



What About . . .

The Lord's Prayer

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, reconciles us to God and thus makes it possible for us to come to God in prayer. Prayer is a marvelous privilege from the Lord. He not only commands us to pray, but He invites us to pray to Him. He wants our prayers. What a fantastic blessing prayer is! The Lord's Prayer is the prayer above every other prayer because our Lord Jesus Christ personally gave this prayer to the church. Let's spend a few moments here exploring the Lord's Prayer.

The Introduction: Our Father who art in heaven.

*Our Father, who from heaven above has told us here to live in love. And with our fellow Christians share, our mutual burdens and our prayer, teach us no thoughtless word to say, but from our inmost heart to pray.**

What a marvelous blessing! We are able to come to the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the maker of all things, both seen and unseen, the all-powerful and almighty God, and call Him "Father." By nature, we human beings are not inclined to faith, trust and love in God. Instead, the Scriptures reveal we are by nature children of wrath, in rebellion against God, fallen and lost. Thanks be to God through Christ our Lord we are able to call God "Father." What is more, He even wants us to come to Him in prayer. We pray to our heavenly Father with boldness and confidence, through Christ Jesus, our Lord, knowing that He will hear and answer our prayers, according to His good and gracious will.

Our Father who art in heaven. . . . You who loved us enough to send your only begotten Son to save us from our sins, I now come before You in prayer, even as Your Son has taught us to pray.

The First Petition: Hallowed be thy name.

Your name be hallowed. Help us, Lord, in purity to keep your Word, that to the glory of your name, we walk before you free from blame. Let no false teaching us pervert; all poor deluded souls convert.

God surely does not need our prayer to make sure His name is kept holy. It is holy in and of itself, and it is holy among

us when we teach His Word in all its truth and purity, and live holy lives according to His Word. Anyone who teaches or lives contrary to the Word of God is actually profaning and blaspheming the holy name of God.

Hallowed be thy name. . . . By grace You have brought me into Your kingdom of salvation. Ever keep me in the true faith and help me through my words and actions to hallow Your name.

The Second Petition: Thy kingdom come.

Your kingdom come, guard your domain and your eternal righteous reign. The Holy Ghost enrich our day with gifts attendant on our way. Break Satan's power, defeat his rage; preserve your church from age to age.

Again, God's kingdom does not depend on our prayers, but we pray here that His kingdom would come among us in all its grace and truth. God's kingdom does not come because we make it come, but because the Holy Spirit is working powerfully in us so that we believe His Word and live godly lives here in time and eventually in all eternity.

Thy kingdom come. . . . Lord, use me mightily to share your saving Gospel with others.

The Third Petition: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Your gracious will on earth be done, as it is done before your throne, that patiently we may obey in good or bad times all you say. Curb flesh and blood and every ill that sets itself against your will.

God will have His way with us and with the world, that is sure and certain. Here we are praying that His will may be done among us. We are asking God to prevent anything in our lives—including the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature—from placing an obstacle between us and the will of God. We ask that He would give us strength to keep us steadfast in His Word until our death. This is what God's good, gracious will is all about.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. . . . Daily cause Your holy will to be done in my life, and when the world would entice me to turn from You, give me the strength to remain faithful to You.

What About the Lord's Prayer?

The Fourth Petition: Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us this day our daily bread, and let us all be clothed and fed. From warfare, rioting, and strife, disease, and famine save our life, that we in honest peace may live, to care and greed no entrance give.

We are asking God to lead us to recognize all the fantastic blessings He showers on us in this life, and so lead us to thank and praise Him for these blessings, which include all that we need or require in this life.

Give us this day our daily bread. . . . Thank You for all of those temporal blessings You daily pour out into my life, and which I can so easily forget.

The Fifth Petition: And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Forgive our sins, let grace outpour, that they may trouble us no more; we too will gladly those forgive, who harm us by the way they live. Help us in each community to serve with love and unity.

Here we ask our heavenly Father not to see our sins, or deny our prayer on account of them. We recognize and here confess that we are not worthy of any of the abundant gifts God gives us and that we surely do not deserve His blessing, but only His punishment, because we sin. Through Christ our Lord, who gave Himself for us, we are able to ask God to grant us His mercy, for the sin that daily we commit. Being forgiven so graciously by God, we want to forgive and do good to people who sin against us.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. . . . Help me to be forgiving of others, even when this is difficult, always remembering how forgiving You have been of me.

The Sixth Petition: And lead us not into temptation.

Lead not into temptation, Lord, where our grim foe and all his horde, would vex our souls on every hand. Help us resist, help us stand firm in the faith, armed with your might; your Spirit gives your children light.

Here we are asking that God would protect us from temptation and keep the devil from attacking us through the world and our own sinful flesh. We are asking that we not be led astray into false belief, or despair, or other shameful sins. We know we are attacked daily and tempted to live contrary to God's will. We have the sure promise from God that Christ has overcome the world for us and will, in our final hour in this life, grant us final victory over them.

And lead us not into temptation. . . . Lord, help me to resist and overcome the temptations that assail me in this life.

The Seventh Petition: But deliver us from evil.

Deliver us from evil days, from every dark and trying maze; redeem us from eternal death, console us when we yield our breath. Give us at last a blessed end; receive our souls, O faithful friend.

We are praying here that the Lord would rescue us from every evil in this life, evils that have to do with our body, our soul, those things God has given us, our good name and so forth. We ask that when the time comes for us to be taken home to be with the Lord, God would extend His loving protection over us and take us from this valley of sorrow to be with Him forever in heaven.

And deliver us from evil. . . . Keep from me all those hurts and evils in life that would assail me, and ever give me the power always to resist the evil one.

The Conclusion: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Amen, that is, it shall be so. Make our faith strong that we may know we need not doubt but shall receive all that we ask, as we believe. On your great promise we lay claim. Our faith says "amen" in your name.

At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, we express a confident hope in the truth that our Lord is the mighty One, whose kingdom and power and glory are for all eternity. With these words we are saying to the Lord, "You are a great and glorious God."

With the word, "Amen" we are saying, "Yes, yes, it shall be so." And thus, with the certainty that rests on the promise of God that He both invites and hears our prayer, we conclude the prayer He taught us. We say, "Amen" that is, "Yes, Lord, you have commanded me to pray to you and you promise to hear me." Amen, amen, may all these things we have prayed be so, for Jesus' sake.

—Dr. A. L. Barry
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* The italicized text is Luther's hymn on the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father Who from Heaven Above," Hymn 431, *Lutheran Worship* (CPH: 1982).