

Our Father ...
Matthew 6:6-13

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November 11, 2012

Introduction: I hope you always know that I take great care in not only preaching, but even the selection of a text. Though it might seem like just a statement, I do strive intentionally for specific direction from God. I will tell you that I felt an exceptional urgency in this regards this week. As I prayed, I somehow just kept coming back to a passage we know well—the Lord’s prayer. Listen to it in its context, then the prayer itself, then we will hear it sung.

Text: ⁶ But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷ When you pray, don’t babble like the idolaters, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. ⁸ Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask Him.

⁹ “Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father, who art in Heaven

Hallowed be thy name.

¹⁰ thy kingdom come.

thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil.

[For thine is the kingdom and the power

and the glory forever. Amen.]

Introduction: My introduction to the Lord’s prayer was, perhaps like most of you, as a child. We memorized it and got a pencil or something for our memory work. In our Baptist tradition, we have not recited this prayer as often as other Christian traditions. My next phase of interaction with this prayer was as an athlete. Unfortunately, as a team, we said this prayer more as a cheer, I’m afraid, than as a prayer. Only in more recent years has this prayer had for me the kind of impact that Jesus intended. I went through it slowly a few years ago, studying the prayer phrase by phrase. I shared some of that during Wednesday evening prayer time and Bible Study.

Not only is it a wonderful model for prayer, the actual words of the prayer communicate some powerful truths about God—some truths that I feel compelled to share with you today. Let’s be honest about the elephant in the room. A lot of you are down this morning. You voted your deepest conviction, and you lost. More than losing an election, you feel as though you lost part of that which you feel a great amount of conviction. But, that’s not everything. Some of you are facing the Thanksgiving Season, and well, there’s just not a lot there for you to celebrate. The list is long—your health, someone else’s health, your job, your finances, an uncertain future. Yes, the list is long. But, God! Our Father!

My Father's Position anchors me to my deepest Convictions.

Our Father who is in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

This portion of the prayer points us to some of those deep convictions.

- **He is Personal.**
So many people have this view of God as an impersonal God. In my opinion, heretical descriptions like “The man upstairs” and similar phrases have done much, even if it is unintentional, to foster this idea of God. God is personal. Perhaps no other title than “Father” helps us to understand that God is personal.
- **His Place is in Heaven.**
God is on the throne of Heaven. He is sovereign, He is in control, and He has all authority and power in my life and in the world.
- **His name is to be Praised.**
“Hallowed be His name” the prayer continues. That’s my conviction in life. No matter what—His name is to be praised. We are approaching Thanksgiving season. Every Thanksgiving, I think of the words from Habakkuk 3.

Though the fig tree does not bud
and there is no fruit on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
¹⁸ yet I will triumph in Yahweh;
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!
¹⁹ Yahweh my Lord is my strength;
He makes my feet like those of a deer
and enables me to walk on mountain heights!

- **His kingdom is Progressing.**
The Bible tells us that His Kingdom is coming. The kingdom is progressing toward a historical climax. Again, God is in control.
- **His will is Perfect.**
Another conviction of my life is that God always does what is best. That’s what good fathers always do. If we strive for that as earthly fathers, how much more does God want to bring about His perfect will in our lives?

I ran across this poem that depicts the Heavenly Father’s love for us.

The Father’s Love Letter (Barry Adams)

My Child

***You may not know me, but I know everything about you
I know when you sit down and when you rise up
I am familiar with all your ways
Even the very hairs on your head are numbered
For you were made in my image
In me you live and move and have your being
For you are my offspring
I knew you even before you were conceived
I chose you when I planned creation
You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book
I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live
You are fearfully and wonderfully made
I knit you together in your mother's womb
And brought you forth on the day you were born
I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me
I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love
And it is my desire to lavish my love on you
Simply because you are my child and I am your father
I offer you more than your earthly father ever could
For I am the perfect father
Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand
For I am your provider and I meet all your needs
My plan for your future has always been filled with hope
Because I love you with an everlasting love
My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore
And I rejoice over you with singing
I will never stop doing good to you
For you are my treasured possession
I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul
And I want to show you great and marvelous things
If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me
Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart
For it is I who gave you those desires
I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine
For I am your greatest encourager
I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles
When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you
As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart
One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes
And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth
I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus
For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed
He is the exact representation of my being
He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you
And to tell you that I am not counting your sins
Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled***

*His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you
I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love
If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me
And nothing will ever separate you from my love again
Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen
I have always been Father, and will always be Father
My question is.....Will you be my child?
I am waiting for you*

*Love,
Your Dad.
Almighty God*

My Father's Providence assures me of my deepest Needs.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver from evil.

- **Physical Needs**—God meets our physical needs. I heard a story about a woman who believed God for everything. She prayed about everything. She prayed for her daily bread. She had a neighbor who was an unbeliever. He resented the fact that his neighbor, the woman, spoke of God in such personal ways. He resented the fact that she praised God for everything. Wanting to prove to his neighbor that her trust in God for her provision was in vain, he went out and bought the lady a sack full of groceries. He put them at the door, knocked on the door, and hid in the bushes. When the lady saw the groceries, as was her habit, she began to thank God for the blessing. The man jumped out of the bushes and said, “God didn’t provide those groceries, I did.” Immediately, the woman prayed again, “Thank you God for providing these groceries, and even using my neighbor to provide the groceries.”

We can count on God, our Heavenly Father, to provide our physical needs.

- **Spiritual Needs**

(1) Forgiveness

(2) Triumph over the enemy

We need both our physical and spiritual needs met and our Heavenly Father has come to do just that. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said this: “Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? **11** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:9-11)

We are at the gift giving season. Some people are what I call good gift-givers. Others are not. You see these folks in the mall. They are just staring at items. They don’t know what

size, what color, what brand, whatever to buy. Finally, they just buy something so as to have something. God is not like that at all. He knows what His children need and He gives.

My Father's Power answers my deepest Questions.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

We all have questions that we will never be able to answer. God, as my Father, helps me to put these questions into perspective.

- **God is Able.**
- **God is Eternal.**

Conclusion: Isaiah, the Prophet, prophesied that the Messiah would be to us an Everlasting Father. What did God want to give to us in giving Himself as our Everlasting Father? Isaiah wrote to a hurting people—a people uncertain about their future. They needed to be reminded that God was going to be to them as a Father and He was going to be forever.

This prayer, the Lord's prayer, is a reminder of that. As we pray it, let's not just pray it, but let's live like we believe it.