

The Lord's Prayer

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[0:00] And before we hear God's word read, what don't I pray for us? Let's pray. Our gracious Father, the psalmist says, direct my footsteps according to your word and let no sin rule over me.

And so we pray this now for ourselves as we hear your word read and explained in Jesus' name. Amen. So reading from Matthew 6, starting at verse 5.

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 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 today 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 the evil one. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

[1:38] But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. What a great joy to be with you again.

And a special privilege, of course, as we turn our attention to the Lord's Prayer. A familiar prayer, of course, but I'm sure that we can learn something more by, with God's help, focusing on the words of the prayer.

This is a prayer to pray and also a pattern for our prayers of request taught by Christ. This prayer taught by Christ was and will be fulfilled by Christ in his death, resurrection, ascension, his being seated at the right hand of the Father and by his coming again.

So it's a prayer that Jesus taught. It's also a prayer to which Jesus is the answer. But notice that Jesus taught it to the disciples before he fully inaugurated the new covenant by his death, resurrection, ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

It's not a fully new covenant prayer. So if you compare the Lord's Prayer with the prayers of Paul, then what Paul is so often doing in his prayer is rejoicing in how God has worked through Christ.

[3:33] But this is, if you like, the last stage of the Old Testament, before Christ has become the mediator, the Saviour and the Lord.

So it's helpful to point out that there were actually three big stages of biblical revelation. We're used to thinking there's the Old Testament and then the New Testament, and that's right.

But actually, there's the Old Testament and then Jesus' teaching in the Gospels while he was on earth. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record them.

And then there is Jesus' revelation to the apostles and prophets found in all the books from Acts to the book of Revelation. So, in a way, we're going back to that second stage of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels.

But as I'll show you, we can fill out the Lord's Prayer more fully by making it a fully new covenant prayer.

[4:44] Notice, too, that it's a prayer to pray, and most of us pray the Lord's Prayer. But it's also a pattern for our prayers of request.

So, we're meant to not only pray the Lord's Prayer, but also incorporate the requests in the Lord's Prayer into our own prayers.

And on a few occasions tonight, I'll ask you the question, do you ever pray this particular prayer in your own prayers?

When you do pray it in the Lord's Prayer, do you include it in your own prayers as well? Well, famously, the prayer begins, Our Father.

And if you read through the Sermon on the Mount, that's Matthew chapter 5 to chapter 7, you'll find that Jesus teaches a great deal about our Father.

[5:50] Our Father is kind to all, the evil and the good. Our Father rewards our generosity to the needy, rewards our prayers, rewards our fasting.

Our Father provides for our daily needs and gives good gifts to those who ask. So, if when you hear the word Father, you hear of someone who's an authority figure, or someone who is big on disapproval, that's not God the Father Jesus is talking about.

He's talking about a Father who is kind to all, the evil and the good, who rewards our generosity, our prayers, our fasting, provides for our daily needs, and gives good gifts to those who ask. So, when we pray to our Father, we're coming with empty hands, but not uninvited, not unwelcome. I wonder if you've ever taken part in a program whereby you knock on people's doors when they're not expecting you to invite them to buy a used vacuum cleaner or to come and hear a talk at church.

[7:25] I used to do that a lot when I was a vicar. I do remember one man who arrived at the door wearing a singlet and nothing else. So, we had to keep the conversation short and snappy.

He was happy to receive an invitation to church. He didn't actually arrive with or without a singlet, but anyway, there we are. But the possibility is that you can knock on someone's door and they open it and they say, Go away!

But the Bible tells us that when we knock on God's door, he always says, Welcome. We're already invited.

We come as an invited guest, not as an intruder or a nuisance. We come as an invited guest, not an intruder or a nuisance.

Our Father in heaven. When we hear those words, we might think immediately, Oh, he's in heaven, so he's not on earth.

[8:46] That is, he's a long way away. But that's not what the Bible teaches. We read in Jeremiah 23, verse 24, God says, Do I not fill heaven and earth?

So, God is present everywhere in his mercy and his power. So, expressions like in the Old Testament, Your right hand, Lord, shattered the enemy, or the seven eyes of God which range throughout the earth, express the truth that God never acts remotely, but is personally present in his words and everything that he does.

He is personally present throughout the universe. And I'm pointing that out because people often think that when they're praying, there may be a difficulty in making contact with God because he's a long way away and he's so busy with all these people praying to him.

He can't quite cope with our prayers. But that's not so. You can't avoid God as we read in Psalm 139. Where can I flee from your presence?

God is everywhere, all the time. Psalm 139. Where can I go from your spirit?

[10:10] Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens? You are there if I make my bed in the depths. You are there if I rise on the wings of the dawn. If I settle on the far side of the sea.

Even there your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast. We might think of the question as, is God near me?

Actually, the right way to think of the question is, has God welcomed me into his presence? God is present everywhere in his mercy and his power.

God is the inescapable God. Well, the usual version of the Lord's Prayer, which most people know, is the next line is, hallowed be your name.

And it's really a funny thing to keep the word hallowed, because it makes me think of Halloween, actually, and people with pumpkins and things like that.

[11:35] better to translate it as holy be your name and the three requests to God make your name holy, bring your kingdom, do your will on earth as in heaven, that's my translation make it clear that we're asking God to do something that we can't do if you translate it as may your kingdom come it sounds well it may come and it may not come and then we

think perhaps we have to help it to come but the far better translation I think is a definite request make your name holy, bring your kingdom and do your will on earth as in heaven well how does God make his name holy what is God's name God's name in the Old Testament is his identity and his promise so Exodus 3

Moses said to God suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them the God of your fathers has sent me to you and they say what is his name then what shall I tell them God said to Moses I am who I am this is what you are to say to the Israelites I am has sent me to you and God's name is his self-revelation and his plan again from Exodus this time from chapter 34 then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with Moses and proclaimed his name the Lord and he passed in front of Moses proclaiming the Lord the Lord the compassionate and gracious God slow to anger abounding in love and faithfulness maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin and God's name is also his reputation and his honour so God says to Pharaoh the king of Egypt I have raised you up for this very purpose that I might show you my power and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth and God's name is his presence and his glory from Deuteronomy 12 you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his name there for his dwelling so the name of God is not just something like Fred or Julie or something like that that the name of God is his identity and promise it's his self-revelation and his plan it's his reputation and his honour and his presence and his glory so how does God make his name holy?

I think it means that God makes it clear to human beings that he is a holy God and this the idea is found very clearly in the book of the prophet Ezekiel so God says to his people they defiled my holy name by their detestable practices so I destroyed them in my anger Ezekiel 43.8 so God judged them because they had defiled his holy name but in Ezekiel 20.8 and 9 but for the sake of my name I brought them out of Egypt I did it to keep my name from being profaned in the eyes of the nations among whom they lived and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites so God makes his name holy by acts of judgment and acts of mercy and why does God make his name holy? here we are from Ezekiel 39 this is what the sovereign Lord says I'll now restore the fortunes of Jacob and will have compassion on the people of Israel and I will be zealous for my holy name or again from Ezekiel 36 therefore say to the Israelites this is what the sovereign Lord says it's not for your sake people of Israel I'm going to do these things that is bring you back from exile but for the sake of my holy name which you have profaned among the nations I'll show the holiness of my great name which has been profaned among the nations the name you've profaned among them then the nations will know that I am the Lord declares the sovereign Lord when I am proved holy through you before their eyes so why does God make his name holy?

to reveal that he is a holy God out of compassion for his people and because he wants to reveal himself to all the nations and here's the point God did make his name holy he revealed himself as a holy God in the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and will complete his work of showing that he is a holy God and this revelation of who he is at Christ's return when again he acts in mercy and in judgment so what is God revealing about God?

[17:36] his holiness his perfection his glorious beauty his otherness as God and not human as creator and not creation as savior and not save so God did make his name holy when Christ died in our place on the cross God did reveal his holy name by raising his son our savior from the dead and raising him to his right hand in glory and when Christ returns we will know that God indeed is a holy God bring your kingdom or your kingdom come how does God bring his kingdom?

well I'm sure you'll know the answer Jesus says repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near Matthew 4 Matthew 16 you'll see the son of man coming in his kingdom to Peter you'll receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ so God's kingdom is Christ's kingdom we read that in Ephesians 5 5 the kingdom of God and of Christ or Revelation 11 15 the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever so God makes his name holy by bringing his kingdom and his kingdom is brought by Jesus who did his will on earth Jesus said I've come down from heaven not to do my own will but to do the will of him who sent me it's my father's will that everyone who looks to the son and believes in him shall have eternal life and I'll raise them up at the last day

John 6 or the agonizing prayer in Matthew 26 Jesus prays my father if it is possible make this cup be taken from thee yet not as I will but as you will and again my father if it's not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it may your will be done and Jesus is quoted as saying in Hebrews 10 7 I have come to do your will for who else does the will of God who else has done the will of God who else can do the will of God but Jesus the son of God and God's will for him was that he died for our salvation so God's name holy name will be revealed when his kingdom comes so that his will is done or you might say

God's will is done so that his kingdom comes so that his holy name is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ may your kingdom come your will be done these are the biggest prayers we could ever pray this is a massive prayer because it's a prayer for God's great work of salvation to be achieved in this world make your name holy bring your kingdom do your will through Jesus Christ is the biggest prayer that we could ever pray it's the most God honoring prayer that we could ever pray because we're saying God it's your will your kingdom your name which matters it is a prayer for world evangelization it's a prayer that people from every nation tribe and people language will hear about Jesus

Christ it's a prayer that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father it is the biggest prayer we could ever pray which I think is why we don't often pray it's too big a prayer but I find when I'm praying for a missionary if I pray this prayer first it's such a big prayer then the prayer for the missionary just becomes part of this great gospel plan and if I'm praying for someone to become a Christian I pray this prayer first because then their conversion is just a minuscule part of this great massive prayer being fulfilled we pray these words when we pray the Lord's prayer do you pray this prayer when you're not praying the Lord's prayer is this part of your passionate prayer life

[23:25] I hope it is because it's how Jesus taught us to pray and please notice that we pray for God's plan before our needs do you notice that the first half of the prayer is about what God wants to happen the second part of the prayer is about what we need to happen give us our daily bread so to pray this prayer is to be in touch with the mind and plan and purpose of God in the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal his glory by making his holy name known in all the earth it is the biggest prayer we can pray God's agenda God's plan God's priorities God's will God's desires and may our deepest desire and our greatest desire be that

God is revealed God is known God is trusted and God's will is done through Christ this is bigger than our lives and bigger than the ministries in which we're involved here is a cosmic a global cosmic prayer actually for the restoration of the universe that's how big a prayer it is and I like to think of this as a whatever it takes prayer so gracious God please do whatever it takes in judgment or mercy on your church and your world on Australia to make Christ known and people from Australia come to trust and obey him this is very different from asking

God to bless our plans it's a praying that God would do his plan which of course he is certain to do and we participate in that by praying as well as other ways in which we encourage people to come to know the Lord Jesus well what a letdown give us this day our daily bread it means provide what we need to keep us alive and let me ask you if you've ever prayed this prayer give us this day our daily bread except when it's in the Lord's bread I think we're more inclined to thank God for our daily food than to ask for it and it's wonderful to thank God for our daily food but actually the reality is Jesus tells us to ask for it that is not to take it for granted for there are millions indeed billions of people in the world today for whom this is a very relevant and passionate prayer give us today our daily bread give us today some fresh water to drink but we in the west well we think the shops are full and there's food in the cupboard I don't need to pray this prayer merely the cow will keep on producing milk and somebody will keep on making cornflakes however cornflakes are made the world will just potter on we don't need to bother God with little things like this but God is honoured when we express to him our continual perpetual dependence on him for daily life for God is the God who gives you air to breathe now and God is the God who enables you to breathe now and God is the God who is keeping you alive now and God is the God who is helping you if you still are listen to what I'm saying God is making my mouth work and your ears work and we trust your brain work as well and if God lost attention for a moment everything would disappear Paul writes in Colossians all things hold together in Christ all things in the universe so if Christ wasn't there the

universe would fall apart ourselves included it's a humbling prayer to pray give us this day our daily bread but Jesus taught us to pray it as we read in the

[29:25] Psalms the eyes of all look to you you give them their food at the proper time you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing do you ever pray give us this day our daily bread the next request is even more challenging I think forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors we usually think of sins as things that we've done wrong and if you put me in a corner and applied some heat to my fingers or something like that I could give you story after story of things that I've done wrong in my life and wrong in my ministry but actually these are not things that we've debts are not things we've done wrong they're things that we should have done that we haven't done and they're much harder to remember because we didn't do them and perhaps didn't even notice that we should have done them so I remember thinking when

I was young that if you wanted to help somebody you could help them I discovered I think in my early 30s that actually even when you want to help somebody you don't always help them even with the best of intention but this is actually about the people whom I missed out on helping it's the good things I should have done and didn't do well dear friends when we're instructed in the scriptures to love God with heart, mind, soul and strength and to love our neighbours as ourselves there must be quite a list of things we have not done debts the debts of love that we have not paid to God or to others and curiously enough we're more aware of the debts that other people owe us than we are of the debts we owe other people she didn't even ask how I was he didn't remember my name they've obviously forgotten the generous present

I gave them last Christmas because they gave it back to me this Christmas we're so aware aren't we of things that other people we think they should have done and they haven't done but we should ask God to show us our debts the debts we have not paid and ask for his promised forgiveness forgiveness achieved by the blood of Jesus on the cross do you confess your sins every day do you confess what you have not done as well as what you have done give us this day our daily bread forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one

I think lead us not into temptation means to lead us not into a temptation or a trial which is too much for us and you find Jesus praying these prayers for his disciples Simon Simon Satan has desired to sift all of you as wheat but I've prayed for you Simon that your faith may not fail Luke 22 31 and then he tells the disciples who are asleep get up and pray that you will not fall into temptation and we often make the mistake of thinking that we're strong enough to resist the ordinary temptations and trials of life but we need to think ahead we do not know what great trial and temptation awaits us life may be manageable at present but our future life may will become unmanageable and Jesus warns us that the last days will be times of greater temptation and greater trials from

Luke 21 there'll be signs in the sun moon and stars on the earth nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea people will faint from terror apprehensive of what is coming on the world for the heavenly bodies will be shaken be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing drunkenness and the anxieties of life and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap for it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth be always on the watch be alert and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen and that you may be able to stand before the son of man yeah we we think that we can cope with life as it is we do not know what the future holds well no as a matter of fact we do know what the future holds because Jesus warns us that the pressures and the trials and the temptations and the persecution is only going to increase we hope our world is getting better and better

[35:37] Jesus says our world is going to get worse and worse lead us not into temptation do you ever pray this prayer why might you not bother to pray this prayer do you need to pray this prayer answer yes but deliver us from the evil one most translations give deliver us from evil that's certainly a possible translation you can translate it either evil or evil one I think it's better in Matthew's gospel translated as the evil one well this is how the same word is translated in the two parables in Matthew's gospel in Matthew 13 verses 18 and 19 about the evil one and

come and peck the word out of your heart and verses 36 and 9 where an evil one comes to sow the tares in the midst of the wheat furthermore in John 17 15

Jesus prayed that his father would indeed protect them that is his disciples from the evil one do you ever pray this prayer the devil goes around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour and if you're in the presence of a lion and the lion is roaring it's probably too late to do very much except write your will if you have time we live in a kind of false security don't we we western Christians we don't think we need to pray give us this day our daily bread we don't think we need to pray lead us into temptation and we think we don't need to pray deliver us from the evil one though Jesus has warned us that we need to pray these prayers and Jesus has taught us to pray them and given us the words to use to pray them well I mentioned at the start that this is not a fully

New Testament prayer so what I've done is to expand the Lord's prayer so we're praying like this but to make it a more fully New Testament prayer it's in your notes it is and it'll be on the screen as well first of all we'll pray the Lord's prayer as we've studied it and then we'll pray the Lord's prayer in an expanded form filled out with more New Testament truth so let's pray the original Lord's prayer and then the expanded version I think if you'd like to stand it would be if you're able to do that it would be good to pray that way we're on page three of your notes our father in heaven we pray make your name holy bring your kingdom do your will on earth as in heaven give us this day our daily bread forgive us our debts as we forget our debts lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil

Lord and then our father in heaven please hear our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ your son our saviour and our high priest please prompt our prayers by your holy spirit who witnesses with our spirit that we are your children and urges us to pray to you make your name holy bring your kingdom do your will on earth as in heaven we praise you for the Lord Jesus who sanctified himself in bringing your kingdom and did your will in suffering on the cross for our sins we praise you that he glorified you and that you glorified him in his death resurrection and ascension to your right hand in glory and his pouring out of your spirit bringing salvation to every people nation tribe and language may we make disciples of every nation may we pray for his return when he will come as saviour and judge and reign in glory forever give us this day our daily praise we praise you that all things hold together in christ that you continue to sustain your creation and that you continue to care for your people and our daily needs forgive us our sins and debts as we forgive those who sin against us and our debtors father we thank you that you have sent your son to save us forgive us and give us eternal life by his eternal sacrifice on the cross help us to forgive others as you in christ forgave us lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one and as the evil one tries to snatch your words from our hearts condemn us deceive and devour us that you would protect us by christ's death and resurrection and by your word of truth make us steadfast in faith and hope and help us to endure to the end and finally beat down satan under our feet all this we ask together in the name of jesus amen