

Enliven Your Prayer Life

Week 4: The Lord's Prayer

Opening Prayer: (thanks to Thomas Merton)

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

Lord, Teach Us to Pray: Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:9-13

“The Lord's Prayer, as we call it, grows directly out of what Jesus was doing in Galilee. And Gethsemane, too: the prayer looks directly forward to what he achieved in his death and resurrection. The prayer is therefore a way of saying to the Father: Jesus has caught me in the net of his good news. The prayer says: I want to be part of his kingdom-movement. I find myself drawn into his heaven-on-earth way of living. I want to be part of his bread-for-the-world agenda, for myself and for others. I need forgiveness for myself--from sin, from debt, from every weight around my neck--and I intend to live with forgiveness in my heart in my own dealing with others. And because I live in the real world, where evil is still powerful, I need protecting and rescuing. And, in and through it all, I acknowledge and celebrate the Father's kingdom, power and glory. Most of the things we might want to pray about are taken care of within that prayer. Like Jesus's parables, it is small in scale but huge in coverage.”--NT Wright, *Simply Christian*

<The Problem with Familiarity--the Gift of Formation and Transformation

**I didn't explore this on the video teaching, but I do want to comment on the fact that the Lord's Prayer may have become so familiar to us that we underestimate its power in our life. On one hand, when it is so well known that you don't have to think of the next word, it's written on your heart. It has become a part of your life. There's great good in that. This is the kind of thing that forms you. It becomes a pattern of praise and prayer that is like breathing. Praying this familiar prayer in a new way, or concentrating on just one line at a time may be a way to see the text anew and to consider it more deeply.>

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,

thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

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.

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

*I didn't cover this in the video either. It is helpful to note that Jesus reveals the nature of the God to whom he prays in the content of the prayer:

God is present

God is pure

God is powerful

God provides

God pardons

God protects us

Week 4 Prayer Tool: Engaging the Lord's Prayer

Get outside, spend time in creation, and pray the Lord's Prayer. You might do this as you walk, or as you sit in a beautiful space. Look at the world around you, see what God has made. As you look at the earth before your eyes, how do we see "on earth as it is in heaven?" As you watch birds eat, how do you understand "give us this day our daily bread?" As you walk past your neighbor's house, how do you hear "as we forgive those..."?

"There is, of course, much more to prayer than the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer that teaches us to pray. It is a foundation of the praying life: its introduction and its continuing basis. It is an enduring framework for all praying... It is the necessary bass in the great symphony of prayer. It is a powerful lens through which one constantly sees the world as God himself sees it."--Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*