

File: Lord's Prayer part 2

Dear Friends in Christ, Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen!

Last week between services someone came up to me and said "I can't believe you were talking about The Lord's Prayer this morning." They told me they were up in the middle of the night worrying about some things. Unable to sleep they decided to pray and ended up praying The Lord's Prayer very slowly stopping every now and then and really focusing on the words of the prayer. Here's the cool part. This person said what happened is---as they focused on God and The Lord's Prayer their worry began to subside and it eventually led to them praying for a whole bunch of other people and relaxing them and they were able to go back to sleep. How cool is that?

It's not cool in the sense that it's like a commercial: "Hey can't sleep at night, you've tried reading, you've tried warm milk, you've tried that special cupboard by the pool table and nothing helps—TRY praying, nothing will put you to sleep faster." No it's not like that. What the person experienced that was cool was that as the person began to pray and recognize God's presence right there in the middle of the night the focus began to be about The Lord and not on their worry.

Do you remember the popular book a few years ago called the prayer of Jabez? The prayer of Jabez is in the Bible and the author tried to make a case that if you prayed it God would bless you materially and you would get rich. He basically tried to turn it into some kind of magical saying. He really wasn't into trying to draw people towards God the underlying tone was 'use prayer to get rich'. Well the only one who got rich off the prayer of Jabez was him.

In complete contrast The Lord's Prayer is the prayer that spans the world, as I said last week, it's the prayer of the sheet metal worker, the farmer, the teacher, the executive, the student and everyone why? Because when we get it right it puts all of life in perspective.

It's the prayer that reminds us of our proper relationship with God and others. And yet it's the prayer we've heard and said so many times that often we just blow right through it. My hope is that this morning your love of God and your love of The Lord's prayer gets rekindled. I hope you'll go home and pray it; slowly very slowly and as you do you'll stop and think about what it means.

I hope you'll talk about it with your kids, with your spouse or partner, I hope you'll pray it with them. And to keep it from losing its impact grab one of Luther's small catechisms off the shelf out in the Narthex and turn to the section on

The Lord's Prayer because he's got some really great stuff to talk about because he always asks "What does this mean?" and "When does this happen?"

Why is The Lord's Prayer so great? In last week's message we discovered that like the first three commandments which all talk about our relationship with God---the first part of The Lord's Prayer talks about our relationship with The Lord. Listen to the words "Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". It's all about God, no me, myself or I. In fact you won't find that anywhere in the prayer. It basically put this relationship between you and God in perspective; it gets the foundation to life right. In other words it all begins with God.

Then it moves into and let's say it together "Give us this day our daily bread". It reminds us that God is interested in our daily needs, not just big spiritual moments---that God is concerned with the concerns that occupy so much of our daily lives. When the 5,000 people gathered to hear him teach didn't have any food he was concerned about their daily need.

When we pray "Give us this day our daily bread" it reminds us to look to The Lord Each Day. In the Old Testament when the Israelites were in the desert for 40 years God told them to collect only enough enough manna for each day. There were some who didn't listen and when they collected more than needed for

each day it spoiled. If we prayed “God give us everything we need for the rest of our life and give it to me now” and God granted that, how long do you think it would be before we forgot about God? Not long. That’s why praying for just what we need for today is so important, because it keeps the focus on God.

And then the next part of the prayer---say it with me **“And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”**—WOW. You talk about a serious prayer. In other words our forgiveness of others and God’s forgiveness of us are linked.

If we spend our whole life holding grudges and never forgiving, how could we ever know what it’s like to truly be forgiven by God? In praying this part of The Lord’s Prayer maybe God will bring to light someone who we thought we thought we forgave but we really haven’t. Maybe this part of the prayer is the start of opening of our hearts and souls to the heart of God and letting go of some baggage we have with someone else. Again, this is big stuff, forgiveness we’re praying about. I mean what could be more important than a clean heart with others and God. That’s why it’s the prayer that spans the world.

Wow as if that wasn’t enough there IS more and please say it with me **“Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil.”** This isn’t about being tempted by chocolate, or decadent foods we know are bad for us. This is really

more about “Lord let nothing become a temptations to me, let nothing get in my way of seeing you.”

Isn't it interesting that some of the greatest dangers that seek to get between us and God show up in unexpected places. Sometimes the wildest wolves are dressed in the most beautiful of sheep's clothing. And sometimes temptations like unseen landmines wait for us.

And what are the wolves dressed in sheep's clothing and the landmines that seek to tempt us and get in the way of us seeing The Lord? Perhaps it's success, perhaps more stuff (even though everybody says it's not important and their not materialistic), maybe it's our own ego always needing to be right, whatever it is that tempts us to not see God but only ourselves, that's what the prayer is getting at here.

And as for the last part (please say it with me) “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever Amen!” Well, technically if you read the Bible that's not really part of the Lord's prayer, it was part of an ancient liturgy that was said after the Lord's prayer. Through the centuries it simply became attached to the prayer and people assumed it was part of it. Even though it's not it's still a pretty great thing to be part of The Lord's Prayer. That's how you can always tell the difference between the Catholics and Protestants at

weddings and funerals. The Catholics don't say that last part and the protestants do.

So here we are, The Lord's Prayer also called the prayer that spans the world, or as one author said and I really like this "The Prayer That turns The World Upside Down". We've prayed it countless number of times, in fact so many times that maybe we've lost a sense of it's holiness. Over the years I've had countless numbers of people say to me Pastor I don't know how to pray, I don't know what to say, I don't have the right words, I don't know what to talk about to God And I will always ask, do you know The Lord's Prayer and the answer of course is yes. So I say, you do know how to pray, and not only do you know how to pray it is the model prayer Christ gave us.

One thing I encourage young couples to do when we do pre-marital counseling is to pray together, and I don't mean just a quick table prayer. Many are uncomfortable praying out loud so I ask them to simply hold hands and pray together The Lord's Prayer. It is amazing how slowing it down and praying it together can change things. I don't know what it is, I don't know how to explain it but there's something about it. And I've had a few couples through the years tell me how important praying together has become for their marriage.

And it's not just newlyweds, If you don't pray together at least occasionally with your partner I would encourage anybody here no matter how many years you've been married to pray the Lord's prayer together with your partner slowly while holding hands.

I covered a lot of ground this morning on the Lord's prayer and each petition has so much depth to it, As I look out this morning some of you are a third of the way through your life, some half way and some three-quarters or more, whether you are single or married why not enrich the last stretch however long it may be by rediscovering the depth and focus of the Lord's Prayer. Let it become a staple of your prayer life, not just a prayer you blow through but a prayer that puts all of life in perspective. And why wouldn't it, it is after all the prayer Jesus gave us. As we close I invite you to pray The Lord's prayer with me and after each petition we're going to pause and just let the words soak in.

Our Father who art in heaven-----5 seconds

Hallowed be thy name---5 seconds

Thy Kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven---5 seconds

Give us this day our daily bread---5 seconds

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us---5
seconds

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from Evil---5 seconds

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever

Amen!