

The Lord's Prayer (3)
Prepared for Wellspring Church
November 27, 2011
Gospel

- Introduction
 - Engage

- Review: The first word in Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer is "Father."
 - This shows three things
 - Immanence (His physical or locational nearness to us). We are being taught that when we pray we are praying to a God who is near to us. He is not a God who is physically and geographically distant and unreachable. Immediate and constant availability with cell phones and internet. No more excuses about being out of town!
 - Psalm 139:7-9
 - Inclusion—we are members of a new family, a family whose father is the Creator of all things, the sovereign of all things, the ruler and keeper of all things.
 - Intimacy (His emotional nearness to us). Here is love and joy.
 - Which gives us a bit of what may seem like impertinence—it is a filial boldness.
 - This is the way that Jesus prayed—
 - Notice John 17, Father used six times. The primary address of Jesus to God in the Gospel is this word Father.
 - Because we have Jesus as our means of prayer—we have this boldness. This is what it means to pray in the name of Christ—"we come boldly in the merit of Christ. When we pray in Christ's name it is to pray with confidence in Christ's merit, in his righteousness. We present Christ to God in our prayers; when we carry the lamb slain in our arms; when we say, "Lord, we are sinners, but there is a surety; for Christ's sake be propitious; we come to God in Christ's name, and this is to pray in faith." Thomas Watson.

Luther: As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household.

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?--Answer.

God would thereby [with this little introduction] tenderly urge us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him confidently with all assurance, as dear children ask their dear father.

WSC:

Q. 100. What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, Our Father which art in heaven, teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence[207]

and confidence,[208] as children to a father,[209] able and ready to help us;[210] and that we should pray with and for others.[211]

- How does this affect our prayers?
 - Gratefulness
 - Boldness
 - Confidence in your situation and circumstance
- Preview
 - Short look at the concept of the phrase “who is in heaven” from the version of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew
 - Seeking to Understand What “Hallowed by Your Name Means”
- Matthew adds the phrase “In Heaven.” I want to take a minute here because this tells us of his transcendence—He is still wholly other and wholly Holy. He is still due our utmost respect. My children call me Daddy, my grandsons call me papa-this is intimacy without improper familiarity or flippancy.
 - What Transcendence?

Transcendence of God

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8–9, NIV) The transcendence of God is closely related to his sovereignty. It means that God is above, other than, and distinct from all he has made - he transcends it all. Paul says that there is “one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:6). Scripture says elsewhere, “For you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods (Psalms 97:9; cf. 108:5).

- Why should we be concerned with Transcendence?
 - Our culture to democratize and level everything. Following the French Revolution “Citizen” was the accepted and demanded form of address to show the equality of all men. Children look forward to the time when they can address adults by their first names. When Jesus qualifies “Father” with the term “in heaven” he is telling us more about the Essence of God than the Location of God. We are never meant to get on buddy-buddy terms with the Almighty.

“Who art in heaven sets before us the fact that our divine Father is great—eternal, infinite, almighty: this the phrase makes us realize that God’s love is unchanging, unlimited, unconquerable in its purpose, and more than able to deal with all the needs we bring when we pray. Prayer shaped and supported by thoughts like this will not be dull.” (J. I. Packer, Praying the Lord’s Prayer)

- This is not place, but plane.
 - If God is omnipresent, that is, everywhere at once, then he cannot be confined to heaven wherever that is.
 - We are told that heaven and earth cannot contain him I Kings 8:27; Heaven is his throne Matthew 5:34; Psa. 103 19; Heaven is his throne and earth his footstool Isa.66:1a; He lives in a high

and exalted place. Isa. 57:15a.

- Otherness
 - I Am (always have been) Transcends Time
 - Holy, Holy, Holy (other) Transcends all moral categories
 - Creator—nothing was without God, he stands above and beyond his creation. Transcends all other being and Space.
- Immensity. "...God is incomparable and transcends the world—whose inhabitants are to him 'like grasshoppers' and whose "rulers of the earth [he makes] as emptiness—brings delight to the weak: 'He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might, he increases strength.' (Isa. 40:22-23). Evil powers never have the last word, because although God enters into the matrix of creaturely powers, he is never simply one player among others. God remains qualitatively and not just quantitatively distinct from creation—and his is good news for those to whom the future seems destined to be controlled by oppressors.' (Michael Horton, The Christian Faith, 233)
- "If God were not free *from* creation, we might pray *for* him. We would have no confidence that he could overcome evil or rescue us from death. Yet God's freedom *for* creation—even for those who are not only finite but sinful—is the presupposition of our hope in Christ.
- Two dangers and false views of God avoided in a proper balance of transcendence and immanence. If we over emphasize his Transcendence we become deists with an absent, removed, uninvolved God. There is a certain fatalism and hopelessness that ensues. This is one of the Errors of Islam, there is transcendence but no immanence and intimacy of relationship. If we over emphasize his immanence we become pantheists, i.e. God is so at one with the totality of Being that He is indistinguishable. Here the focus is on becoming gods and not on relating to God. The focus is on what I can do to appease the god of nature and also on how to unleash the power of divinity in me.
- What does this teach us about prayer? At least three things
 - The greatness and majesty of God. Realizing and remembering that God Our Father is "in Heaven" is to think of him as the infinite creator who dwells in "inapproachable light"
 - The need to approach God with a **respectful** familiarity. We do have freedom of access, He is our Father, He is even "Dear Father." But we must hold in balance who is to us with who he is in his person. The addition of *abba* to our address of God is one of respect and honor. There is familiarity yes, but not at the expense of Respect. A. W. Pink warns us that if we focus on the intimacy of "Our Father, *abba*" at the expense, or without proper concern for the awe and humility that should attend us when we think of his majesty that we will tend toward what he calls "an unholy familiarity". On the other hand coming into the presence of the almighty without a confidence in his compassion and tenderness as a kind and caring father "produces coldness and dread."
 - At the same time and above all we must guard against flippancy, that is,

an impertinent form of address without any show or concern for the greatness that is inherently his. “Some out of ignorance will refer to God as the man upstairs, or the big guy. Some will pray, Hi God, it’s me, Bob, What’s up?” Yo God,

Charles Spurgeon told his students in Bible College:

“We are taught to say, ‘Our Father,’ but still it is ‘Our Father who art in heaven.’ Familiarity there may be, but holy familiarity; boldness, but the boldness which springs from grace and is the work of the Spirit; not the boldness of the rebel who carries a brazen front in the presence of his offended king, but the boldness of the child who fears because he loves, and loves because he fears. Never fall into a vainglorious style of impertinent address to God; he is not to be assailed as an antagonist, but entreated with as our Lord and God. Humble and lowly let us be in spirit, and so let us pray.” (Lectures to My Students, Banner of Truth Trust edition, 2008, p. 60)

- We need to build and pursue a proper “fear” of God. This is a subject for another day.
 - We should be overwhelmed with a humble marvel. This “awesome, holy, transcendent God stoops down in love to lift us up from the gutter, so to speak, brings us into his family, gives himself to us in unstinting fellowship, and thus enriches us forever.” (J. I. Packer, 38)
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- Now lets move into the petitions of the prayer. There are two sets. The first set is Godward (Name, will, Kingdom). The second set is manward (bread, sins, protection). When we move into these petitions We have seen that we are concerned with others and the community. But amazingly we are also to be concerned with God. The Dutch Commentator Herman Witsius says that here we are praying to God that God would do certain things to and for himself. Here indeed is a mighty intimacy and closeness to God. We transcend transcendence and identify ourselves with the heart and mind and purposes of God and yearn first for what he desires. We enter into the high privilege of praying for God.
 - “Hallowed by Your name” shows the concern that the children of the heavenly father have for their father’s reputation.
 - Our natural inclination is to begin and end with ourselves. If we were left to ourselves and left untaught we would pray quite differently than we do. “Before we begin to think of ourselves and our own needs, even before our concern for others, we must start with this great concern about God and His honor and glory. There is no principle in connection with the Christian life that exceeds this in importance.” (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Sermon On The Mount II: 59)
 - What do we mean by his name? In our world names are often chosen rather haphazardly and more at the whim of the parents than they are for their inherent meaning. When you look at lists of popular names you will see celebrities and culture reflected. It seems that little thought is given to the character of the child that the parents want to see reflected and grown un the child. This is not so in other cultures and in the past. The meaning of the name was more important.
 - All that he is:
 - This is His designation; this is term by which he is called. We

say God or Lord or Father, sometimes we say Jehovah or Yahweh.

- Character. His name is not just what he is called, but Who He is. His name is the totality of his character and attributes. All that he is wrapped up in his name. We cannot speak of his name without speaking of his Love, Holiness, Grace, Justice and wrath.
- It is His reputation. It is his fame and renown. It is Who he is and how he is to be thought of.
- It is the sum of all that he is and all that he has revealed himself to be and all that we have rightly experienced of Him. It is the revelations of God through his works of
 - Creation
 - Common Providence
 - Grace
 - Glory
 - and “most of all in the word of his gracious covenant, in which he shows how God may be denominated the Savior of sinful man with full display of all his perfections.” (Witsius)
- Remember when Moses asked to see God’s glory, God responded by declaring his name and attributes. Exodus 34:1-8
 - Other names
 - The Lord will Provide *Jehovah-jireh*
 - The Lord that heals *Jehovah-rapha*
 - The Lord our banner *Jehovah-nissi*
 - The Lord our peace *Jehovah-Shalom*
 - The Lord our shepherd *Jehovah-ra-ah*
 - The Lord our righteousness *Jehovah-tsidkenu*
 - The Lord is Present *Jehovah-shammah*
 - What do we mean by hallowing?
 - It is to give honor and respect. To treat as holy. To treat with reverence.

Terry L. Johnson is helpful here:

“To pray that God’s name should be hallowed is to pray that He will get the honor, the respect, the reverence, the fear, the glory of which He is Worthy. His name is hallowed because His is an ‘honored and awesome name (Dt. 28:59). His is ‘the name that is above every name’ (Phil. 2:9).”

A.W. Pink writes that the first petition signifies our desire “that God’s matchless name might be revered, adored, and glorified, and that God might cause it to be held in utmost respect and honor, that its fame might spread abroad and be magnified.”

“This is the whole meaning of this petition. It means a burning desire that the whole world may bow before God in adoration, in reverence, praise, in worship, in honor and thanksgiving.” (M. Lloyd-Jones SOM II:61)

- It is in the Third Commandment—Do not take the Lord’s name in vain. Do not use God’s name for anything other than Prayer and Praise.

- Fifth Commandment shows how this is taught in the family.

Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, (which is, *Hallowed by thy name,*) acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and, by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

(Westminster Larger Catechism)

- How is God’s name hallowed or made holy? First and Foremost He is made most glorious in the gift of salvation.
- How is God’s name hallowed or made holy? It is not by adding to his holiness or perfections. He is already complete and perfect. It is by the extension of his reputation. It is through our concern for the holiness and honor of his name.
 - Knowing, understanding, meditating and contemplating his attributes.
 - Know them
 - Study the
 - Pray them
 - Knowing, understanding, meditating and contemplating his works.
 - Recognize them
 - Study them
 - Pray them
 - Tell them
 - Knowing the words of Scripture so that we can use The Holy Spirit’s own language to hallow God’s name. When reading Scripture take the words of Scripture and make them into a prayer. See for example Psalm 105:106 “None do seek the Lord so earnestly, but they have need of stirring p to seek him more earnestly.”
 - Conformity to his law and ways which is obedience.
 - immediate
 - fully and
 - without complaining
 - Love and adoration. But how is love to be shown to God? Psalm 116:1-2, 12
 - Patience, hoping, waiting—or Contentment “we are not at liberty to rest satisfied in any good thing which we possess, so far as it is ours, or contributes to our advantage or enjoyment. Out very happiness must not be sought merely for the delight which the possession of it will afford us. A higher object is, that God’s own property, which we truly are, may be beautified and enriched,—that the blessings from on high, which complete our happiness, may prepare us more fully for celebrating the excellencies of the Divine nature, --and that God

himself may behold that delight the riches of his grace. Our highest happiness is to be entirely devoted to the Divine glory. Our highest rejoicing is to *rejoice in the hope of the glory of Christ.*” Witsius, 19

- Fruit-bearing John 15:6
- Witnessing, telling of his works
- Suffering well.
- Abhorring evil
- Living with holy confidence
- Living with Gratitude
- For this reason.... Witsius 207-208

Herman Witsius

Why has the Christian been made what he is? That God may be glorified in him. For this purpose he was *created*, and endowed with a capacity of know the things of God, that he may say, ‘Where is God my maker who giveth songs in the night; who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?’

For this purpose he was *elected* by God through Jesus Christ, ‘according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us acceptable in the beloved.’

For this purpose he was *redeemed* by the blood of Christ, that he might be ‘among the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb, and might sing a new song before the throne with those who have the Father’s name written in their foreheads, a song which no man can learn but those redeemed from the earth.

For this purpose he was *called* by the gospel, and *regenerated* and *sanctified* by the Spirit, ‘that he should show forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvelous light. This people I have formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.

For this purpose, finally, he will at length be *glorified* that, with the four and twenty elders, and ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousand of holy angels, he may say ‘Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’”

- It is far more than saying this prayer.
- It is far more than not swearing.
- God-fearing
- The way we are in times of public worship. (Newspaper, Sleeping, talking, passing notes, daydreaming)
- What am I saying when I pray this prayer?
 - That it is my true desire and longing, my sincere passion, to seek the glory of God above all things.
 - That the glorifying of God’s name must proceed from God himself who alone is competent to display his perfections rightly.
 - That he would make me fit and able to hallow his name and to make it known.
 - That is the purpose of my whole being and the purpose of all that God has done
- Some ways of dishonoring God’s name
 - With our Mouths

- Worry
- Fear
- Denying that there is truth
- Equating all religions
- Denigrating His word
- Attributing his works to natural causes
- Ingratitude and Discontentment
- Using Him for what he gives us and not loving him for who he is.
- Some questions of application
 - Do I always come to God as Father? If not why not?
 - Do I come to God with Praise and Thanksgiving that he is my Father?
 - Is his Glory my utmost concern in my prayers?
 - Can I look forward to the time when the other petitions are out of date and yet this one stays current? (Ryken 33)
 - Is this my supreme desire?
 - What do people hear when then listen to me?