are links; this is the staple from which they all hang. All other beings are derived, and therefore limited and changeful; this being is underived, absolute, self-dependent, and therefore unalterable forevermore.”

- David Gibson - *The Lord of Psalm 23*

- This is the first place that I noticed that God is **already doing** everything petition made in the prayer.
  - **We can already begin to see the true purpose of this prayer. It's not really about changing anything externally - it's all about getting us aligned with reality**

## **The Third Layer - Our Father's Kingdom and Will**

<sup>10</sup>Your **kingdom** come,

- When we say “Your kingdom come” - what are we actually saying?
  - This is the fulcrum on which the entire prayer hinges.

This is the Gospel - Jesus announced the arrival of a new kingdom, and He was the King

- **His Kingdom Is completely upside down (Matthew 5:2-11)**

This Kingdom was completely upside-down

- Jesus begins His sermon by making a surprising statement about who were the ones “winning” in this new kingdom -
  - The Poor in Spirit - for theirs is the **kingdom** of heaven
  - Those who mourn
  - The meek
  - Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
  - The merciful
  - The pure in heart
  - The peacemakers
  - Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake - for theirs is the **kingdom** of heaven
    - This is what this new Kingdom looks like - and These are the winners in this new kingdom
      - Right here and now - though we cannot always see it

your **will** be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

### ● His Plan Will Be Accomplished (Gen 50:20)

Saying “May Your will be done” feels silly to me at times because it’s like saying “May the sun be hot”

- The sun is hot whether I wish it so or not!
- God’s will is accomplished whether I wish it so or not!
  - ◆ This is an exercise in resting in God’s sovereignty
  - ◆ Like Joseph told his brothers, you meant this for evil but God **meant it** for good.

### ● He is Sovereign Over All

There are many versions of songs derived from and inspired by this prayer, but the one we will sing today is one of my favorites because of one little line

- ***On Earth as in Heaven, right here in my heart***
  - This line, to me, perfectly encapsulates the essence of this verse.
  - This isn’t praying and begging God to figure out what’s going on down here - or to finally do something about this mess!
    - All of Heaven bows to your will
    - All of Creation bows to your will
    - The only thing that has a problem with Your Will is **MY WILL**
    - So I will bow to Your Will

Perhaps another way to phrase this verse would be “*May I bow to Your will as it is done, on Earth as it is in Heaven*”

**\*\*\*This is an important part of the filter - by aligning myself with reality, that the Lord will accomplish His Plan...**

- Then the next layer of the prayer becomes less of a request, and more of a reminder.

## **The Fourth Layer - Our Father's Provision and Correction**

**<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our *daily bread*,**

You cannot read or pray this verse without thinking of the Israelites in the wilderness in Exodus 16

- The people are grumbling because they are hungry convinced God has led them into the wilderness to die of starvation

**Exodus 16:4**

**<sup>4</sup>“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and **gather a day's portion** every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.”**

It is ok to make our needs known to the Father.

- However, If you've worked down through the filter, by this point you realize that this is really more of a reminder for myself than it is a request to an unaware God
- **The Father Already Knows What We Truly Need**
  - **Matthew 6:7-8 (ESV)**

**<sup>7</sup>“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for **your Father knows what you need** before you ask him”**
  - He created you **with needs** - He is not unaware, and is able to **sustain** and **satisfy** those needs

**The need for food isn't a product of the Fall; it's a product of *design*. God didn't have to make us this way, but he did. In doing so, he reminds us daily that we're not self-sustaining...Food helps us recognize that life comes from and is sustained by God.**

**Eric Schumacher - *The Good Gift of Weakness***

- We are usually much like my toddler when he asks for a snack

- He is **certain** he will die without a granola bar right now, and he feels that we, as his parents, do not understand how life works when we tell him “not right now”.

Proverbs 136:25 (ESV) “He gives food to every creature”

<sup>12</sup> and **forgive us** our debts,  
as we also have **forgiven** our debtors.

I love how quickly Jesus moves from our request for **our needs**, to a reminder of **our weakness** with a simple little “and”

- How much time do we like to spend pouring out to God about our physical needs in our prayers?

This fits in with the new upside-down Kingdom so perfectly. When Jesus would heal someone, feed someone, or take care of someone’s physical needs, He would always address their spiritual needs.

- **Physical Needs are Pressing yet Passing, Spiritual Needs are immaterial yet Eternal**

- Once your belly is full, you will eventually hunger again.
  - The 5,000+ people that Jesus fed wanted more food
- Once you have fixed your car, it will eventually breakdown again
- Once you recover from an illness, you will eventually get sick again
- Once you have healed from a hurt, you will eventually be hurt again
- Once you have witnessed a miracle, you will eventually find yourself praying for another miracle
  - Even Lazarus eventually died again.
- We can’t be so focused on our physical bodies or those around us, that we forget to consider the state of our souls
  - Jesus would like us to flip it around, to view our spiritual needs the the spiritual needs of those around us as the most pressing and urgent

- **Forgiveness is Essential to be in Right Standing with The Father**

- This should definitely cause us to ask ourselves some serious questions
  - Am I truly forgiving those that hurt me? Or do I just say I do?
  - What does true forgiveness look like in cases where there are continual repeat offenses?
  - What if someone hurt me really badly, and they’re not even remorseful about it?



- Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV)  
<sup>14</sup>“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup>but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
- Sometimes knowing the right answers doesn’t always mean that it’s actually happening in our hearts.

## The Fifth and Final Layer - Our Father’s Guidance and Protection

<sup>13</sup> And **lead us** not into temptation,  
 The Toughest Section of the prayer...

### ● He Does Not Always Lead Us How We Expect Him To

- The word “temptation” is tricky.
  - Almost exclusively the word has come to mean “inciting someone to sin or do evil”
  - James 1:13 (ESV)  
*“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.”*
- The word used for Temptation can also mean
  - Testing or Trial - we’re far more comfortable with that concept
  - A test can be an important mile-marker of growth
  - 1 Peter 4:12-13 (ESV)  
<sup>12</sup>“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to **test** you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”

“It is simply unwise to assume... that we have a Shepherd who leads us to peace and tranquility, but has no say over how sheep come to find themselves in a threatening gorge. No, the valley of the shadow of death, the days of deep darkness, do not mean we have left the paths of righteousness; in fact, they are where the shepherds’ paths of righteousness are sometimes located. This is how He leads.”

- David Gibson - *The Lord of Psalm 23*

- This can be a tough concept to grapple with. It is easy to talk about, but hard to walk through.

- This is important - If one thinks that God's job is to always lead me to still waters and green pastures, but forgets about the valley of the shadow of death, it can cause some to doubt the **goodness** of God, because their definition of God's "goodness" was incorrect;
  - Namely if one defines God's goodness as the absence of pain, suffering, hardship, and sorrow in my life
- I think that's why Jesus includes it in this prayer. It's ok to ask to avoid such tests - After all, Jesus did and he instructed Peter and His Disciples to as well!
- Matt 26:41 (ESV) (To Peter)
 

"Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into **temptation**; The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

  - **But remember, the first half of the prayer is a filter for the second half - Jesus shows us what that looks like before He is arrested**
- Luke 22:39-42 (ESV)
 

<sup>39</sup>"And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup>And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into **temptation**." <sup>41</sup>And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup>saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. **Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.**"

So God, I do not wish to be tested, but if you do lead me to be tested as you did Adam, Job, Abraham, Moses, the Israelites, David, and even your Son (to name a few)...  
Then please Father,

but **deliver us** from evil.

Some translations say: *the evil one* (The accuser, the adversary, the devil, the satan)

- God at times leads us to the test, but there is real danger there at times.
- **There is evil Crouching at Our Door**
- God tells Cain - Genesis 4:6-7
 

"The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is **crouching at the door**. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."
- The word "Contrary" is also translated "To Have" and "to control" - Here, sin is depicted as a lion crouching in Cain's heart, ready to pounce and devour him.

- Scene in the LOTR (Optional if time allows) **Picture**



- **The Lord Jesus Prayed for Deliverance for US!**

John 17:15 (ESV)

*"I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one."*

John 17:20 (ESV)

*"I do not ask for these only (His disciples), but also for those who will believe in me through their word..."*

If Jesus thought it was important that we pray this for ourselves, and then felt it was important for He Himself to also pray this for us... It is likely of more importance than we care to admit in our cultural context

KJV has the familiar line...

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

Added later, but is a wonderful reflection of where this prayer should filter down to.

**(Read prayer if there is time)**

**Pray to Close**