

The Lord's Prayer

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Preacher: Harvey Guest

[0 : 00] As advertised, let's get down to business here, as advertised, today a look together at the Lord's Prayer. The handout, as you see, I hope you've got a handout, is the prayer in Greek with a literal translation by a woman named Shirley Sullivan, a one-time professor in the classics department, a very learned lady, Shirley Sullivan, a professor in the classics department at UBC, and a one-time lecturer at Regent College in Latin.

I was speaking to a friend the other day who took a course with Shirley Sullivan in Latin. She was a warm and engaging teacher.

So as we do a little unpacking of the prayer, this is just by way of introduction, the usual English will be used. We're also familiar with the Lord's Prayer.

I don't know, when I quote it, I'm not sure if I'm, is that RSV? Is that the English Standard? Is that the New King James? But just to begin, it might be good, I hope it is, to listen to the prayer in this kind of different tone, if you will.

Just a slightly different sound, broadly speaking. So again, this is still just introduction, but I want to, since we're looking at the Lord's Prayer, I want to read the Lord's Prayer to you right off the bat.

[1 : 25] So the Lord's Prayer, this again, it's in Greek, as you see in front of you, and this is, as she describes it, a literal translation from the Greek, from Shirley Sullivan.

Let's read the Lord's Prayer. Father of us, the one in the heavens, let your name be held holy, let your kingdom come, let your will be done, as in heaven, also on earth.

The bread of us. Maybe she's a bit strange. The bread of us, the coming, give to us today, and let go our things owing.

As we also let go our, our ones we owe. And do not carry us into testing, but deliver us from evil. Or as she points out here, it could be translated, deliver us from the evil one. Either one includes the other, of course. There's the Lord's Prayer. I find that interesting to read it that way.

[2 : 32] I hope it's not merely novel. I think, and once or twice we'll see as we unpack it, I think that this other reading sometimes is an avenue into a further deepening of our understanding of what the Lord teaches here.

It's like and yet unlike. I'm sure you notice that. Like and yet unlike. Seeing it again, if you will, for the first time. Of course, not quite. Again, we're so familiar with the Lord's Prayer.

But it is sometimes good to hear something familiar. I'm sure you'll agree. As if. For the first time. A kind of, oh, yeah, that's what it says. There it is.

I'm so used to those words. But there's a rendering of them. Again, from a classicist who's as fluent in Greek as they come. Other languages. And there's how she translated it literally.

A few weeks back. Still by way of introduction. During a communion service, James Wagner, who is with us. My left at the rear.

[3 : 36] James Wagner was reading, as our clergy do for us, the comfortable words. Or the strengthening words.

As we approach. Scripture has been read. Scripture has been expounded. The order of the liturgy then wisely takes us towards the holy table.

Where we meet the Lord in bread and wine. And so as we approach, we hear why we are, in a sense, permissioned to come. Encouraged to come to the Lord's Prayer.

And James read these words. He read all of them, of course. And I heard familiar words as if for the first time myself.

Or at least with an intensity of attention. I love that little phrase from Marilynne Robinson. You know them. I love, the woman's a master of the language.

[4 : 33] Why not remember her language? I heard again the comfortable words. One comfortable word with an intensity of attention. And you know them, of course. I heard them again this morning. They're from 1 John. We have an advocate with the Father. Are the words I heard again. As if for the first time. It's just about a month ago now, James. I just remember. You read them. We have those liturgy moments. I hope frequently. Some one thing just says, Wow. I've heard that a thousand times. And today, it's with me in a new way. An intensity of attention occurs. One trust by God's grace. We have an advocate. The connection with the Lord's Prayer dawned on me. It's obvious, isn't it? Our advocate with the Father. He says to us today.

[5 : 33] He says to his disciples. He said to them long ago. He says to his church. When you pray, say, Our Father.

The advocate with the Father says, When you pray, say, Our Father. He permissions us. He invites us. He commands us. To say, Our Father. There it is. It is sometimes, as you know, called the Our Father.

This prayer. So today, again, the Lord's Prayer. Just want to look at it again with you. Perhaps on occasion, as if for the first time. And since we're looking at prayer, we must begin, of course, as we always do at Learners Exchange, the introduction being over.

Let's begin with prayer. Our God, we pray that you would always keep us steadfast in prayer. May you keep us watchful in it always.

[6 : 44] And as we remain steadfast in prayer, by your grace, as we remain watchful in it, may we always abound in thanksgiving. Teach us, Lord, today, teach us again, more of what it means to say, Our Father.

Amen. 57 words in this prayer, so there's going to be, I hope, blessed repetition. I'll say the words again.

Our Father, says the Lord. When you pray, say, Our Father. Or, as we heard from Ms. Sullivan, Our Father, or the Father of us.

Goes without saying, I speak as one who believes, and I know I speak to most here who believe, I trust all, the prayer is profound. Our Father.

Father. The rest of the prayer unfolds what the word Father means.

[7 : 56] The rest of the prayer will unfold who we are, our, the Father of us.

This prayer defines Father, and it defines us, our Father. This is the framework of the prayer. We've already heard, in a sense, the whole prayer. This is the controlling framework for everything that follows. Our Father.

Father. Our Father. Our Father. Our Father in Heaven. Our Father in Heaven.

The One in the Heavens. Nearby, right down the way, from these opening words, we hear, Thy will be done on Earth as in Heaven.

[9 : 00] Your will be done on Earth as in Heaven. Which may mean that in Heaven, I suspect it does, you get this from commentators, commentators, and I think Shirley Sullivan says this herself, which may mean that in Heaven, our Father in Heaven, means where your rule is complete.

Father, where your rule is complete, I address you. Father in Heaven, where your rule is complete. Does it mean also, I think this is the natural kind of response to it as we pray it and think it, does it mean also where our Father is, in a sense?

Where is the Father? And we say, He's in Heaven. Well, we can obviously ask, where is Heaven? And I think the best answer, if I'm in the tradition, and as the saints have prayed this, as theologians and thoughtful people in the history of the Church have thought about this, and it's kind of obvious, Heaven is nearby.

Our Father in Heaven. Heaven is nearby. Or perhaps it's better to put it this way, Heaven may be near us in its own sovereign freedom.

It's not just there for our easy access. In His sovereign freedom, God makes Himself available to us in Heaven. Our Father in Heaven.

[10 : 33] Jesus went up a mountain with Peter, James, and John. And there He was transfigured. Famously, there Moses and Elijah appeared with Him, to be with Him.

Heaven is close. or maybe we should say, Heaven is within prayer distance. Whenever you pray, Heaven is present in sovereign freedom.

Our Father in Heaven. Our Advocate says, pray this. Our Father in Heaven. Nearby. In sovereign freedom. Very close to us now is the Father.

Father in Heaven. One thing about this prayer is it keeps you moving right along. Must be a reason why Jesus taught it this way. Try to ponder that as we go through it.

Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. This is the first part of the prayer that I find really sort of this will engage.

[11 : 40] I find it does anyway. Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Or let Your name be held holy. As we see it in our literal translation.

The good thing about that literal translation there is it obviously brings out the sense and it just feels right. As the scholars call, this is the divine passive. Let Your name be held holy.

We won't establish God's holy name. We ask for God to do it. And He will do it. God, make Your name holy in the world as it is in Heaven.

Hallowed be Your name. You could go on forever about this moment in the Lord's Prayer. God is infinite in wonder. Hallowed. Our God, our Father God is infinite in grandeur.

He is infinite in wonder. He literally surpasses all thought. God is beyond our thought.

[12 : 51] God, our Father, is properly understood. God, God, our Father, is literally incomprehensible. God, our Father, is literally incomprehensible.

To know this, it seems to me, and to confess this, honors our God. Orthodox tradition is higher on this truth than we in Protestantism are.

in books about Orthodox, in books of Orthodox theology, they always start, they go, second chapter is usually about the Trinity.

The first chapter will be about God's incomprehensibility. And that is a beautiful truth to hold on to, to see. It honors God.

Alas, the late John Webster, I always find it so memorable the way he put this nicely in another key, but it's the same point. He writes, God calls reason into his presence.

[13 : 55] Reason does not call God into its presence. We're proud in our culture of our reason. We've come of age.

We're the knowers. Reason's a gift from God. He calls, he's its sovereign. He calls reason into his presence.

The incomprehensible God, God. The world, ourselves, our reason, our awareness of the world, all is sheer gift. We are here today aware of the, that we're in a world because God has given this to us.

How do we reason about the one who has given the world to us, given ourselves to ourselves, given our, given us reason? the Holy One of Israel authors all things and he is holy as Scripture witnesses again and again.

I like the way Ian Proven puts this simple point. Our God is dangerous to approach, but he provides a way of approach.

[15 : 12] We have an advocate. He has provided a way of approach. For some, a footnote here is important, I think.

God is unknowable is again a profound truth, but it is misused by some.

And for that reason it may be that in some orthodox circles we've downplayed this truth. To say that God is beyond all thought, after all, is to make a statement about God.

God possesses the property of being unknowable. I first learned that truth from Alvin Plantegell, great Christian philosopher. It's an important point to see because, you know, some thinkers, and usually they are hostile to Christian orthodoxy, really secretly want to say that God is a prisoner of his transcendence.

A completely different truth. It sounds like the first one, but it's completely different. And they have an agenda for saying that.

[16 : 23] They want to say that you can never really say anything true about God because he's unknowable. That's not true, Christians believe.

Our God may speak. He's not a prisoner of his transcendence. Yes, he's incomprehensible, but he may make himself knowable. God may speak. He speaks in creation.

He spoke to Abraham. He spoke to Moses. In Judah, God is known. His name is great in Israel, says Israel. And she knows, Israel knows, that is a wondrous, amazing statement to make.

It's because God has revealed himself to Israel. That's an amazing assertion. He may even, again, provide an advocate to teach us to say things like, Our Father, the incomprehensible God, has made himself known.

And we may address the incomprehensible one as our Father. He's not a prisoner of his transcendence. He can make himself known. hallowed, hallowed, hallowed, be your name.

[17 : 42] Just to labor a point, I'm going to labor it. You can run into people, I have on any number of occasions, I'm sure you have, it goes something like this.

You religious people, you're always worshiping God. What's wrong with God? He's sort of insecure. He needs affirmation all the time.

He's sort of neurotic. Unless you praise me, I'm going to get angry. Unless you build me up, I'm going to be put off with you people that I created. No, no, no, no.

Why does God ordain that he should be hallowed? Why does God ordain that he should be praised, adored, magnified? Well, it's just to bore you.

This may be the least thing you want to hear today. It's important to some. I find it endlessly interesting. One classical answer, and I think it's the central classical answer from the theological tradition goes like this.

[18 : 45] God is, we won't disagree with any of this, I'm sure, God is maximally, I don't know what a word that is. I like that word. God is maximally great.

A bit of philosophical theology just to get us going this morning. God is maximally great. The maximally great should be perfectly praised.

That's logical. Therefore, to ordain praise or hallowing is part of God's perfect perfection, if you will. To not ordain his hallowing would be a moral imperfection in God.

God is infinite in his beauty and he wants, he demands that his infinite beauty be praised. What do you do when you see something beautiful? You just want to praise it.

Music, piece of art, a human being, the sky this morning in Vancouver? You see beauty, you want to praise it. What is called for in the presence of infinite beauty?

[19 : 59] Infinite praise. Hallowed be your name. It's perfectly reasonable, if you will, for God to call upon us to worship him.

If there is anything higher than God, God would command that we worship it. But there is nothing higher than the maximally great one. So he calls us to worship him.

For the record, historians of dogma will tell you that this kind of teaching has been unfolded in the history of the church by people like Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Quinas, Jonathan Edwards.

That's good theological company. The heart, the tradition, richly witnesses that there's a reason why God calls us to worship, to hallow him.

It isn't because God likes being praised, period. It's because it's reasonable for the great, the maximally great one to be worshipped.

[21 : 06] Oh, beauty so ancient and so new, Augustine calls God. God. And sometimes it's helpful, I think, for us to say those kinds of words ourselves.

God we hallow is infinite beauty, infinite goodness, infinite wisdom, and we should worship him. It is a good thing to worship the infinite beauty.

God calls us to worship him. There it is. one in the heavens. We are called to worship him.

Another footnote, if our Father is to be hallowed, if we pray, let your name be held holy, this I find so wonderful and freeing and beautiful.

Nothing else is to be so praised. Nothing else is to be so confessed, if you will. Other things, other powers in the world will make claims upon us.

[22 : 08] They sometimes even ask for our absolute submission. Roman Empire asked for the absolute submission of the Christians and they said, no deal.

And they died. They died because they wouldn't hallow Caesar's name. They'd obey Caesar, they'd pay taxes, but they wouldn't worship him.

Only God is to be worshipped, our Father in heaven. That's an amazing power, that's an amazing truth. God mediates his rule through many lesser appointed forms of rule, but they are subject to his rule always.

We obey for conscience sake, the apostles will tell us, the governing authorities. All authority is given by God, Paul said to the Romans.

Yes, there are authorities that we must obey, but we don't hallow them. We obey for conscience sake. All authority is given by God.

[23 : 13] But if we demand worship, we decline. This, to say Father, our Father in heaven has so many implications.

Karl Barth said to call God Father is the Christian's primal obedience. When we say Father to our God, that's our first obedience.

That's our primal obedience. Our very identity, this, Shirley Sullivan does talk about this, our identity rests on our relationship with this God who is called by Jesus and who calls us to call him our Father.

That's our very identity. Who are we? We are ones who know the creator God who gave us the gift of existence. We call him our Father.

He is our identity. There's amazing stuff, it seems to me. And if any of that, we move on with this prayer, if any of that needs elaboration or some kind of validation, it is sort of, I think, quite clearly spoken to us now in the next words of the prayer.

[24 : 33] Thy kingdom come, we now pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. What comes next, Lord? The great catechist is Jesus.

What comes next? Well, he says now, call for his reign. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. How familiar these words are with us, aren't they?

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amazing. We were reminded this morning from the pulpit in our very good homily.

Last night in London, there was another terror attack. how inadequate is human rule on earth? What a disaster is human history.

God appoints orders to sort of hold it together. And they do sort of hold it together. The Roman Empire held it together. The government of Canada sort of holds it together.

[25 : 41] The EU is trying to hold it together. The UN is sort of holding it together. But they're not, have you noticed, they're not doing a great, great job. So we say, and Jesus knows this, call for the rule of the Father to arrive.

This is a revolutionary prayer. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Oliver O'Donovan's lovely phrase, here we pray that the world might become the scene of God's self-disclosure.

Do you want history, do you want your neighborhood, Canada, the world, to become the scene of nothing else than God's self-disclosure?

We should, says Jesus, and he says, ask for it all the time. Thy kingdom come, your rule, your rule, Lord, let it arrive here.

You are in heaven where your rule is complete. Please make your rule complete now here, on this earth. That's me knocking. Sorry, I saw someone in the bed.

[26 : 54] Just trying to distract you. That's, this prayer, it's concrete for me right now application. I hope, I don't know if this, I'm sure it's good for all of us.

this prayer therefore commits the future to our God. This prayer commits the future to our Father. Thy kingdom come. It is good to commit the future to God.

The Lord teaches that here. We should do it all the time. If we don't, I confess, I have fallen into this trap all of my many years. I won't mention how many there's been.

if we don't commit the future to God, we will consider ourselves, my own little phrase here, I'm very proud of it, little lords of our own future.

You ever tried it? I've tried it many times in my life, and it never works. You sort of, you know, I sort of stumble along, hey, that's pretty good, I don't know, this path is opening up, you know, I'm somebody, you know.

[28 : 02] It never works. Commit the future to God. Commit the future of the world to God. Commit your own future to God. Thy will be done.

My reading group recently read a wonderful little book by Tim Keller about prayer, which he mentions this, I had never thought of this before, I think he's right, it might be easily misunderstood, but he says, thy will be done is the only petition which we see Jesus praying in his own ministry. In Gethsemane, he refers to, in Gethsemane, our Lord prayed to his father, thy will be done, not my will, your will be done.

Our Lord in Gethsemane committed his imminent future to God his father. Thy will be done, not mine. And I think that's very instructive to see that truth, especially in the Gethsemane context. Thy will be done, perhaps, is the hardest prayer we ever pray. Thy will be done. That's the kind of prayer that we, it's true of the whole prayer here, but surely this moment of the Lord's prayer is the prayer which we grow into praying all along life's way.

[29 : 39] Thy will be done. There may be Christian people this morning, this afternoon, London time, who had people who died yesterday in the terrorist attack.

Are they on their knees now saying, Lord, thy will be done? That is a hard prayer to pray, but the attack happened, the loved one is dead, the loved one is lost, or the job has been lost, or your health breaks down, or the world turns against you, thy will be done.

That's the hardest prayer of them all. I think that's one of. Perhaps it's the hardest prayer we ever learn to pray. But we commit the future to our father God. Jesus says, do it.

He knows this father. His future for all of us is better than our future for us. Surely that's true. There it is.

Our father, our father in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Here it is. Commit the future to God.

[30 : 54] Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher, he speaks of, it's one of his famous little phrases, he put this metaphor into circulation for generations of thinkers and it still should be in circulation amongst us.

He speaks of the eclipse of God. One of his books is called the eclipse of God. We know this is true, although our culture increasingly doesn't know it's true.

God is not dead. God. We have not killed him as the philosopher Nietzsche thought. A lot of people think Nietzsche is right. History has just got rid of that idea.

We killed him. We don't believe. He has not been domesticated as other philosophers would tell us in the great encyclopedias of enlightenment learning.

God's been safely put in a certain religion category and we sort of get the God talk. We figure that out. He's sort of pinned on our knowledge board.

[31 : 59] No, but he is, we may reasonably say, that he is eclipsed, our God, in our time. God is very eclipsed, hidden by something in between him and us.

His rule is not evident. We can agree with the atheist to that extent. Where is this God of yours? He's not evident. We do not see his name hallowed in our world.

We do not see his kingly rule established. So we should pray the Lord teaches us. Thy kingdom come. Lord, make it evident that you are the creator God, that you rule history.

Make it evident that you are God our Father. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. There it is.

surrounded as we are by I love T.S. Eliot's words. You meet them every day. I bet you'll meet them today in Vancouver. Decent, godless people.

[33 : 01] They're everywhere in our civilization. They've learned a lot of the Christian tradition.

They've learned a lot about justice and decency. A lot of nice people. We're surrounded by them in our civilization.

They're decent, godless people for sure. So as we pray this petition, we should maybe pray it with more fervency.

Perhaps this is a more marginal Christian theological thought, but I embrace it more and more.

Perhaps as we pray this prayer today, we pray it as a priestly people, catching up the world and what it should be saying.

the world wants justice at its best, wants the rule of some kind of decency, but doesn't know how to get there. But we pray, thy will be done.

On their behalf, let us pray it, if you will. Calvin says quite wonderfully, when we say our father, we include all of humanity.

[34 : 11] If there's an exclusion to be done, that's God's word, not ours. we pray on behalf of all of humanity when we say our father. We're not angry at the unbelieving world.

It doesn't do any good to be angry at the unbelieving world. We don't know what God's purposes are for them, but we'll pray on their behalf, father, your kingdom come. People in London this morning are thinking if only God's rule would come.

There it is. This prayer says so much. With angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we have hallowed the father's name. I think when we say this prayer to begin with, we enter into heaven and join with the angelic hosts.

We're in Revelation 5, the lamb slain and the 24 thrones and the myriad of angels, our father in heaven. We join in the real world and worship God.

There it is, surrounded by angels and archangels. We call upon the father's name, asking that it be made hallowed everywhere. And we give the future to our God who rules the future.

[35 : 21] That's a blessed thought. And now we arrive and we can do it swiftly. We arrive precisely, the prayer teaches us this, at this day. This prayer really is a practical prayer.

The Lord loves his disciples. He wants them to get on in the world as they should and he's teaching them the real stuff here. Worship the father.

Call for his reign. Okay, Lord, what about today? What about, okay, we'll do that today, but come on, right now, my real life. We arrive at this day.

Give us this day our daily bread. And here, Marilyn, I'm obsessed with that woman. Shirley Sullivan, Shirley Sullivan, another learned lady.

She may have perplexed us here, if she perplexes me. The bread of us, Shirley, the bread of us, the coming, give to us today. Well, thanks. Thanks, Shirley, that's helpful.

[36 : 24] The strangeness of that turns, just a little footnote in passing here. The strangeness of that turns apparently on the rarity of a certain Greek adjective, which I know most of you here are aware of, but I would just imagine.

There are some Greek adjectives which are very rare, apparently. The bread for this coming day, it seems to mean. The bread for this coming day. Like Israel in the desert, we receive bread daily.

The Lord is very Jewish. You can go through this prayer again and emphasize the Israel centered, Old Testament centricity of everything he says here. Like Israel in the desert, we receive bread daily. We live always again by gift. I find as I get older, that truth means more and more to me. My life has just been a gift. I didn't create myself.

I won't decide the day I die. It unfolds as gift. My awareness of the world is gift. Thanks be to God. It's so beautiful to be a human.

[37 : 30] It's a profound thing to be a human being. Soren Kierkegaard says it's a profound thing to be a human being. We forget that. Take ourselves for granted.

We are God's image in the world. It's wonderful to be a human being. No matter how old you are and how difficult life is, the gift is beautiful. It's so lovely.

We live always by gift. Luther taught, I learned this again from Mr. Keller. I wasn't aware of this. I've read quite a bit about the Lord's Prayer. He wrote about it when I was at Regent College.

Lo and behold, just after the flood, I think it was. Luther taught that the church prays this, give us this day our daily bread. Amongst other things, Luther said the reason the church prays this prayer, it's a warning to government power.

This warns governments. So thought Luther. God expects governments to provide all with the basic necessities of life.

[38 : 36] Luther thought that for sure. Give us this day our daily bread. Give every one of your creatures the food they need to live. You created us as needy ones, Lord, give us what we need.

God causes the sun and the rain to fall on the evil and the good. God expects governments to provide food, clothing, shelter for every human being.

Luther thought it for sure. And when you pray this, you're asking for God's judgment on any structure of political and social power that denies that. I think this prayer should be read expansively.

My favorite gloss on this particular moment in the Lord's prayer. Surely, I just go right to it all the time. When I pray this prayer every day now, I go often to write to the benediction in Hebrews. May the God of peace equip me today, Lord, with all I need for doing your will. May the God of peace equip you with everything you need for doing his will.

[39 : 41] That's what it says at the end of the letter to the Hebrews. Yes, Lord, let's do some business. I need bread. I need things to do your will in the world.

Give them to me. The Lord permissions me to pray this. Give me daily bread. Give me what I need to serve you in the world today. Give us daily bread.

The Lord, the advocate with the Father, permissions us to pray like this. Again, expand on this.

Think how it relates to your own life. Maybe you can pray this prayer in the presence of your banker. I don't know. See what happens. moving on. That's not one of the great comments on the Lord's Prayer in the Christian tradition.

So let's edit that. It is a simple prayer and it does move on, doesn't it? Forgive us our sins. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have sinned, who have trespassed against us.

[40 : 47] Apparently the Lord, taking him at face blush here, says the minute your daily needs are met, know this, your next big need is the forgiveness thing. You may not think that when you pray this on a daily basis, but it's a big need in your life.

You better get this sin and forgiveness thing straight, or you'll have nothing straight. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Here I think the literal really helps. Thank you, Shirley, for this. Let go our things owing, is the literal rendering of this apparently, as we also let go our ones we owe.

Got that? Pretty clear, eh? Let go. I like that rendering. Let go. Forgiveness. Learn this especially from the ethethist Oliver O'Donovan, a great Christian thinker.

His ministry glanced off of St. John's many, many years ago. He preached at the other place. Good friend of Harry Robinson's. Forgiveness is the gift of freedom, says Oliver O'Donovan.

[42 : 06] Essentially what forgiveness is, it's the gift of freedom. Our Father gives us this gift, and we must likewise give this gift to others.

forgive as I forgive, Lord. We should remember this, Shirley Sullivan, I think, and others emphasize this, love, love was at the very center of Israel's life.

Jesus is a Jewish rabbi teaching Jews, disciples, love is the very center of Israel's existence. love, love, love, love the Lord your God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.

The whole meaning of life Israel taught herself and anyone who would listen, God fears. Love God and love your neighbor. God's life.

That's the whole law and the prophets summed up that way. So a daily recognition, Oliver O'Donovan talks like this, a daily recognition that this is not accomplished calls for daily repentance.

[43 : 30] that's the heart of this teaching. I'm called to love God with my whole being and I'm called to love my neighbor as myself and every day I never do it.

I never complete this task. Who would dare to say, today I did it. No. So daily, always, seek repentance, seek a life of repentance and the reception of the gift of freedom, which is forgiveness. This is a call for freedom. This is worth pondering, slowing down a bit. We are headed towards the end here, I promise. With this petition, we do feel somewhat perplexed.

To put it bluntly, we do not understand forgiveness. We just don't. The more it's thought about, we don't understand it. How does it speak to the issue of justice?

When some great evil is done, how do you talk about forgiveness before justice is done? Does forgiveness just throw justice out the window?

[44 : 43] Surely not. We don't understand forgiveness. What about the deeply wronged ones in the world? Are they just to find out that, oh, they were forgiven, the people who destroyed your lives, people who took your children away from you, destroyed families, destroyed countries, attempted to destroy race of people in the 20th century?

The 20th century is filled with people trying to wipe out millions of people, often successfully. Just forgive? Just forgive? How does this work? What is forgiveness? It is perplexing.

We don't understand forgiveness. I think we can stay here on this point. We're just going a bit slow here. I take it from the Gospels that the disciples felt very perplexed about our Lord's apparent lavish mercy.

How often shall I forgive my neighbor? Jesus, says Peter. Maybe he was just getting, wow, you're crazy. You're going overboard with this mercy talk.

How often shall I forgive? Seven times? No, Jesus, says try 70 times seven, Peter. Almost a kind of dangerous liberality is here.

[46 : 00] God gives this gift of freedom apparently and he calls upon us to do that. But here, alas, I think, or good news here, not alas, but here I think we should recall that the one who taught this prayer is our advocate with the Father, which speaks to how he brings about the mystery of forgiveness.

Matthew and Luke remember this prayer after all, we should recall, because they're remembering the resurrected one. This prayer doesn't stand on its own. The church remembers that it was Jesus, the resurrected one, who taught this prayer.

Again, I'll call upon your patience here, but I just can't resist this again from the already mentioned, Oliver O'Donovan. He was a professor of pastor on moral theology at Christ Church in Oxford. Learned man. Forgiveness, he writes, I find this very moving. Forgiveness, he begins his little meditation on forgiveness by saying this blunt statement, writing it, forgiveness is for the unjust. We ask, we ask for discontinuity. We ask for discontinuity. We ask for the inauguration of a new justice.

[47 : 34] Again, forgive me for carrying out the lengthier quote, but I think this is gold. To desire pardon forgiveness is not to desire that God should wink or bend, you know, wink away our sin, bend the rules for us or for his creation.

No. It is to desire that he should show himself in his majesty as the one who raises lost mankind from the dead.

That's all. That's what forgiveness ultimately is going to be about. So the sinner has to be put to death and raised up into a new life, into a new justice, if you will, a new justification.

I find that goes to the heart of what forgiveness is about for us in our attempts to understand it. So I would say again that forgiveness is a mystery, but I've come to realize that's not enough.

It's better to say forgiveness is an evangelical mystery. It's a good news mystery. I don't understand it, Lord, but you've forgiven me. You know, that is good news.

[48 : 53] I don't understand how the injustice that I've done, the evil that I've done, you have forgiven. I don't understand how you can do that, but you have.

It is a gospel mystery. Forgiveness. Forgiveness, again, gives freedom from the past. Isn't that a wonderful thing to realize?

We're burdened with the injustices that we've done, with the sins we've done. We're burdened that our sins have gone out and affected other lives, and we can't take those actions back. And perhaps they go on hurting other people.

But God says, that burden of your past, I'll deal with. In a certain sense, forgiveness gives us a new past. The past is that which has been forgiven. And we go on living, creating a new past every day, and it's forgiven.

Forgive us this day. Lord, go on forgiving me, and let me go on forgiving others. I'll give them freedom from the burden of what they owe me, as you've given me freedom from the burden of what I owe you.

[50 : 05] I'll enter into this mystery of new justice, which you give me in my advocate, Jesus. The prayer must move along here, enough time for good conversation.

The prayer ends on, I would think as a bit of a strange note, it's strong too. The prayer ends on a kind of strange note, or so it seems at first reading. Lead us not into temptation, Father God, but deliver us from evil.

I would think this prayer is really realistic. I've got a day ahead of me, Lord, I pray this in the morning, I need food, I need all that I need to serve you, I need to live in forgiving love, given and received.

Lord, I am in a bad world, where things that are evil happen all the time. Please, my Father God, protect me.

what a pragmatic, down-to-earth prayer. Lord, forgive me, protect me from evil. I think here that maybe the first thing to realize is that it's a prayer which it's always a kind of urgency in this prayer, isn't there?

[51 : 19] This is a real prayer for real people in a world as in the world as it really is. The day calls, life must be lived.

The Lord knows his disciples are in this real world. I need again daily bread, I need forgiveness, I need protection, Lord, from evil.

The mystery of iniquity, I see here, I suddenly realized this as I was thinking this prayer again the other day. This prayer just presupposes that the mystery of iniquity is in the world.

heaven would have us live intelligently in this kind of world. So the Lord says, pray this, Father, protect me.

Father, protect your people. Lord, protect us from evil. All that this petition, as we again move towards the end this morning, all that this petition means is open to our deliberations.

[52 : 27] I don't pretend that I've got this one straightened out in my thinking. The best help may be found, I think, in Psalm 95. Today, the Psalm says, today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your

hearts as in the provocation and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

And then these amazing words, you know them. When your fathers tempted me, proved me and saw my works. This prayer, in a sense, it seems, prays something like this, keep us, Father God, from such an alienation from you that I would actually live the kind of life that would tempt you to maybe set me apart from your protection and I would be led into something that's bad.

Lord, protect me from that whole dynamic. Protect me from becoming the kind of person who tempts you. Lord, protect me from evil.

It's a good prayer. I don't understand that. I think often the Lord would say, I know you don't understand it. Pray it. You'll grow into an understanding.

We just pray it, he says. I think there's an urgency here. Just pray it. All the time, my people, my church, pray this prayer. There's evil, as God said to Job, there are things out there, Job, that you can't handle, but I can.

[54 : 02] And I think this prayer is a kind of repetition of that too. Father, there's evil out there that I don't understand. It gets inside me, it twists me, it deceives me. You deal with it.

Protect me from evil. To close. As we get about, we can have, we can go to 10, 15, Alexander. Good, we'll have time for conversation.

When you pray, say, our Father. When you pray, the Lord says, I want to end where we begin.

When you pray, say, our Father. Again, the prayer is shaped by this mystery, our Father.

And within the biblical drama, I think you can sort of see its strangeness, our Father. fire, the consuming fire, the one Moses met in the wilderness.

Remember what God said to Moses in the book, who are you? And Moses heard, I am who I am. Didn't hear, I'm your father. Not time for that yet.

[55 : 08] I am who I am. The one who was present in the burning bush, bush. But the bush was not consumed. Do you like the way the orthodox tradition deals with this kind of thing?

This is a picture, they think, of the incarnation. Jesus was perfect deity in that body.

He was a man. He wasn't consumed by the perfect deity. It's also a picture, they think, of the perfect end of all things. When the whole creation is renewed and will bear perfectly the glory of God but will not be consumed by it.

It will just show it off. Moses met a picture of that in a bush that was on fire but it wasn't consumed. Moses met an impossibility that was going to come.

So, hear it again. I'm just going to end by saying the Lord's prayer again. Here's another way it can be easily remembered. You can think of the Lord's prayer as in two parts.

[56 : 20] Each part has four petitions. Two parts, each with four petitions. So, we'll hear the Lord's prayer again. A bit of a free reading of it.

Our Father, He is in the heavens. Our Father's name is to be held holy. Our Father's kingdom, we pray that it will come.

Our Father's will, we pray that it will be done. Part one is completed. Part two, Father, give us daily bread. Father, forgive us as we forgive.

Father, do not carry us into testing. Rather, Father, rescue us, rescue me from evil. the Lord's prayer.

What a prayer. What simplicity is here, someone has commented, at the same time, what complexity, if you will, entering into it, seeing all of its dynamic mystery.

[57 : 21] What simplicity and complexity? Surely, our advocate with the Father knows how to pray, and knows how to teach us how to pray. The Lord's prayer, in English about 57 words, is filled with the glory, of the gospel, the glory, of the deep meaning of the world in which we live.

Our advocate with the Father, who is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us, from there he sent the Spirit. In the Spirit, in his words, he teaches us how to address his Father.

Now we say thanks be to God for this prayer, and may have a good conversation about it. Thank you, Lord.

Amen. Thank you. Thank you. John?

Yeah, you know, I'm thinking about the part that let go, and the actual practice that let thing, people say, let it roll off your back, well it doesn't always, well you can do the prayer walks, the past and you're rotating your diet and going for long walks in prayer, because sometimes if people, if they're nervous, intense, repressed emotions, if there's trauma, alcoholism in the family, alcoholic mindset, you don't know, alcoholic things do not always roll off, maybe three, four, five mile walk to get

yourself used if things do start to roll off, and that complements the prayer, and the prayer complements that, and then the forgiveness, there's less of the stored up, less invigorated, and things do start to clear and clear and clear, and that's quite a long process too, but it's good, the letting go, forgiving, it's quite a, quite a long process.

[59 : 14] Yeah, that's why you pray it all the time, thank you John, that's, yes, we grow into the realization of such petitions, don't we? If you don't quickly ask questions, I know you are, I'm going to, at the end, before we leave, I think we should take a vote on this, just for the fun of it, nothing else.

We are, we are in the habit of calling it the Lord's Prayer, having some great name for it, other traditions called the Our Father. On some, after reading some of the commentaries, I mean, man, maybe it should be called the Our Father, because the Our Father is the framework of everything, before we leave, we'll take a quick vote.

Even if you don't have a strong opinion, you don't really care to take a vote. Should we call it the Our Father, or should we call it the Lord's Prayer? Well, that's too away. Anyway, there was a question here.

In the Orthodox Church, when they pray the Lord's Prayer, they always say, and deliver us from the evil of one.

Yeah, and that, to me, brings to mind Satan. Could you comment on that version versus deliver us from evil?

[60 : 34] Yeah, I think that's good. You see that our translator here does, or the evil one here, and praying it either way includes the other.

If we pray for protection from evil, well, of course, from the evil one. If we pray for protection from the evil one, it means protection from all evil. So I think, good point, I think either contains the other. So I think you should go with the one that you feel more strengthened by, I think. Maybe in times of great, horrible evil, if we were Christians this morning today in Syria, or perhaps in Egypt, we would pray the more potent one.

Protect us from the evil one. he's at work, he's loose amongst us. I think that's a good point about this prayer, is even if it feels sometimes, well, it doesn't all appeal to me, it doesn't all apply to me today because I feel pretty good.

My refrigerator is filled with food, and you know, my banker called the other day and I'm filthy rich. Well, so you don't have to pray for daily bread, right?

[61 : 49] Well, you do. You're a member of the mystery of Christ's body, and some of your sisters and brothers in Christ today are hungry. So we pray with the Holy Catholic Church about these things.

They do apply to your sisters and brothers somewhere in the world, maybe next door. As Luther would say, pray it as a witness to the world, that we better see to it that bread and shelter are with all.

It's a judgment on the world that there are hungry people in the world. It's shameful that in God's creation there are hungry people. And this prayer says that, Luther said.

It's shameful. There's these evil things. But thanks for that question. I guess her decision on this is to say that the Greek bears either from evil or from the evil one.

The classicists, they know Greek like the back of their hands. She writes essays about comparing the structure of the Lord's Prayer to things you find in Greek playwrights. She claims that you find in Greek, it almost has a bit of a sing-song feel to it.

[63 : 12] The way it repeats certain words, it makes it easy to remember. The Greek speakers in the early church would have been very much aware of that. Please. I've been thinking about this, the great of us.

Yes. And as a child, when I asked for a good bread, I could give a picture a slice of bread. But I could I not argue that this is something much deeper.

Jesus told us he is the bread of life. And the coming, what if we added in correctness, the coming warrants, and then are we not praying that he would pour himself fully into our lives that day?

Yeah, sure. Yeah, you can do an evangelical reading of it very easily. Yeah, thank you for that. In the tradition of the church, they have a suspicious sort of guy but a profound thinker and his own origin, the church has always felt suspicious about, but he would totally platonize the prayer.

He would say, yeah, this is the soup, he would translate it as, we should gloss it as, give us this day that super abundant bread which is Jesus in heaven and the man in the world, he'd go all off in that direction, which is true and good it seems to me.

[64 : 28] The trouble with it is, it makes me forget that my neighbor next door doesn't have any food today and if I'm praying this prayer, maybe God is saying you better do something about that.

Real food in people's mouths is important to our God. He's not just spiritual. The body is important, it's supposed to be fed, closed, housed.

Our Lord fed the people in the wilderness because they were hungry. So, yeah, I want to go in, I want to gloss in, I want to abound in its meaning.

Thank you for that, yeah. Sure, the Lord is, we can turn it into an evangelical tract almost, but then it might lose something of its concreteness sometimes.

Is there anybody out there right now that I haven't forgiven? And if I could just say to them, you're forgiven, I would lift a burden off their lives because God's done that for me and he wants me to do that for others.

[65 : 32] John? You know when you're saying about your neighbor that's hungry, you know when Jesus says instead of giving a person someone, teach them something, the exchanging of ideas and taking the time to talk to somebody, like the portal model for instance, with the homeless they got, the homeless population, 70% of the market economy, exchanging of ideas or walking around investigating, checking out things, you never know what ideas you can come across, you have all these different ideas and then as a person you're less helpless, you're more in control, you're more able and that's better than going over to that nice generous person's house to give you a nice dinner but you're able to do that on your own because the ability is there and somehow it needs to get ignited and that's where you have good friends, good mentors, good communication and get, because the ability is there and some people can't figure things out for all and that's where you exchange ideas of being good mentors and good friends, good neighbors to each other.

I think that's profound. Eugene Peterson says somewhere that loving your neighbor means live with some imagination towards your neighbor. Think about you, what's my neighbor needing right now? What's the best next thing I could do for my neighbor? Get it concrete, use your imagination. You know, there are some elderly people in our city who are really in need of a friend just to say hello every day.

That might be the best obedience to this. And your neighbors are full of ideas too. Let them rub off on you to get some ideas from them too. Before our leader kicks us out, our father, hands up everybody, who wants to call the our father?

One or two. Who wants to call it the Lord's Prayer? Most want to stay well? That's the traditional name for it. So nothing turns on that for the Lord. Although you will be reported to the Archivist of it.

[67 : 39] Yes, yes, yes. What I want to say is, in the Icelandic tradition, it's father vor, and that's just the subjection.

Everyone knows that in English. What I'm saying is, English is a great language. let's keep it. We say, Lord's Prayer, and by and large, we're sweeping all authority away.

What's the matter with God being Lord and Master? Lord and I'm very pleased that everybody is going to stick to community praying and not twiddling and fiddling with taking our energy into eradicating something that has served English so well for so very, very long.

There you go. On that note, I wouldn't add anything to that. Well, on that note, I am going to ask you to join me in thanking Harvey for an amazingly helpful thing.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much.