

How's your prayer-life? Is THIS it, church on Sunday?! Do you feel guilty for not praying more? Do you feel like your prayers are hollow? In the Gospel, Jesus gave his disciples a model for prayer which paved the way for their success as his followers. That's what we're going to talk about this morning. Let's pray.

## PRAYER

### **READ Luke 11:1-4**

**Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup> And He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. <sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread, <sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."**

Let's begin with the introduction to the prayer of Jesus. It provides historical context. We read, **Luke 11:1, Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."**

Notice how the disciple asked Jesus to teach them to pray as John the Baptist "taught his disciples" how to pray. All of the rabbis had formulas for prayer, and John was among them. So Jesus also gave his disciples a model prayer. Why did he do this? Consider the first word of his prayer. Jesus said, "**When you pray, say: "Father...."**

This was a revelation. And I think this is one of the most important reasons why Jesus gave his disciples a new formula for prayer instead of just telling them that what John the Baptist had given them was good enough.

The Aramaic word Jesus used for father was "abba," as in "daddy." No one had ever before addressed God with such familiar language. Indeed, they'd never known God the way Jesus knew him. Jesus revealed to his disciples something about God they never would've known without his help.

Later on, St. John wrote, **1 John 3:1, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.”**

Who do you know? You know Jesus: dead on the Cross for our sins, and risen from the grave with the promise of eternal life for you and me. That’s how great and awesome God the Father’s love is for us.

With their relationship to God completely transformed, Jesus told his disciples to pray, **“hallowed by your name.”**

Names are important. For example, when I think of the name, “FORD,” I remember how as a child I learned that “FORD” means, Fix Often Repair Daily!

St. Paul wrote this about the name of Jesus: **Philippians 2:9-11, “God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

When we pray that the Lord’s name would be hallowed, we’re praying for the fulfillment of what Paul has said here, that even in our own lives the name of Jesus would be revered and glorified.

So every time I hear someone give Jesus a middle initial (using his name in vain), I cringe inside. They’ve had a mental lapse or maybe they just don’t care. Even so, Jesus loves us so very much. That’s why we hallow his name, for he loves us, he cares for us, and he heals us.

Even Jesus’ name itself communicates his work in our lives, for “Jesus” means, “Yahweh saves.”

Jesus continued his prayer with the petition, **“your kingdom come.”**

“Kingdom”: what’s the first thing that comes to mind when you hear that word? Perhaps you imagine one of the great empires of the world, the Roman, British or Ottoman Empires, which ruled over the culture and economic conditions of millions of people for hundreds of years.

But concerning God's kingdom, Jesus said, **John 18:36, "If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My Kingdom is not from the world."**

Later on, St. Paul wrote, **Romans 14:17, "the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."**

"(E)ating & drinking" are metaphors for all material things, which is to say, the Kingdom of God is not about material things. Indeed, the Kingdom of God is here among us now, for the Lord has already begun to build His Kingdom among us, in our hearts, for his Kingdom of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Brothers and sisters in Christ's let these words wash over you, and they will give you peace. Election season is in full force for the next 4 ½ months, but there's no reason why God's children—you and me—should lose any sleep over it or alienate our friends. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God first.

Please say it with me: The Kingdom of God is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Amen.

Jesus said, **Luke 17:21, "the kingdom of God is within you."**

When we pray, "your kingdom come," we are talking about the complete transformation of our lives from the inside out. With our hearts centered on God's presence in us, Jesus told his disciples, pray, "**give us each day our daily bread.**"

"Daily bread" in the Greek uses a very unusual spelling for bread. In fact, this is the only place in the Bible where it's found. It can mean the bread we eat for our physical sustenance, or it can refer to that which concerns our spiritual health. Jesus wanted for us to pray for our daily sustenance, indeed. But too, he wanted us to reflect on God's heavenly bread, for he himself taught his disciples, **John 6:35, "I am the Bread of Life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger."**

When we pray this petition, Luther said we should believe that "**our daily bread, is our Lord Jesus Christ who feeds and comforts the soul,**" that our Father in

Heaven gives “us our daily bread so that Christ may remain in us eternally and we in Him.”

Jesus then told his disciples to pray, “**forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.**”

I wish Jesus had said, “Forgive us our sins,” and stopped there. But He didn’t. If He had, I think it would’ve been too easy to forget how costly our forgiveness was, and to forget that we all need to be forgiven by each other too. St. Paul wrote, **Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”**

If we can remember that we each need Jesus’ work on the Cross, I think it is easier to forgive others.

Jesus told his disciples to pray, “**Lead us not into temptation.**” “Temptation” means two things in the Bible: It means “to test,” as in God tests us to strengthen us in faith, and it means “to lure,” as in the enemy tries to lure us away from the Lord. To test or to lure—we don’t like it either way!

But St. Paul encouraged us. He wrote, **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:12-13, “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”**

So we pray for the escape. And I recommend, from personal experience, to pray for the escape before we even need one! We know where our weaknesses are, we know how we should pray.

In summary, Jesus gave his disciples a model prayer, one which encouraged them in their relationship with God and with one another as individuals and as a church.

Let’s take a few moments to meditate on these six points of Jesus’ prayer:

- **Father:** Dear Lord, you are my dad, my daddy, and you’ve promised to take care of me. I thank you, and I come before you with my every need with confidence;

- **hallowed be Your name:** Your name is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and I worship you; let your name be glorified in my life;
- **Your Kingdom come:** With the deepest longing I pray to be transformed into the image of your son, Jesus, then I shall know you in my heart of hearts just as he did;
- **Give us each day our daily bread:** Sustain me in my body, my minds and in my spirit, that I may be nourished unto eternity, always giving thanks for your gifts;
- **and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us:** I confess, dear Father, that I have been slow to forgive others. Forgive me, dear Lord, and well up in me a love for my enemies that they may no longer be enemies but my beloved brothers and sisters Christ;
- **And lead us not into temptation:** Abba, Father, Daddy, guide me unto life everlasting in your care, protecting me and everyone who is close to my heart from the evil one, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friends in Christ, this week may you be encouraged in your walk with God. He knows you; he sees you; and he receives your prayers as his dear children.

This week may you be encouraged to spend time with your Father in heaven, laying before him all of your needs.

And this week may you have the opportunity to share this good news with another person who really needs to hear it, in the name of Jesus. Amen.