



ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Bible Study

AUGUST

2011

MORNING & EVENING SERMONS

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Prayer is one of the biggest challenges facing us as Christians. We know that prayer church's ministry and mission. Yet our practice of prayer falls far short of our own expectations, let alone God's expectations. Prayer, therefore, produces a kind of permanent guilt complex within us. And instead of being something natural and normal, it becomes something of a duty or a routine or even a burden.

The Lord's prayer is possibly the biggest prayer challenge of all. First because it is always in danger of becoming the 'empty phrases' and 'vain repetitions' that Jesus warned about. The Lord's prayer is not something we just repeat. It is something we pray. The second challenge is that the Lord's prayer is as Luther reminds us 'the model prayer of Christianity' or in Dr J.I. Packer's description 'a pattern for all Christian praying' It is a template for other sorts of prayer. From the prayer we get a model, a pattern, a template and inspiration for all the prayers we offer.

The Lord's prayer in Luke is a response to the disciples request 'teach us to pray'. So it is a teaching prayer. Jesus was a master teacher, and he knew how to teach prayer by example and by words. When the Lord's prayer is put back into Jesus mother tongue Aramaic, apparently the rhythm and poetry of the prayer come through more clearly than they do in translation. Jesus constructed the prayer so that it could be taught and passed on. So the challenge for us as we study the Lord's prayer this month is how to share and teach and pray the lord's prayer today as Jesus intended. It was meant to be memorised, transmitted, passed on, learnt and taught and prayed. How can we best do that today?

7 AUG 2011	THE GOD TO WHOM WE PRAY LUKE 11:1-13
14 AUG 2011	WHAT WE PRAY FOR GOD JOHN 17:1-5
21 AUG 2011	WHAT WE PRAY FOR OURSELVES MATTHEW 6:11-15
28 AUG 2011	OUR PRAYERFUL RESPONSE EPHESIANS 3:14-21

**GENERAL SURVEY**

Topic:

Key Verse:

Main Person/s:

Key Ideas and Questions:

**INTRODUCTION***Our Father who art in heaven*

The overall pattern of the Lord's prayer is clear. We begin by giving God his proper and rightful place before we ask anything for ourselves. But if we take the prayer as a whole, probably there is little that cannot be found elsewhere in the Old Testament or Jewish prayers. What is new is the strikingly simple address; Our Father.

God is not pictured in terms of his greatness, power or knowledge, but simply as father of his family. We are immediately put in a family relationship with God. This is a prayer where God is addressed in the most intimate of terms. The modern equivalent is perhaps Dad. It would have sounded strange, as strange as public prayers today beginning with 'Loving Dad'! It is an opening reminder that we are praying not to a remote God, but someone approachable, someone with whom we can have an intimate and personal relationship.

So we don't have to climb ladders to heaven. The God who is our father is in heaven. That is the other side of the coin. We must never treat him just like a human buddy. But God brings heaven to earth. Heaven is God's home and we are part of his family, so heaven becomes our home, especially in prayer. Our citizenship as Paul puts it is in heaven. So through prayer the kind of relationship that exists in heaven of love, trust, intimacy and praise is one that can begin to be ours here. How then do our prayers reflect our understanding of God and our relationship with him?

## 1. Jesus's example of Praying (v1)

- (a) The Lord's Prayer is a model prayer. Jesus's use of prayer is another model for us. Luke's Gospel lays particular stress on this and refers to Jesus praying on many occasions. Look at the following references leading up to this passage in Luke to see in what circumstances Jesus prayed.

3:21 -  
 5:16 -  
 6:12 -  
 9:18 -  
 9:28-29 -

- (b) Jesus must have known the disciples needed to learn how to pray, but what caused Jesus to teach them at this point?

- (c) What are those influenced by us learning from us about the importance of prayer?  
 (In this study we are looking specifically at the opening line of the Lord's Prayer, later studies will focus on the rest of the prayer.)

## 2. Our Father in Heaven (v2-4)

- (a) Jesus gives the disciples a model prayer. To whom is this prayer addressed? Have a look at different translations as not all have the same wording. Whichever wording is used, what is consistent?

(b) Look at Jesus's prayer of praise in Luke 10:21. To whom did he address his prayer? What does this teach us about the significance of this form of address?

(c) How would this form of address encourage us in prayer?

(d) What words or phrases in the Lord's Prayer help us not to treat this relationship flippantly?

### 3. Parables to encourage commitment and persistence (vv5-13)

(a) In vv 5-8 Jesus tells a parable about a man in need. Jesus used this story to illustrate prayer.

What did the man need?

Why did he need it?

Who did he go to?

How did he get what he needed?

Why did the neighbour help?

How does this relate to prayer, and what is it emphasising?

(b) In verses 9-10 what do we learn is our responsibility with respect to prayer? Do we ever get beyond the 'ask' in our prayer time? How can we 'seek' and 'knock'?

(c) But God is not like the neighbour who must be pestered to answer our request, instead He is 'our Father in Heaven'. This is the form of address Jesus taught us to use, and these verses remind us why God is our Father.

How would a father respond to appropriate requests from his child?

How would God?

Just as a child may not always know what they should ask for, do we always?

What is this passage reminding us we continually need?

## DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

1. Jesus prayed regularly. As his disciples so should we.
2. Prayer needs to be learned, not so we use 'religious' language, but so we understand the purpose of prayer.
3. Prayer is about a relationship between God and us. How we view that relationship affects our attitude to prayer.

## FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

Take some time to concentrate on the meaning of 'Our Father, who is in heaven'. What does the concept of 'Father' imply? What does this mean in our relationship to God and to fellow Christians?

The following prayer is based on the opening line of the Lord's Prayer. Take some time to read through it, with children or new Christians talk about any unfamiliar concepts, then take time to pray it.

*O Lord,*

*You live in the highest Heaven; you are the author of our being.*

*By you we are born again with the hope of new life.*

*You love us, you are kind to us, like a caring Father.*

*Help us to give back to you the love of obedient children, so that we may be like you, our Father in Heaven.*

*Give us a dislike of what seems like pleasures, but are really the pollutant things of this world.*

*So raise up our thoughts that we may always have heaven in our minds;*

*For from heaven we look for our saviour and Lord Jesus Christ to come.*

*Amen*

(Taken from *The Whole Duty of Man* by Michael Perry; Ark Publishing 1980 page 199)

**GENERAL SURVEY**

Topic:

Key Verse:

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**INTRODUCTION**

*Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

The word Hallowed is not an everyday word, so it causes misunderstandings. The Greek word means to regard as different. We ought to think of God as different- to let God be God. Or to put it another way to give him a unique place in our lives, and to let his character, his name, become ours.

The Kingdom of God was central to Jesus's preaching and teaching especially in the parables. By it he meant not a geographical area like a country, not a system of government to be imposed on the world, but a state of affairs where God is acknowledged to be in charge. It is accepting the rule of God and Christ into our hearts and lives. The kingdom has past, present and future dimensions. There is a sense in which the kingdom has come, is here and yet is still to come.

And when we pray Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven, we are essentially praying the same prayer as Thy kingdom come. Our prayer for the will of God and our work towards it is always in the context of our wider citizenship, which Paul reminds us is in heaven. Sometimes when we pray this prayer, what we are really praying is 'O God your will be changed'. We are asking for this or that to happen or not to happen. So how do we pray sincerely for God's will to be done and not ours?

The Father glorified Jesus whose completed work gave eternal life

1. Glory (vv. 1, 4)
  - (a) What does 'this' (v. 1) refer to?
  - (b) Look up the word 'glory' in a Bible dictionary, summarise it in a ten-word sentence, and share your finding. How may Ex. 33:20-23 help you?
  - (c) From vv. 1 and 4:
    - The source of glory is:
    - Jesus's aim was:
    - How Jesus glorified God:

In relation to the Lord's Prayer, consider the importance of God's revelation of his name:

- Ex. 3:13-15
- Ex. 6:3
- Ex. 34:6-7
- Ps 79:6

Consider your attitude: How may you honour God when you refer to or speak about him?

2. Authority (vv. 2-3)

(a) Identify the person of the triune God in the following sentence: God authorised Jesus over all people that \_\_\_\_\_ might give eternal life to all those \_\_\_\_\_ had given\_\_\_\_\_.

(b) How was eternal life defined in v. 3?

Some aspects of the Kingdom of God as you reflect on the Lord's Prayer are:

- Jn. 18:36
- Mk. 1:14-15
- Heb 1:1-3
- Dan. 7:26-27

Reflect on your priorities: God's kingdom may be defined as God's people in God's place under God's rule (Goldsworthy). How have you been building God's kingdom instead of others' or your own?

3. Eternity (v. 5)

(a) How was God's presence important to Jesus?

(b) What does v. 5b tell us of Jesus's existence?

Some insights to the will of God in the Lord's Prayer are:

- Rom. 12:2
- 1 Thes. 4:3
- 1 Thes. 5:18
- 1 Pe. 2:15
- Col. 4:12

Ponder about your perspective: As you live out your faith, to what extent are you focused on understanding and furthering God's will?

## DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

Because Jesus's completed work brought salvation, believers choose to please God and submit to His will.

1. **Glory:** When we please God, He is glorified. God is not glorified in a vacuum: what we do and say reflect on the God we worship. How will you address God appropriately, say when you are among non-believing friends? How may Ex. 20:24b encourage you?
2. **Authority:** When we submit to His will and rule over our lives, we are subject to God and must therefore have consistent Kingdom's objectives. How will you demonstrate that submission this week, for example at work?
3. **Eternity:** When we are focused on God, we live with an eternal perspective. Words and deeds of believers have eternal consequences. How will you live beyond the immediate and instead with an eternal perspective, say in the area of planning?

## FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

Read aloud Ex. 20:24 together.

As a family or as a group this week, how may you please God in the way you approach and refer to God?

**GENERAL SURVEY**

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**INTRODUCTION***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.*

The first request looks simple, but it is less simple than it looks. The word translated this day is a very rare word hardly used elsewhere. It can be taken at face value to mean 'daily' and as such is a straightforward request for daily provision. But some people took it to mean the bread for the morrow. Give us today tomorrow's bread. Still others have linked it to the communion bread and the idea that 'man does not live by bread alone' Basically it is a prayer for our present needs and for essential provision rather than for the luxuries of life. It is the opposite of prosperity prayers. But there are deeper levels of prayer here once we start asking what is our daily bread.

The second request is the most challenging and thought provoking in the prayer. It is literally asking God to forgive us in proportion as we forgive others. It means if we refuse to forgive others, we are asking God not to forgive us! Looking at it from a more positive perspective it is saying that it is through God's forgiveness of us that we learn to forgive. So it is in our capacity to forgive that we show we have been forgiven.

The third request has often puzzled people as to why God should ever tempt us. This is because we think of temptation as an impulse to do unworthy or sinful things. But in scripture it means so much more. It also means trials and is often translated that way. Here the reference may be to the final trial or crisis that is coming, and to the personal trials we all face as Christians. It is a prayer to God to give us what we need to face life's trials and evil. That is why it is linked with the prayer for deliverance from evil, evil in the wider and more impersonal sense of the evil around us in the world, but also evil in the personal sense of the fears, sins and habits that bind and hinder our spiritual growth.

## 1. Give us our daily bread

Bread was the staple food in Israel. It is like rice in East and South East Asia. Praying 'give us our daily rice' would have the same meaning. There is nothing more basic than bread (in Jesus's Palestine) or rice (in Asia). We are praying for our daily needs not what we want.

(a) What are our needs? Let us share with one another what some of our needs are. Do we have the same needs? Discuss the list of needs we come up with; Is any of these items not a need? Which of them would fit into the bread category?

(b) When we pray for personal items, what do we pray for? Are we asking God for our daily bread or our daily ice cream?

(c) Discipleship Pointer: Living 'give us our daily bread'

Our prayer life should affect the way we live our lives. How should 'give us our daily bread' affect our lives?

(i) As far as our possessions & livelihoods are concerned? (Prov 30: 8; 20: 17)

(ii) As far as planning for the future? – note: we are praying for our daily not our yearly needs here. (James 4: 13- 16)

(iii) As far as helping those in need? - We are to be God's witnesses to the world. We are God's servants in the world. As we pray 'give us our daily bread', we need to remember that we are the instruments that God may use to give others their daily bread. (Gal 2: 10; Rom 15: 26; Deut 15: 7- 8)

2. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us  
 We often pray for forgiveness but how often have we taken seriously the part of the Lord's Prayer that links our forgiveness to how much we have forgiven others?
- (a) What is Jesus's standard for forgiveness? Is there any sin that cannot be forgiven?  
 (Mt 18: 21-22; Luke 17: 3- 4; Mt 18: 12- 14; Mt 12: 31- 32)
- (b) Why is it that we should forgive others? (Mt 18: 23- 35, Mt 6: 14- 15)
- (c) We can only forgive others if we have a right attitude about them. What is our attitude to other people (especially the 'sinners' and 'bad men' of the world (like gangsters, prostitutes, murderers, etc.)? Do we think that we are much better than them? Let us heed the warning of Jesus in Luke 18: 9- 14.

Discipleship Pointers: What is our standard of forgiveness? Is this the standard we want God to use? Let us remember that no sin (except one) is too great that it cannot be forgiven:

On 2 October 2006, Charles Roberts entered an Amish schoolhouse and shot 10 children killing 5 of them before killing himself. The Amish community's response was to forgive and reach out to the family Charles left behind. They spent hours consoling the family. 30 of them attended the funeral of the man who killed 5 of their own children. Charles' wife was one of the few outsiders that were allowed to attend the funeral of the children that were killed. Could we do the same if it was us?

3. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
- (a) Temptation – Biblically – To prove, to try, to solicit. Unlike modern English, there is no automatic sense of evilness or wrongness. Often translated test in modern translations so that the evil sense is removed. For example, we see God test (tempt) Abraham as far as Isaac is concerned (Gen 22: 1)
- (i) How does temptation occur? (James 1: 14- 15)
- (ii) Can we blame God for our temptations? (James 1: 13- 15)
- (iii) So what does it mean to pray 'lead us not into temptation'?

Discipleship Pointer: As we pray 'lead us not into temptation', we should also not be tempting others. Why? (Mt 18: 6- 7). In what ways can we tempt others or cause them to fall? (e.g. Rom 14: 1- 6, 14- 17, 20- 23)

- (b) deliver us from evil  
 There is much evil in the world. We only have to look at the newspaper or TV to see this.  
 Evil is not just far away. It is around us. Where does much of this evil come from?  
 (Gen 6: 5; 1 Sam 24: 13; Mark 7:20- 23)

Discipleship Pointer: There are 3 common mistakes concerning evil that we make:

- (i) To think that there is no or little evil in the world.  
 (ii) To think that there is no or little good in the world.  
 (iii) To think that we humans are basically good and that evil is due to spiritual forces outside ourselves.

Let us remember - There is evil in the world and much of it is due to our human heart. There is a lot of good in the world coming from us humans. The same person can do both.

## FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

Parents are to be examples to their children:

- Are we showing a trust in God in our prayers and action as far as our living is concerned? Is 'give us our daily bread' just words? What is our attitude to our possessions? What are we showing our children?
- Do we show forgiveness to one another?

**GENERAL SURVEY**

Topic:

Key Verse:

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**INTRODUCTION**

*For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN*

Just as the Lord's prayer begins by focusing our prayer on God, so it ends by re-focusing our prayer back upon God, not this time in his approachability and intimacy, but in his kingship, power, glory, and eternity leading to an emphatic Amen. Prayer is not just talking to God, reflecting on him and his will, requesting his help and provision, it is responding to him in worship and unity of heart and mind.

The passage in Ephesians is both a wonderful personal pastoral prayer, and also a powerful reminder that prayer is not about how we get God to work for us, but how God can work through and even sometimes in spite of us in a way that exceeds both our prayers and our thoughts.

Prayer when all is said and done is leaving ourselves in the hands of a loving God, the breadth, length, height and depth of which leaves us breathless, and allowing Him to work and receive the glory. How about each group creating and praying its own doxology to the Lord's prayer?

## 1. Paul's Prayer (14-15)

- (i) Who do we 'kneel before' when we pray?
- (ii) To what does the Father give his name - what meaning does this have for us (see following notes)? (NIV has *from whom his whole family*. NRSV has *from whom every family*. The Greek is ambiguous. The Greek word for family - *patria* - is closely related to the word for father- *pater* - a connection which it's impossible to convey in English. It should also be noted that *patria* can mean clan or tribe as well as the more limited modern understanding of family.)

## 2. Out of his glorious riches (16-19)

- (i) How does Paul pray that God will strengthen the Ephesians?
- (ii) In what ways does 'his Spirit in your inner being' strengthen you? Give specific examples from your life.
- (iii) How does Christ dwell in your hearts?
- (iv) In what is faith 'rooted and established'?
- (v) An essential part of our Christian faith is that we are 'together with all the ?????'. Who are these? Where are they in time and space?
- (vi) How is the love of Christ described?
- (vii) What is 'love that surpasses knowledge'? Discuss.

## 3. Doxology (20-21)

- (i) This passage is often described as a doxology. What is a doxology? What's happening in this passage?

(ii) Why is the church mentioned here in parallel with Jesus Christ?

Note: the phrase 'glory in the church and in Christ Jesus' echoes the author's emphasis on the church as the body of Christ, who is its head. The church is the place where God is praised, and to this service of praise humankind has been appointed since creation. *Victor Paul Furnish, Acts and Paul's Letters, 1971.*

## DISCIPLESHIP POINTERS

- We offer this prayer and all prayer to the father (*pater*) from whom every *patria* (group descended from a common ancestor) is derived. The church is a family in a unique sense, as sharing his very life and nature.
- We pray for moral change in five ways:
  1. through the strengthening of our inward spiritual life
  2. by Christ dwelling in our hearts
  3. by a firm foundation in love - to grasp that fullness which is the goal for the church. This is only attained communally 'with all the saints' for each individual has only his or her finite measure.
  4. by experiencing the love of Christ. Knowing what is beyond knowledge is a paradox that envisages an ever expanding experience.
  5. by being filled with the fullness of God.

## FAMILY/GROUP MOMENTS

- Every family, every group, every church and the entire church are a family with a common ancestor – God, our Father. In this passage we give thanks to our father that he has given us this purpose.
- As a group or family what are the ways in which you have experienced the changes outlined above (Discipleship pointers 1-5)?
- In what ways does your family or group glorify the church and Christ Jesus?