

## THE LORD'S PRAYER – PART 2

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Last week, we looked at the Lord's Prayer and we noted that there were two versions: one found in the gospel according to Matthew, and the other in Luke's gospel. Matthew's context was the Sermon on the Mount while Luke's was a reply to a question asked by one of the disciples. The other thing that we noticed was that Matthew's was longer than Luke's. Luke's version seems to be a little truncated, almost a generic prayer compared to what Matthew was writing in his gospel. It seemed like Matthew was writing to people who already had some knowledge of what prayer is, and ought to be because of the Jewish heritage, while Luke was writing mostly to people who wouldn't have had that kind of background.

Then we also noticed that there was a kind of structure to the Lord's prayer – it could easily be broken up into two parts:

- The first half would fall into that bucket of God-centered petitions –

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.

- Then the second part was human-centered petitions –

Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

And then Matthew alone concludes: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.  
Amen.

I just want to highlight a few things that we noticed last week. We saw two things in that opening phrase itself.

*Our Father who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name.*

We saw the imminence of God, the closeness that He has allowed us to see of Him, that He is personal, He is accessible, He is a loving, loving Father. But we also saw His transcendence, the fact that He was supreme, that He was awe-inspiring, He was majestic, He was sovereign, reigning in heaven.

And as we ended, we said that there are a couple of reflection questions for us to think about a little more deeply.

- How do we approach God? Do we really approach Him as our Father? do we have that kind of intimacy with Him, that kind of closeness with Him?
- Do we still have the awe and reverence that we ought to have when we approach the throne, or has that awe and reverence faded away over the years, and now it's a 'buddy-buddy' time that we have with Him? Have we forgotten that He is sovereign God?

- Are we fully accepting of His will in our lives today? “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” How does His will happen on earth? It happens when His citizens, citizens of His kingdom do His will. Then the will of God becomes the will on earth.

We also said that there were three ways that we could respond to the will of God.

- To have a kind of a defeated resignation to it, that we are accepting God’s will reluctantly because resistance is futile. We’ve just got to accept that this is His will.
- To accept His will with a sense of bitter resentment, submitting to God’s will with anger and frustration being part of accepting His will.
- To accept His will with loving trust, submitting to God’s will, confident in His wisdom and His love. Like the psalmist says, “I delight to do Your will, oh God, to be able to say that in every situation, every circumstance.

We also saw that when we looked at the human-centered petitions, that it could be broken down into the present, the past and the future, encapsulating the whole of life for us.

- Present needs: “Give us this day our daily bread”. We bring our immediate tangible needs before God, recognizing Him as the sustainer of our lives.
- Past needs: “Forgive us our debts”. What has happened, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
- Future needs: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” We entrust our future to God’s guidance and protection.

So we see the entirety of our lives, past, present and future being brought to a triune God to bring a breakthrough in our lives.

So, let us now look a little more in depth at the second half, this Sunday.

### **Give us this day our daily bread**

God provided manna in the wilderness, and He taught them to depend on Him daily. The manna couldn’t be saved for the next day. It had to be collected for the day, which made them depend on Him. And so He provided for them daily. And we are reminded, when we look at that, not to worry about future needs, but to trust God one day at a time. Sometimes that’s difficult for us. To say that it’s not enough that I need to just look at tomorrow. I need to look at the day after or the year after, but to trust God and say: God is my provider. He will take care of my needs.

I remember reading about George Müller, Christian evangelist running orphanages in Bristol, England. One day, he came down to the living-dining area and found that there was no food that day. He called all the children, they sat at the table and he said, “Let’s pray.” And it’s amazing the kind of prayer he prayed when there was nothing in the house in terms of bread or milk or anything. He said, “Let’s pray. Dear Father, we thank you for what you’re going to give us to eat.” They had hardly finished that prayer when there was a knock at the door. It was the town baker. And he said, “Mr. Müller, I don’t know why I’m here, but at 2 o’clock in the morning, I woke up and felt that God was saying, ‘Make some extra bread and take it down to the orphanage.’ I don’t know if you need it, but here I am. I have bread.” And he left the bread there, and they’d hardly exulted over it when there was another knock on the door and the milkman was outside and he said, “My cart broke down. I can’t take it any further, and I have all this milk. I can’t leave it; it’ll get spoiled. Would you like to have it?” And so the children had bread and milk that day.

Father, we thank you for what you’re going to give us to eat. Our daily bread is not something that we deal with. All of us are assured of food on the table. And yet, the statistics for the world today is that there are approximately 830 million people who are starving, who don’t have daily bread. Maybe we don’t know them. But beloved, we can certainly pray for them. To pray that somehow God

would reach them through somebody like the baker or the milkman, and give them what they need. "Give us this day our daily bread."

### **The spiritual component of Daily Bread.**

But there's another component to daily bread that we need to look at. And that is the spiritual element. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." Jesus satisfies our deepest hunger. Somebody said that there is a God-sized vacuum in our hearts. And that vacuum can only be filled by God Himself. Our souls were designed for a relationship with God and only Jesus, who is the bread of life, can satisfy the hunger like nothing else can. Everything else may give us temporary comfort; but in Him, we find eternal peace and joy and fulfillment.

Saint Augustine once remarked, "You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

The psalmist says in Psalm 46, "As the deer pants for streams of living water, so my soul pants after Thee, my God." My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. We thirst for Him, we long for Him. That's the spiritual void that God fills, which is why Jesus said, "I am the bread of life."

We must ask ourselves: Are we praying for both the physical and spiritual nourishment? Do we have a hunger for God's presence and God's will? When the disciples came and met Jesus at the well, when He was talking to the Samaritan woman, they encouraged Him. They were telling Him to eat something. His words to them: "My food is to do the will of my Father."

Jesus explains that His deepest satisfaction comes from fulfilling the mission God gave Him. And so we see that obedience to God's will is not burdensome because we are strengthened and nourished spiritually by God. And then it brings true sustenance to us, this daily bread that involves both physical and spiritual elements, and therefore, brings meaning and fulfillment to our lives.

And so, the question for us in that first phrase is to ask ourselves: Are we seeing the bread of life daily, and is our daily food the will of God? Are we seeking His will and are we being nourished and strengthened by doing the will of God? So, we rely on God for both physical and spiritual provision. Jesus is the bread of life who satisfies our hunger and true sustenance comes from living in alignment with God's will.

### **Forgive us our debts and we forgive our debtors.**

This can sometimes be a little troublesome because we hear it used differently in different places. Sometimes forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. forgive our transgressions or our sins. And we wonder, is there something that needs to be understood about this part of the Lord's prayer? Whether forgive us our debts or transgressions or trespasses is the right thing?

So let me try and amplify it a little bit looking at the original literature. In Matthew 6:12, in the original Greek, the word is *opheilema*, which literally means debt or something that is owed. The idea of debts in this context refers to moral obligations that we have; moral obligations or sins, which is our failure to meet God's standard of righteousness.

In Luke 11:4, however, a different word *hamartia*, is used, which means sin in the Greek. And it is used in a similar version of this prayer. Different English translations have looked at it in different ways. Then we find that there's a word 'trespass' also that is put in. The use of trespass, when you look where it started, comes from William Tyndale when he translated the first Bible. And then that made its way into the Book of Common Prayer, which has been the liturgical standard for so many years in most mainline denominations.

But trespass has a broader sense of violating God's commands. The concept of trespassing refers to crossing boundaries, much like sin involves crossing moral or spiritual boundaries. In fact, in Matthew 6:14-5, where Jesus explains the Lord's Prayer, He uses a different word. He uses the word trespasses, which is *paraptoma*, the Greek word for offenses or transgressions. In this He says, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." It seems to be tied to us modeling what God is modeling for us, that just as He forgives, we too need to forgive.

Both terms convey the idea of sin and forgiveness, but they highlight different aspects. In terms of debts, it emphasizes the idea that we owe God something because of our disobedience and our unrighteousness. We incur a spiritual debt that needs forgiveness.

You might be saying that it's enough Greek and time to spend on a 3 second sentence. That is precisely why I'm taking 10 minutes to explain this. We need to understand the full import of what the Lord's Prayer means. We can never glibly finish it in 5 or 10 seconds by just meaninglessly going through it. We have to understand it.

Trespass focuses on crossing moral boundaries or violating God's law. So it comes down to that. Despite these differences, the underlying message remains the same. We seek God's forgiveness for our sins and commit to forgiving others. That's the bottom line. We seek God's forgiveness for our sins, and then we commit to forgiving others.

There's this reciprocal nature to forgiveness. Jesus says, "If you forgive others, your Heavenly Father will forgive you." In a sense, when you think about forgiveness and its importance, forgiveness brings reconciliation. When you go through life, maybe you have friendships at work or at your institutions, or even in your family relationships. When a relationship gets fractured, maybe you end up not talking to somebody for an extended period of time, then you miss that person. And sometimes it's pride that keeps you from saying, "I did wrong, or I want to ask your forgiveness."

And yet, when forgiveness happens and reconciliation comes, there's so much of joy. You talk nineteen to the dozen, telling the other person all that you missed telling them earlier. That's what happens when we forgive. Relationships that were fractured get put together, and there's a freedom that happens. Bitterness, resentment are all broken and taken away. The benefit of forgiving people, or why Jesus is saying to forgive, is that it frees us from anger and resentment. It strengthens relationships and brings healing to those relationships.

So, forgive us our trespasses or our debts as we will forgive those who trespass against us. it's a good time to think about those who need forgiveness in your lives. And when you think about those who you haven't forgiven, it'll come to you in a flash. Because it's always there. If you're really serious about just following what Jesus is saying about this prayer, then that needs to be your prayer as well. To forgive and release. Maybe that person hasn't come and said sorry. Forgiveness doesn't rest on the attitude of the other person. Forgiveness rests on your obedience to God. Nothing else. Sometimes we say: I'll wait till somebody has said I'm sorry. God doesn't say that. Forgiveness is something that God is saying you must do. Why? Forgive us our sins as we forgive. God forgives us in His mercy and His love. We don't deserve it. and yet, He is willing to forgive. Likewise, in mercy, we also ought to forgive.

#### **Our future needs – Protection from temptation.**

*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

Does God lead us into temptation? The answer is a very emphatic 'No'. God never leads us into temptation. James states this so clearly in 1:13 *"When tempted, no one should say God is tempting me. For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone."* God is perfectly holy. He does not entice anyone into sin.

Remember Isaiah 6. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and lifted up and His train filled the temple. And seraphim were singing 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, God Almighty. The whole earth is filled with His glory.'" God is holy.

The word for temptation, *peirasmos*, can refer to testing or trials. God may allow trials into our lives to strengthen us. But Satan uses those trials to tempt us. Satan will come alongside and look at the difficulty that we're going through and try and provide shortcuts.

Remember Jesus in the wilderness. That's what he was trying to do. Throw yourself down, the angels will come and lift you up. What a spectacle that will be. What was he trying to do? He was trying to move Jesus away from the cross. Central to the whole of our Christian faith is the cross. Imagine if the cross wasn't there, we would be dead in our trespasses, as Paul says. Just one final destination – separation from God.

So our plea must always be to guide us away from situations that would overwhelm us, or cause us to give in to temptations. A key verse for this is **1 Corinthians 10:13** *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted more than you can handle. And with the temptation will find and give you an escape route so that you can endure it.*

**Three beautiful promises** there, tucked into this verse, that come under the canopy of this one statement. God is faithful.

1. **Whatever temptation you're going through, somebody else is already facing it.** it's never, never unique to you. Satan's ploy has always been to isolate and destroy. How does he do that? he comes to you and says, "You're the only one who's dealing with this." And then we listen to it and we say, "Oh! I need to withdraw. I can't talk to friends. I can't get into and do the things that God wants me to do because Satan's voice is there. with this kind of a sin, you can't do any ministry." And so we retreat from doing what God wants us to do as well.

The Bible is saying, "No, its not. you're not the only one." Thousands and thousands of people are experiencing the same thing. And the moment you share it and say: Hey, my brother or my sister, will you pray for me because this is my temptation, the other person says: Oh! That's mine as well. There's a connection where each one prays for the other.

2. **No temptation will come to you that you cannot handle.** Imagine this. You're sitting here and a temptation is coming from Satan. God sees that temptation and He sees you, and He says, "No problem. My child can handle it." Not in your strength, but in the strength that He will give.

Every temptation that comes to you needs to reinforce this whole idea that God is saying you can handle it. you don't need to give into it. That's the confidence with which you need to meet every temptation. It should almost bring a smile to you – My Father in heaven has seen this coming and He has confidence that I can take care of it, and He's allowed it into my life.

3. **There's always an escape route.**

God will always provide an escape route. Our job is to recognize that escape route and take it. For example, you're watching something you shouldn't be watching. then you say, "Gosh, I shouldn't be doing this. Lord, would You just strike my computer with lightning? Then I don't need to deal with this." And God says, "There's a little button on top. Just press it. The computer will go off." You say, lightning; God says, button. God gives us an escape route for every temptation that comes our way. And the onus is on us to be able to take it.

### **Finally, temptation is NOT sin.**

Temptation is not sin; yielding to temptation is sin. When temptation comes to us, we begin to chastise ourselves. "There you go again with the same temptation! Where is your growth?" And we forget that Satan is sitting there laughing at us as we berate ourselves, when nothing has happened. It's a temptation. When everything that is promised in this verse should come to our aid, we begin to beat ourselves, thinking that we were done with this, but it's back again.

Beloved, only when you give in to that temptation, does it become sin. Remember Jesus was tempted just as we are, but was without sin. Sin comes in only when we respond or yield to that temptation. Somebody said, "You're driving down a road and you see a huge billboard with a scantily-clad lady (forgive me ladies, it could be a gent). And you can't help but see it. However, you see it and go past. That was temptation. Going around and coming back to take another look; that is sin. Yielding to temptation is sin. So, yield not to temptation but deliver us from evil.

### **Deliver us from evil.**

Now, when we look at that phrase, it cannot be a standalone, because if you read on, there's a word 'for' after that. It says, "*Deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever.*" Whenever you see the word 'for' in the Bible, always ask yourself what it is there for. There's a deeper meaning to it.

'For' always connects a causal statement. There's always a cause and an effect. So, *deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.* This particular line would make even greater sense for us if we read it like this. Deliver us from evil, because you alone have the kingdom, the power and the glory. We are not the ones who get delivered from evil by ourselves. it rests on the fact that a sovereign God is bringing all that He has to bear to deliver us from evil. We're not asking for deliverance based on our own strength, goodness or merit. Our request is anchored in the unchanging quality and reality of God, the ultimate authority in heaven and on earth.

As we bring this to a close, 3 things – the sovereignty of God, the power of God, and the glory of God is what helps us to go through temptation.

#### **1. The Sovereignty of God.**

The kingdom refers to God's reign and rule over all creation. We are part of His kingdom. He is king. And so, He is sovereign over us. And He brings to bear His authority (3:15) to help us to go through evil.

Colossians 1:13 says "*He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.*" God's kingdom.

#### **2. The Power of God.** God's power rescues us from evil.

Psalm 62:11, David proclaims, "*Power belongs to you, O God.*"

- 3. The Glory of God.** His glory reflects His majesty and His greatness. His eternal unmatched splendor. God's ultimate purpose is to glorify His name by saving and delivering His people. When He acts to deliver us, it brings glory.

Psalm 115:1 *"Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to Your name be the glory because of Your love and faithfulness.*

**Forever and ever.**

*For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever.*

This underscores that God's kingdom, power and glory are eternal. They never have an end. God's reign is unshakable because His authority is eternal. Therefore, His ability to help us to deliver us from evil is reliable and lasting. So, God's reign, which is His kingdom, God can act because of His power and God will be glorified in the process, which brings Him glory.

**Summary:**

The word 'for' creates a causal relationship between our request for deliverance and God's sovereign nature. So, as we look at the whole idea of the Lord's Prayer, the second half especially talks about:

- 1) Having dependence on God
- 2) Having confidence in His supremacy.

We need to make sure that we never get to a point where we say, I made myself. I don't need God anymore. I'm a self-made person. No. God continues to work on our behalf, continues to help us grow and prosper. And we must always be dependent on Him.

I remember when I was in seminary, I was having a discussion with my professor, and we were talking about how difficult it was for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. At the end of our talk he said, "You should write a paper on what you've been talking about." So, I did, and I titled it 'Squeezing in the Rich through the Eye of the Needle.' My point was this: It is not how much you have, but how loosely you hold it. tomorrow if God were to say, "I want you to leave everything you have and go and do this," you ought to be willing. That's when you know that you have complete dependence on God, that you can leave everything and start from scratch, trusting that God will provide.

And then to have confidence in His supremacy. There is nobody who is more supreme, stronger than God. He can take care. Maybe somewhere along the way you've lost confidence in God. You may be going through the motions of coming to church and all of that, but your prayers don't have the vibrancy that they used to have. You used to fall on your knees before God and say, "Lord, here's the thing that is breaking my heart. Would You help me? Lord, would You give me wisdom?" maybe today that's all gone because you have no confidence. You just pray generically. Lord, if it's Your will, do this. Lord, please bless these people. And maybe today, God is saying: Come to Me with confidence, with your greatest needs. The writer of Hebrews says: *"Enter with confidence the throne room to receive mercy and grace."*

I wonder beloved, whether there's some of you who just need to do business with the Lord, who need to reconnect in terms of prayer and say, "Lord, I've just lost it. I don't have that kind of connection with You. I've forgotten that You are supreme. I've let thoughts and ideas and small people, or even evil ones crowd my mind and shut You out." Maybe this morning, God is saying: How about we connect once again? come to Me with confidence and depend on Me. He will come through; He always does.

There's a song that we sang as a choir: "He's never failed me yet."

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we confess that we have varying ideas of Your supremacy and what You can do in our lives. sometimes we allow the small of our thinking to obliterate the vastness of who You are. but Lord, in these moments, would You connect once again with us? would You knock incessantly upon hearts' doors? Through Your Holy Spirit, would You draw us into greater dependence? Lord, would You help us to approach the throne room with confidence from now on, ready to lay our greatest needs at Your feet and say, 'I know You're the only one who can help. Lord, we have exhausted all our resources, but Your giving, Lord, is only just beginning.

And we ask that You would minister to each one. You know us, Lord. Even now You are hearing cries from those who are here, those who are listening, drawing, coming back to You. Help us, Lord. In the context of Your supper, would You etch these decisions upon our hearts with the power of Your Spirit? In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.