

FATHER'S DAY MESSAGE
"Honoring Your Father"
Matthew 6:9-10
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June 15, 2003

Matt. 6:9-13: "This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Some time ago I was having lunch with a friend, when a little eight-year-old boy walked up to our table and asked what we were doing. "We are reading our Bibles and talking about Jesus," I replied. He seemed to be interested, so I asked, "Do you have a Bible?" He said he thought they did have one at home somewhere. Over the next few minutes I took the opportunity to share with him God's plan of salvation: God loves us very much; but our sin separates us from Him. In His love God sent His only Son to die on the Cross, to pay the penalty for our sins. By trusting Jesus as our Savior, we can obtain forgiveness of sin and eternal life, and become children of God (John 1:12). The boy said he wanted to ask Jesus to be his Savior; and so right there he bowed his head and prayed a simple prayer inviting the Lord Jesus Christ into his life.

When my little friend finished praying he began jumping up and down exclaiming, "Now I have TWO fathers! – God is my Father in Heaven and my Dad is my father on earth!" Then off he ran to tell his parents what he had done.

My point in telling this story is, as that young boy enthusiastically noted, when you place your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you have now have two fathers!

On Father's Day, as we take the time to honor our dads, let's also remember to honor our Heavenly Father and thank Him for being the loving Father and the perfect Dad He is.

One of the ways you honor your earthly father is by the way you talk to him. The same is true of your Heavenly Father. In the Lord's Prayer Jesus is teaching us how to talk to God.

In the parallel account in Luke 11, Jesus had been praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him: "*Lord, teach us to pray.*" In response, Jesus gave his disciples this instruction concerning prayer. It was meant for all Christians in all places and at all times. It is a perfect summary of our Lord's instruction on how to pray and what to pray for. Jesus taught it, not so that we might just mechanically repeat it, but so that we would be able to understand that there are certain things we should always remember when we pray. This prayer is divided into two sections. The first section deals with God's glory (vv. 9-10) and the second section deals with man's need (vv. 11-13).

BIG IDEA: This morning we are going to look at two important lessons from the lips of Jesus about talking to God (Matt. 6:9-10)

THE FIRST IMPORTANT LESSON: Those who have been born into God's family are to approach Him on the basis of a father-son relationship (Matthew 6:9).

One of the greatest privileges of being a child of God is being able to speak to God and relate to him as a good and loving Father!

Many people do not understand that God is not the Father of all people. Only those who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can say "our Father." In John 1:12 we read: *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name."* God is the creator of all things and all people. He has given physical life and being to everybody in the world. But the Bible makes a sharp distinction between those who belong to God and those who do not. A carpenter may make a beautiful table; but that table, though made by him, is not his child. It does not have his life in it. In the same way, until we have God's life in us, we do not belong to God's family--we are not God's children. We only have God's life in us when we have received Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. I John 5:12: *"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."* When we receive God's Son God as our Savior we have God's life in us. He becomes our Father and we become His children. I John 3:1: *"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are!"*

The fact that He is now our Father indicates that He is near to us, that He loves us and understands us: *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him"* (Psalm 103:13-14). It also means that he cares about our needs. *"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"* (Matt. 7:11).

Jesus wants us to learn that it is important to come to God in prayer with the right frame of mind, with right thinking about Him. He is your Father. Before you make any petition, before you ask for anything, realize you are in the presence of a great and wonderful God--your Father, who is in heaven. He is not an impersonal force but a personal God. He cares for you as a loving father cares for his own dear children. You are very precious to him. He is never too busy. He is never too tired. He is full of love and grace and mercy. He is concerned about every detail of your life.

THE SECOND IMPORTANT LESSON: When we approach God in prayer, our first and greatest desire should be for God's honor and glory rather than our own interests (verse 10).

We ordinarily bring our own needs to God in prayer before thinking of God and his interests. Sammy Tippet, in a book on prayer, has said, "Too much of prayer is shallow

and superficial. It begins and ends with the needs of people, reducing God to a heavenly Santa Claus. Much prayer is simply 'I need this,' and, 'give me that.'" (Tippit, 70). Jesus reverses the order: First Your name, Your kingdom, Your will (God's interests); then give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us (our interests). Andrew Murray has written, "In true worship the Father must be first and He must be everything. The sooner we learn to forget ourselves so that He may be glorified, the richer our own blessing in prayer will be" (Murray, 32).

So the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer have to do with putting God's interests first in our prayers. Before we think of ourselves and our own needs, even before our concern for others, we must start with this great concern about God and His honor and His glory.

The FIRST PETITION establishes the first priority in prayer – to see that God's name be hallowed, honored and exalted.

"HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME"

God's "name" in the Bible means the person He has revealed Himself to be. When God reveals His many names in the Bible, He is revealing something about Himself.

To hallow His name means to hold Him in reverence and honor. This same word is used in I Peter 3:15: "*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts...*" This means, "give God the place in your hearts he deserves." This petition is parallel to the first of the Ten Commandments: "...*You shall have no other gods before me.*" He is to be our first priority. We are to love Him and serve Him with all of our heart and soul and strength. We are to love Him more than anyone or anything else in life.

This first petition is meant by Jesus to be a constant reminder of your main purpose in life as one of His disciples. You have been brought into fellowship with a loving Heavenly Father and your primary assignment in life is to bring honor and glory to Him.

As a child of God your highest goal in life is not the accumulation of possessions or the experience of pleasure or the attaining of a position or any other noble goal. The highest goal is that God's name be glorified through your life. This removes man from the center of the picture and gives that place to God alone.

To pray "*hallowed be your name*" is not only to reverence and honor Him in your own life but to have a burning desire that the whole world may bow before God in adoration, in reverence, in praise, in worship, in honor and in thanksgiving – that this wonderful God who has become our Father, should be honored, should be worshipped, should be magnified among all people. This leads us to the SECOND PETITION...

"YOUR KINGDOM COME"

When we pray "*your kingdom come*" we are praying for that wonderful day when all sin and evil and wrong and everything that is opposed to God will finally be removed. We are praying that Christ will return and His kingdom will be established on the earth.

Peter put it this way in I Peter 3:13: *“We are looking for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”*

My father had a little card on his desk. There were just two words on it: “Perhaps Today.” He lived each day expecting the Lord’s return. This is the hope of every believer. Paul said, in Titus 2:13: *“We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”* The Bible holds out no hope of peace on earth and among the nations until Christ comes back and finally destroys sin and evil. Our hope is not in the United Nations. Our hope is not in our military might or the wisdom of man. Only when Christ returns will war be no more, and sorrow and sighing flee away. It is comforting to know that God is in control of history. Our future is not dependent on nuclear arms summits, but on the return of Christ.

In the meantime, when we pray *“your kingdom come”* we must be ready to add, “and start with me, Lord. Make me fully obedient to you. Use me to extend your kingdom. May you be enthroned as the King of my life.”

This brings us to the THIRD PETITION...

“YOUR WILL BE DONE, IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”

When we pray *“your will be done”* we are praying for obedience to the will of God revealed in His Word.

- We are praying first of all that God's will become our own will.
- Second, we are praying that His will prevail all over the earth as it does in heaven. The angels in heaven do as God says and desires. People on earth do not. We often rebel against God's will. All the sorrow and suffering and war in the world comes from disobedience to the will of God. We are to pray for the day when rebellion against God will cease.

If you are truly praying that God's will be done, it means that you are committing yourself to two very important responsibilities:

- First- you are committing yourself to learn all you can about His will. Since His will is made known to us in His written Word, this means that you must be committed to an ongoing humble study of the Bible. You should always be growing in your understanding of God's Word.
- Secondly- if your heart’s desire is that God's will be done, then praying this petition is also your pledge, by God's grace, to do His will once you know it.

I find that one of the most serious problems we face as Christians today is not so much the need to know more about God's will as much as it is to do that will of God which we already know. *“I am constantly trying to impress the Lord with how much I know. He constantly impresses me with how little – I obey!”* (Howard Hendricks).

Today, on this Father’s Day, if there are some areas in your life that you know are outside of the will of God, let your heart-felt prayer of renewed obedience be this simple third petition, *“Your will be done Lord in this area of my life.”*

Richard Alleine, a Puritan writer, prayed a great prayer in 1755: *“I am no longer my own, but Yours...let me be...exalted for You or brought low for You; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal...”* This summarizes the proper attitude of our hearts as we come to God in prayer, as expressed in these first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.

CONCLUSION

It is very easy to simply repeat the words of the Lord's prayer. But to pray them with sincerity has revolutionary implications – because it expresses your priorities as a Christian.

Whether you can pray these petitions with integrity is a searching test of the reality and the depth of your Christian profession.

You see the Lord knew that you would be constantly under pressure to conform to the self-centeredness of your secular culture. He knew that your natural tendency is to be concerned only with your own little name, your own little empire and getting your own will.

And so he has given you this model prayer so that you would be encouraged to have as your top priorities in life-not your name, your kingdom and your will but God's.

When we apply this pattern of prayer to much of our prayer we are ashamed. We usually pray about our need, our family, our neighbors, our church and our country first. Jesus says this is wrong. God's kingdom must come first, then our need.

I close by quoting Martyn Lloyd-Jones, former pastor of Westminster chapel in London, England: "Before we think of ourselves and our own needs, even before our concern for others, we must start with this great concern about God and His honor and His glory. We must realize that we are in the presence of God and that He is our Father. Everything about Him is good. Then we must have a burning desire that the whole world may bow before God in adoration, in reverence, in praise, in worship, in honor and in thanksgiving. Our desire should be that this wonderful God who has become our Father, should be honored, should be worshipped, should be magnified amongst all people--that His kingdom come to the earth and that his will alone be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Lloyd-Jones, Sermon on the Mount, 58).

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