

## The Lord's Prayer Our Lord Never Prayed (Luke 11:1-4)

**Context:** An unnamed disciple asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. It was a common practice for disciples to be taught a specific form of prayer by their rabbi: John the Baptist had done this for his. There are several "prayer times" in the Gospel of Luke: at Jesus' baptism (Lk. 3:21-22), as His popularity grew (5:16), before He selected the twelve (6:12), before Peter declared Him the Christ (9:18), on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:28-29). Whenever anything of importance occurred in the Gospel of Luke, prayer surrounded it.

**Prayer:** a sincere, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for everything God has promised, according to His Word, for the glory of His Name, with submission in faith to the will of God.

The efficacy of prayer depends on the integrity of the one praying and the motive, wholehearted, and sustained earnestness as it conforms to God's revealed purposes and ways, acknowledging that God's will of command may not come about. However, His will of decree is always certain: God may will something that He wills not occur (will of command), yet in all things His will is always done (decree).

The "Lord's Prayer" is recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. Matthew's account is *italicized* below and contains fifty-seven words in Greek. Luke's account is thirty-eight.

*"Father (our Father in heaven), hallowed be Your Name. Your kingdom come (Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven). Give us each day (this day) our daily bread, and forgive us our sins (debts), for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us (our debtors). And lead us not into temptation (but deliver us from evil (the evil one))."*

*\*some manuscripts add, "For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen."*

### 1. The Vertical Posture and Priority of Prayer (v.1-2)

#### A. The Father's Name (v.2b): "Father,"

- The Old Testament never called God "Father" to individuals. It was always corporately on behalf of Israel. Nor was any Old Testament prayer directed to Yahweh as "Father."
- The Jews were so focused on the transcendence of God that they were careful never to repeat the tetragrammaton. They wouldn't say Yahweh (covenant name), so they said, "Jehovah."
- Addressing God as Father is a revolutionary development. No one spoke to God this way. Jesus is unveiling the mystery of the Trinity: one God exists in three Persons. He recorded prayers addressing God as Father more than sixty times in the Gospels.
- Calling God "Father" is only reserved for His children, who have been born again through the Holy Spirit: When we believe, we become children of God (Jn. 1:12). The Spirit is the spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:6) through whom we can know the Fatherhead of the Trinity as Father, not merely Creator, Sustainer, Provider, Sovereign, etc, etc.
- The Fatherhood of God signifies love, mercy, and delight: He delights in Himself.

#### B. The Father's Honor (v.2c): "Hallowed be Your Name."

- It means "to sanctify, set apart, or be made holy" (Ex. 3: 5, 14; Lev. 11:44; 21:1-9; 22:31-33; Ps. 99:1-3; 111:9; Isa. 5:16; 6:3; 29:23; Ezek. 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 38:23; 1 Pet. 3:15).
- God is the Father of those adopted into His family through Christ's work and the Holy Spirit's regenerative action. While there is filial belonging through Jesus, the Father is not among us "as peers." While He is separate and "other," He is always accessible in Christ.
- His name is His reputation:
  - God possesses all fullness in Himself and cannot essentially or intrinsically be diminished. He is worthy and just to demand reverence from His creation, not for His

benefit but theirs. God brings ascribed glory to His Name through His children as they bear Christ's image and reputation and, as a result, must reflect Him.

#### C. The Father's Kingdom (v.3c): "Your kingdom come."

- This is in the aorist active imperative, meaning "a past, present, and future coming" that is eschatological. It is a definitive coming of His kingdom (His rule and reign in the hearts of men, including the programmatic unveiling of the mission of the incarnate Son; Lk. 4:17-18), which will be consummated at His Second Coming.

### 2. The Horizontal Provision and Practice of Prayer (v.3-4)

#### A. The Father's Provision (v.3): "Give us each day our daily bread,"

- This Greek phrase only occurs in the Lord's Prayer and is not used in other Greek literature.
- It can be interpreted as "our bread for tomorrow, give us today" and includes two needs:
  - Physical: "Provide for me all that I need so Your kingdom can advance in my life."
  - Spiritual: all the graces from the Father, in the Son, through the Holy Spirit.
- The Father will provide for His children all they need, when they need it, by giving them what they need for tomorrow, today, while giving everything they need for today, today.

#### B. The Father's Pardon (v.4a): "Forgive us our sins, as we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us."

- The plural of us, and we, refers to the disciples He taught how to pray. Jesus never prayed this prayer. Jesus knew no sin (Col. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:16) and was without sin (Heb. 4:15).
- The connection seems to be a condition, but it is an assertion: we have been forgiven. As children who have been forgiven, we forgive.
  - There is an additional sense in which forgiveness implies that God's discipline can reflect and respond to our humility in confessing and forsaking sin.

Forgiveness is not to be confused with reconciliation (man to man):

- Forgiveness is unilateral and unconditional. Nothing is required from the offending party. All offenses are written in black ink (fact), not red ink (debt).
- Reconciliation, however, requires both parties to agree that the offense has been committed and consent to the course of action which may restore the fractured relationship (if possible).

Reconciliation is required in estrangement because intimacy and belonging have been compromised. In all reconciliation, there is forgiveness, yet in all forgiveness, there may not be reconciliation. Christians must work toward total reconciliation, if possible, to the glory of God.

Jesus grounds the disciples' request for divine forgiveness in their practices of extending forgiveness. The forgiveness we grant embodies the kingdom of God as He works His character in us. When we refuse to forgive, we dishonor His Name (v.1). We rob Him of glory as a conduit of forgiveness.

How can you be assured of your salvation if you haven't forgiven?

#### C. The Father's Protection (v.4b): "lead us not into temptation."

- Depending on its context, the Greek word can mean temptation (enticement to engage in sin) or trial, testing. In this context, it means "the temptation that, if yielded to, will lead to sin."
- James describes the movement from the test or trial to the temptation (James 1:2-5 → 13-15). A temptation entices one to sin (which God does not do; Jas. 1:12-15), whereas a biblical test or trial intends to reveal and strengthen faith (Jas. 1:12-15; 2 Pet. 2:9). It is the result of the behavior rather than the causes.
- When tempted by our sin, the flesh, and the devil, God always provides a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). While God does not tempt us, He does test us (Jas. 1:13).
- God's children often do not resist long enough to be victorious over the temptation (Jas. 4:7). As a result, their sanctification is stifled, reducing what would be spiritual strength to atrophy.