

## The Lord's Prayer (Mt 6; Lk 11 – references from Mt 6 unless otherwise stated)

- Pray: “**Lord, teach us to pray**” (Lk 11:1). *How To Pray Jesus' Way*
- A well-known but little-understood neglected prayer? Pray with understanding – think about it, prayer seeking understanding. Not mechanical vain repetition
- A prayer to say regularly – “**When you pray, say:**” (Lk 11:2) → prayer is talking to God (with words) (not listening to Him)
- A pattern / model for all our prayers – “**This, then, is how you should pray:**” (9) – Gold Standard Prayer of Prayers – an antidote to the babbling pagan prayers of 7-8. Short but contains everything!
  - Recognise who God is, mainly petitions (asking for things), confession, praise
  - How do Jesus' priorities and concerns compare with our own? Do we pray like this?
  - Use this prayer as an outline / framework / agenda / “hooks” – meditate on each clause – a clause a day?
- A vision for all of life – a prayer to always be growing into (always too big for us), living in the light of

### I. GOD AND HIS GLORY

#### Our Father in heaven,

- “**Our**” - basically a communal family prayer even if said in private (6) - not an only child! – prayed in fellowship with all my brothers and sisters around the world and down the centuries → remember their needs
  - The prayer of Jesus and his brothers & sisters – we pray with Jesus! We are heard in him, because of him
- “**Father**” – a prayer for believers (Acts 13:10; 17:24-29; Heb 12:9; Jam 1:17 Jn 1:12; 8:44; Eph 1:5) adopted as God's sons and heirs, privileged access (Eph 2:18; 3:12), God approachable, close permanent personal relationship, intimacy / love / confidence
  - God the Father to Israel (Ex 4:22-23); faith in Jesus the Messiah, God's Son, (2 Sam 7:14) defines a new people of God; Jesus the True Israel our elder brother. God primarily Jesus' Father (God the Father, God the Son). In this prayer, our older brother, Jesus, tells us what to ask our Father for, what the Father loves / wills
  - Good fathers: provide (Mt 7:9-10), wise, guide (8, 32), protect. God the ideal parent (Is 49:15; Eph 3:14-15; Mt 5:48; Lk 15:11ff) – all seeing (6) – infinite time & energy for us, never too busy
  - As children of God we are to share the family likeness (Eph 5:1), obeying our heavenly Father
- “**in heaven**” – (Is 66:1; Ps 33:13-14; 115:3) - supremely powerful, able to answer → worth praying to! Awe, respect, reverence. Know your place! Almighty God not all-mate-y God

#### hallowed be your name.

- May your name be **honoured / treated as holy** – “holy” = special, separate, uniquely set apart – a prayer that God would be treated as God, that all other “gods” would be dishonoured
  - by everyone, by me, - in every area of life → be part of the answer to your own prayer! Implications for how we think, speak, live etc. An end to all metal and mental idols
- God's **name** stands for who he is – God's fame, reputation, glory, honour. Am I good representative / ambassador of Him? Are we more concerned for God's name or our own?

#### Your kingdom come,

- God's **kingdom**: not a nation state, God's rule & reign. Key Bible idea
  - Graham Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*: God's people, in God's place, under God's rule and blessing
- Creation mandate (Gen 1:28): man intended to rule the world under God. Failed!
- Jesus is God's king (Mt 4:17; 28:18-20; Ps 72). There can be no kingdom of God without God's king. The gospel is the ultimate essential means to true social justice etc.
- Kingdom already inaugurated, not yet consummated – in part, not in full – here now, coming more and more
- Extending Christ's kingdom: preach and live the Biblical gospel in the power of the Spirit → Evangelism & discipleship, mission & maturity → Pray for evangelistic opportunities. Breadth and depth. Christian culture
- Ultimately a prayer for the end of the world and the New Creation in its fullness
- “**Your kingdom**”, not my empire or just focused on my little world. God's kingdom 1<sup>st</sup>, then our needs (33)

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

- (1) God's secret decreative / providential / sovereign will – what God decides always happens (Rm 8:28)
- (2) God's revealed preceptive / moral will – what ought to happen, what is done in heaven
  - Seeking to know, love and obey God's will (sense 2), accepting God's will (sense 1) thankfully (Mt 26:39)
  - A prayer for godliness and an end of sin. A prayer that earth would be more like heaven

## II. US AND OUR NEEDS

### Give us this day our daily bread,

- A prayer for God's grace – "**give us**" – a free unearned gift. Ask as an empty handed beggar. A humbling prayer, that encourages us to be generous (Mt 10:8)
- Honest seeking of bread from God rules out stealing, compromise with evil etc. (cf. Mt 4:1-4)
- A prayer that includes others – "**us... our**" - good to pray about our own needs, nothing unspiritual about that but not selfish / self-centred or just parochial → share prayer needs & keep informed about needs of others e.g. notice sheet; *Operation World*; missionary news
- A prayer for necessities – "**bread**" (=food) not cake, not luxurious self-indulgence (Jam 4:3; Prov 30:8-9)
- God cares about this world, physical needs etc. Nothing too mundane to pray about – God interested in it all
- → Make prayer a first resort. Ask! (Mt 7:7). If you're worried about it, ask your Father about it (1 Pet 5:7)
- Remember our Father knows our needs (8, 32), loves us and delights to give us good gifts (Mt 7:9-10). He knows best and gives us what's best for us. God's inexhaustible resources (Ps 50:12)
- Cf. Manna in the desert (Ex 16) – a prayer that God would keep us bring us safely to the promised land / keep us going to the New Creation – feed me till my work on earth is done
- Jesus, the True Moses, is more than able to feed all God's people (Mt 14:13ff ). Jesus the Bread of Life (Jn 6:35, 48) shares his bread (Mt 15:26-28)
- Spiritual food (Mt 4:4; Jn 6:27; Ps 42:1-2) of God's Word needed → regular Bible reading / listening
- A foretaste of the Messianic banquet to come (Ps 23) – the bread of tomorrow today
- A "**daily**" prayer – constant dependence on God. Continual hunger. We remember / bother to eat: do we pray? → Make a habit of it. → Give thanks at meal times
- → Trust God for the next step, a day at a time (34). Trust today, keep trusting

### and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

- Just as we need daily bread, we constantly need God's forgiveness and help in the face of temptation. Expect a constant battle with sin. → On-going confession, repentance and faith
- Specific honest confession of sin (thought, word, deed, done and undone). Cf. God's standard (Mt 5:48) we are murderers and adulterers deserving hell (Mt 5:21-30). → Self-examination
- Sin as a "**debt**". We belong to God, we rob him of his glory. We cannot pay, but Jesus pays
- Not earning our forgiveness but forgiving because we are forgiven, showing we depend on God's mercy, not demanding justice (14-15; Mt 10:8; 18:21-34; Lk 7:36-50). Freely forgiven so → forgiving freely

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

- "**temptation**" – hard testing – cf. Israel (Ex 17:1, 2, 7; Ps 95) & Jesus in the wilderness (Mt 4); Jesus sympathises with us (Heb 2:18; 4:15); (Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38; Lk 22:40; Jam 1:13-14; 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Pt 2:9)
- → avoid situations of temptation
- "**evil**" – The Evil One – the devil – real and evil - Satan under God's control (Job 1-2), a defeated enemy (1 Pt 5:8; Jn 8:44, 2 Cor 11:14; Col 2:15; Mt 12:29; Jam 4:7)

[For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.] – only in some late manuscripts

- Praise! Confident that the prayer will be answered, God's kingdom will triumph. Reasons to pray:
  - (1) The grounds of prayer: God is the powerful king – worth asking him, he can do it
  - (2) The goal of prayer: God's kingdom and glory

### Resources

Richard Coekin, *Our Father: Enjoying God in Prayer* (IVP)

Peter Lewis, *The Lord's Prayer: The Greatest Prayer in the World* (Paternoster)

Gerald Bray, *Yours is the Kingdom: A Systematic Theology of the Lord's Prayer* (IVP)

Derek Prime, *The Lord's Prayer for Today* (Day One)

Tom Wright, *The Lord and His Prayer* (Triangle / SPCK)

Peter Masters, *The Lord's Pattern for Prayer* (Wakeman Trust)

Matthew Henry, Ch 7 in *Method for Prayer* online at <http://www.matthewhenry.org/read/esv-corporate/chapter-seven/>

Thomas Watson, *The Lord's Prayer* (Banner of Truth)

John Calvin's in *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Book 3 chapter 20 parts 34-49, Ford Battles edition vol. 2 pp897-917

J John, *God's Priorities: Living the Lord's Prayer in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Kingsway) *Your Kingdom Come* Study Guide