

## Praying the Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

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Tomorrow Canadians from Coast to Coast to Coast will mark the 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of The First World War. Remembrance Day is a day in which we pay homage to those who gave what has been coined as “the ultimate sacrifice” – dying in battle or war. Every year, the second Sunday of November is also the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church; His people persecuted – and even martyred – in His name and for His glory. Indeed, today and tomorrow mark a time of reflection of the wars, battles and struggles that take place on Earth.

These battles and struggles have their very visible worldly side, such as we mark on Remembrance Day. But they also have a side that isn't so easily seen, but is just as real. In Ephesians 6 we read Paul's instruction of putting on the full armour of God; a picture of readying oneself for battle. In this case though, Paul tells us that this battle is not the traditional battle against flesh and blood. Rather, it is a battle against rulers, authorities, powers and the evil forces in the heavenly realms (spiritual battles).

In verses 17 & 18, we read the instruction take the helmet of salvation, the sword of truth (His Word) and that we should pray in the Spirit on all occasions... for all the saints. In this picture, we get the sense that praying is critical – not just something to do when we have landed a promotion and want to thank God; or, when we have been hit hard with something and hope that God will rescue us. It is to be an ongoing practice... on all occasions.

Now, many of us may find it hard to pray. Even though we may know that we should be praying regularly, we still find it difficult to do so. It could be time pressures or a case of “best intentions have gone awry” in one way or another.

If we do pray regularly, or at least somewhat regularly, our prayers might revolve around many petitions and requests for health or other such needs.

But what if things are going well? What do we pray about then? Well, today we are going to look at praying from God's Word to guide us in our prayers. Specifically, we will look at the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 and use it as a way to “frame” our prayers.

Before we dive right in, perhaps a mental picture would be helpful of how we can guide or frame things in other areas of life. Consider artistic painting.

For those of you who know a little something about artistic painting, you know that you can choose from a variety of types of paints; many hues; a variety of surfaces to paint on; and, a vast number of brushes coming in all shapes and sizes. So, if I said that we are going to paint a watercolour painting of a fall scene (using the warm colour hue), it would give you a guide for what to paint but, as you can see on the screen behind me, it would still allow for artistic flexibility delivering many different paintings.

Similarly, my hope today is that you will have a way to use His Word in guiding your prayer. Some of you may be thinking, I have said the Lord's Prayer before. Isn't it short and simple? Is that all I'm supposed to pray? Well, let's look at using it as a way to guide or frame our prayers.

We'll discover how framing our prayers around the Lord's Prayer will also allow our prayers to still be guided by the Holy Spirit, bringing forth many different prayers, yet based on a similar theme – just like the fall painting scenes.

Let me first acknowledge a gratitude to Daniel Henderson and his book *Transforming Prayer* that Pastor Tom led us through during his sermon series on prayer last year. Much of what I am going to share comes from this fantastic book. So, if you still have a copy, I would encourage you to take it out again – like I did – and read it through for some amazing gems on prayer. If you don't have a copy, it would be worth your time and financial investment to purchase one and read it.

Now, let's open our Bibles to Matthew 6: 9 – 13. You can also follow along on the insert or on the screen. I am going to read from the ESV:

*This, then, is how you should pray:*

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

### (THE 4 R's)

Using this prayer, let's take a look at how we can give God **reverence**; how we can **respond** to God; how we can present our **requests** to Him; how we can be **ready** to serve – and end our prayers by once again showing Him **reverence**. Let's call this the rule of 4 R's.

#### REVERENCE

To start, if you were here for PT's series on prayer, he talked much about seeking God's face in prayer – not just His hand. Starting our prayers in reverence is a perfect way to seek His face every time we pray.

Using verse 9 as our guide, we are drawn to His Holiness – and can approach Him in reverence; "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

What does reverence and hallowed mean? Reverence is a deep respect for someone or something; or, to regard or treat with deep respect; or, the one I like: a feeling of profound awe and respect and often love.

And, how many people, besides pastors and Sunday school teachers, even use the word hallowed? What does *it* mean? It means to be honoured as holy; or, sanctified/consecrated.

So, with these two definitions in mind, we can approach God in reverence – knowing that His name is to be honoured as Holy; we can praise and adore His holiness as we consider all of the ways that He has revealed Himself to

those in Scripture and to us personally. This is seeking His face. It is a time in our prayer – in starting our time with the Father – where we can go deeper in discovering who God really is and take comfort in the blessing of being a part of His eternal family.

#### RESPONSE

Once we have taken time in reverence of our God, we can then turn to the second "R" – response; how should I respond? Or, we may ask God "What is your will for me?"

Here we recognize God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, as the Lord of our life and that we want to seek His will for our life. I often find it so easy to pray prayers where I try to ask God to bless my plans and fit into my plans, rather than seeking His plans and seeing how I can fit into His will. If you find yourself doing the same thing, verse 10 guides us to seek His will in our life – "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

As we use the Lord's Prayer as a guide for our prayers, let us remember that we are not simply reciting the Lord's Prayer, but allowing the Holy Spirit to work through the Word of God in guiding our prayers. As Romans 8:27 says, "And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according **to the will of God.**"

Responding to God's Word is our way to seek God's will for us.

#### REQUESTS

Now we turn to the third R – requests. Yes! Finally something important, you say? Finally we can lift up petitions to our God; for our family, friends and ourselves. Well, until we know the One to whom we pray; take the time to adore Him and seek what *He* wants... Well, let me put it this way: How do you like it if your children or others in your life always come to you asking, asking, asking – maybe even demanding. Oh sure, they could be asking politely, but it becomes tiresome when there is no other conversation; no relationship; no respect given to your time and your priorities and how their

request may not really fit into your plans; not even the common courtesy of recognizing you as a fellow human or more – a parent or close friend.

If this is how we may feel, as mere humans – think about what our Father in heaven would desire from us mere humans to the One whose name is hallowed?

Anyway, once we have taken the time to revere Him, and taken the time to respond by seeking His will, then He *does* want to be the ever-loving, ever-providing Father and listen to our requests. So, what should we pray about? Verses 11 and 12 guide us in our requests, “Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

We can be thankful for His provision of our daily needs, and take comfort in verses such as the ones later in Matthew 6 (25 – 34) where God promises to care for our every need. This is not something to take for granted, but it is also something that we are instructed to not be anxious about. Be thankful and ask for your “daily bread” according to His will.

This is also an opportunity to seek forgiveness – and to seek if there is someone who you need to extend God’s grace to by forgiving them. Now, this topic is a whole sermon (or series) in and of itself, but suffice to say, we are to forgive those who sin against us and seek forgiveness AND we are to not only seek brotherly or sisterly forgiveness where necessary, but seek our Heavenly Father’s forgiveness for *all* of our sins.

If you have been here for Tom’s sermon series on 1 John, you will remember how when we confess our sins, and seek His just grace through Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven – praise be to God.

So, what else could we pray about in requests? Well, in looking at Romans 8:27 again, “And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God,” we can seek the Holy Spirit’s divine guidance in our prayers – or even

trust that in our inability to express ourselves fully, that the Holy Spirit will intercede for us.

## READINESS

This now brings us to readiness; or, “where do I go from here?” Verse 13 reads, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” This verse helps us recognize our inability to go ahead on our own strength and power, but that we absolutely need Him to guide us every step of the way. It reminds us that there is evil; that there is an evil one (Satan); that we or born in sin; and that without God there is no way that we would be able to endure the battle we talked about in Ephesians 6 (Eph 6:10 says: ...be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might).

Do not be fooled into thinking that our righteousness in Christ, and our ongoing sanctification, makes us able to battle on our own – we need Him in absolutely everything we do.

## REVERENCE

For those of us who recall another portion of the Lord’s Prayer, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” That comes from the King James Version and is Matthew 6:13b. Although not in the NIV or ESV or other newer translations, it is a wonderful place to end our prayers – by once again giving reverence to Him. Praise His name and who He is.

So, now you can use the Lord’s Prayer as a guide to pray in transforming ways. But why should we?

Well, because it can give you hope that you will be able to pray. Maybe you aren’t sure what to pray or how to pray and, although this is not the only way to pray, it is one way and can help guide your prayers.

If you listened to the words of the song shared by the quartet, *I Then Shall Live*, you may have noticed that the writer was inspired by the Lord’s Prayer.

It wasn't the Lord's Prayer, but it clearly uses the Lord's Prayer as a guide or frame in writing the song. You can now do the same when you pray.

You can even use this idea and pray similarly through other parts of the Bible. I recently tried this when reading Luke 10 – 12. Almost every few verses I was able to pray the 4 R's based on the verses I just read.

As an example, in Luke 10:21-24:

In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it."

Here we can give reverence in knowing that we serve a Triune God – seeing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit at work together. We can respond by seeking His will, as outlined in these verses. We can be thankful for being chosen to have the Holy Spirit work in us and request that He reveals Himself to us, in Scripture. We can show our readiness in His power and strength, knowing that we know the Father because we know His Son Jesus Christ.

Why else should we pray in transforming ways, using God's Word as a guide?

Well, because the devil doesn't want you to and God does. God has instructed over and over again through Scripture His desire for His people to come to Him in prayer. (2 Chronicles 7:14 – "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and

heal their land") And let's remember the privilege we have, that through Jesus we now have direct access to the Father in prayer.

Why else should we pray – and especially pray together as a church or as couples or as families? Let me share a passage from Henderson's book. Mr. Henderson gives an interesting idea of what he would do if he were the devil in order to stop Christians from praying in transforming ways:

(Pages 193 – 195)

Folks, let us remember, we are in a battle. A battle against the powers and the evil forces in the heavenly realms (spiritual battles).

On the note of praying together, I would encourage you to pray as families. Whether it is couples together; children with parents; grandparents with grandchildren; or whatever – praying together in transforming ways is powerful.

As I conclude, I recognize that there may be some of you here today who have heard the Lord's Prayer before – and you may have even recited it on occasion. However, you may never have taken the step to have a personal, saving relationship with the One who first said the Lord's Prayer – Jesus Christ.

You might sense a desire to follow Jesus, but are not sure what you should pray either. Well, you can use the Lord's Prayer to guide you in this, too.

By acknowledging God's Holiness and the reality that the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ to suffer and die on the cross for your sins, and then rose again so that you too may rise to be with Him in heaven – reverence; that you feel a desire to make Jesus Christ both the Lord and Saviour of your life – response; that you want the Holy Spirit to take up residence in you and that your sins be forgiven in Christ, with a desire to turn away from those sins and follow Christ – request; and, that you desire to learn more about Him and how to serve Him in His power – readiness. You can then revere His mercy and grace as you find a new life in his salvation.

If you just prayed this, or find yourself praying something along those lines now – please share that with someone after the service – either someone you know; or, one of the pastors, elders or me. Or, maybe you *want* to pray a prayer like that with someone *after* the service. I would encourage you to do so.

Let us pray.