

## INTRO: HERE'S HOW TO WORSHIP GOD THROUGH THE LORD'S PRAYER. . .

*“Why pray, if God loves us and knows all we need before we pray? What if the main object in God’s idea of prayer be the supplying of our great, our endless need—the need of Himself? Communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other needs; prayer is the beginning of that communion” (George MacDonald).*

Last week Dr. Tim Robinson showed that prayer for Jesus was that place of communion where *He* soaked in the intimate presence, power and will of His Father and emerged recharged to love God and others well.

Great news! Jesus gave us The Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6) so we could experience the SAME THING! These 66 words are Jesus’ template for prayer that ushers us into intimate communion with God.

The two major themes in Jesus’ template for prayer are WORSHIP (in the first half of the prayer) which I’ll teach today, and PETITION (vss. 11-13), which Adam Watson is teaching next week.

We know from scripture that all true worship consists of **praise** and **sacrifice**: *“I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, Lord, for it is good” (Psalm 54:6).*

Unsurprisingly, both elements are in the first half of the Lord’s Prayer:

*9 “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Here’s how to worship God using this first half of the lord’s prayer. . .

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### I. LIFT UP YOUR PRAISES TO HIM

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*“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. Psalm 100:4*

This famous verse reminds us that, if prayer is going to be actual communion with God, we have to begin it by **consciously recognizing and entering His presence!** Anything less results in what I call the “*say a prayer for me*” fallacy. This common request implies that prayer is a verbal formula for getting stuff from God and not a personal conversation with God—which it is!

But we wouldn't ask our friends, “*Say a conversation for me.*” Maybe a better formulation would be, “Please have a conversation with God about me!” But to do that, you first have to enter His courts, His presence, with praise! Praise is the essential beginning of communing prayer because it sets our mind and heart on the ONE with whom we are meeting.

### **A. “Our Father. . .”: Praise God as your Father!**

In Greek, the first word in the Lord's Prayer is “Father”. How unique to Christianity! That's not what **Aristotle** called God. To him, God was the “**unmoved mover**”. **Aldous Huxley** called God “**eternal energy**”. **Matthew Arnold** called God “**the absolute unknown**”. **Yoda** called God “**The Force**”. The **Na'vi of Avatar** called their Hindu Krishna-like God “**Enya**”.

The unfortunate worshippers of such deities have to arm-twist or pacify or manipulate their impersonal and dismissive Gods to induce a response. “O First Principle of the Universe, O Great Ground of All Being, bless this food!” But thankfully, not so Christ-followers!

*“Prayer shouldn't be calculated to impress. . .because God . . . doesn't require a flawless recitation of certain phrases, as if he were poised to fly into a rage in the absence of the right formula or performance. No, Jesus says, “God is your father” and he already is disposed favorably towards you” (Wesley Hill).*

And why is God “favorably disposed” toward believers? Because we are His children. And how did that happen? **John 3:16!** He so loved us that He sent Jesus to share and bear the pain and sins of the world that we may be healed and adopted as children in their Father's forever family.

*“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1)*

What a privilege we have to call God **“Father”**! No wonder God’s Children just saying the words “Our Father” is praise! No wonder God is called “Father” in the Gospels over 170 times! No wonder our elder brothers and sisters in the faith called The Lord’s Prayer “Pater Noster” (our Father) because to them, that intimate relationship was the most blessed insight of the whole prayer! So praise Him for it every day!

### **B. “Our Father in Heaven”: Praise God as your Heavenly Father!**

But God is also our Father “in the **heavens**”, plural. God is as close as a Father to His children, but also as far above us as the heavens are above the earth. Theologians say he is **both immanent and transcendent!** He is **both personal and perfect!** He is **both the Sovereign King of the Heavens and our intimately personal Father.** So we praise Him as our **Good, Good, Heavenly Father!**

*Oh, I've heard a thousand stories of what they think You're like  
But I've heard the tender whisper of love in the dead of night  
And You tell me that You're pleased and that I'm never alone*

*Oh, and I've seen many searching for answers far and wide  
But I know we're all searching for answers only You provide  
'Cause You know just what we need before we say a word*

*Because You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us*

*You're a good, good Father  
It's who You are. . . And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am. . . (Good Good Father by Chris Tomlin)*

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## (I. LIFT UP YOUR PRAISES HIM)

## II. OFFER YOUR SACRIFICES TO HIM

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*“I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, Lord, for it is good” “Psalm 54:6).*

Sacrifice (along with praise) is a part of worship. Here are the daily sacrifices Jesus gave for us to make. . .

Jesus now calls for 3 personal daily offerings in the Lord's prayer. (Using third person aorist imperatives from the verb *eltheto*,) these offerings are framed as earnest requests. *“Let your name be hallowed, let your kingdom come, and let your will be done.”* In each request is an implied commitment.

Let's say that in the locker room before last week's Super Bowl, Andy Reed reviewed his game plan against Philly and his St. Louis Chiefs had responded with, **“Let your plan succeed, Coach!”** Think he may have responded, “Thanks for your well wishes men, but what I really need is your sacrificial effort to **make** my plan succeed!”

### A. HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME: “I offer a life dedicated to your glory.”

Jesus says to pray that the name of this loving, awesome God be “hallowed” (*hagiozo*). The word means holy, revered, respected. How is our Father God's name hallowed in this world? Through the display of His character in His children's lives! So when we say “Hallowed be your name”, we're actually offering our life as a living sacrifice to make our Father's name famous!

*12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Illustration: Have you ever seen Britain's crown jewels in the Tower of London? Awesome! Diamonds and emeralds and rubies the size of plums strikingly set against dark black or crimson velvet backgrounds with lighting masterfully done so the jewels fairly dance and sparkle with light. The beauty and magnificence of those gems are absolutely enhanced by the skilled setting in which they are displayed. That's what God wants to do in us! He wants our lives to display the gems of his grace and love as the showcase of his glory!

**B. YOUR KINGDOM COME: "I offer my unqualified allegiance to your Kingdom.**

In Greek, the verbs here are placed at the beginning of these two statements for emphasis: "COME, KINGDOM OF GOD. . .BE DONE, WILL OF GOD."

God's kingdom has already come spiritually during Jesus' first advent when the Church was born on the Day of Pentecost. But it will fully be consummated in a completed physical sense when Jesus comes again to heal the world and invite the whole creation to finally joins in the song and when the kingdoms of this earth become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ!

It is to this Kingdom of God that Jesus daily wants us to offer our unqualified allegiance!

*"When we pray 'thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,' we are praying, as Jesus was praying and acting, for the redemption of the world; for the radical defeat and uprooting of evil; and for heaven and earth to be married at last, for God to be all in all. And if we pray this way, we must of course be prepared to live this way" (N.T. Wright, p. 19).*

**C. YOUR WILL BE DONE: "I offer my joyful submission to your will."**

Jesus wants us to pray for His will to be done now as he does whatever it takes in the lives of his people to prepare the world for his second advent.

That will mean some tough going for us just like it did for Jesus Himself praying in the Garden, ***“Let this cup pass”*** and immediately offering his submission to His Father, ***“yet not my will, but yours be done”*** (Lk 22:42).

In Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s “A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich”, Ivan endures the horrors of a Soviet gulag. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and sneers, “Prayer won’t help you get out of here any faster!” Opening his eyes, Ivan answers: ***“I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God.”***

Our joyful submission to the will of God (especially when it’s painful!) is one of the daily sacrifices of praise that Jesus wants us to offer.

***“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:16-18).***

## ENDING STORY

5 days ago I finally succeeded in dragging my wife Alice to play pickleball with our group. 10 minutes into our first match, as my competitive bride rushed the net to hit a winner, she tripped and plunged head first into the net, racking her right shoulder on the steel I-beam at its base. The ER doc said it was one of the worst shoulder dislocations he’d ever seen! And the fracture of her shoulder socket and the need now for rotator cuff surgery to repair it wasn’t pretty either!

But with all this misery we've also experienced amazing blessing. The reason? Praying the Lord's prayer! It turned all this misery and pain into a daily occasion to praise our good, good Heavenly father and to offer the sacrifices of our lives dedicated to His glory and our unqualified allegiance to His Kingdom and our joyfull submission to His will.

The prayers not only made the pain meaningful, but God’s presence and our communion with Him palpable!

***“I pray because I can’t help myself. I pray because I’m helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It***

*doesn't change God. It changes me" (C.S. Lewis in the stage play and film Shadowlands).*

## CLOSING SUMMATION

When you daily pray “the prayer of all prayers” worshipfully—offering your praises and sacrifices, **it will change you!**

When you daily praise Him as your infinitely transcendent God who just happens to also be your intimately loving Heavenly Father as well, **it will change you!**

When you daily offer Him your sacrifices of a life dedicated to His glory, unqualified allegiance to His Kingdom, and joyful submission to His will, **it will change you!**

When you daily pray the Lord's Prayer this not to change God, but so that He can change you, **it will change you!**

AMEN

## THE SENDING

*“God shapes the world through prayer. The more praying there is in the world, the better the world will be and the mightier the forces against evil” (E.M. Bounds).*

Encourage everyone in the “40 DAYS OF PRAYER” project beginning on Feb 26 as well as in the upcoming series on the Practice of Prayer by John Mark Comer.