

Our Father Who Art in Heaven, Hallowed Be Your Name

Matthew 6:9-13

1. Story of the Lord's Prayer

When did you learn about the Lord's Prayer for the first time? For me, it was when I was an elementary school student that I learned the Lord's Prayer from my Sunday school teacher at my home church, Chuncheon Central Methodist church. My Sunday school teacher promised to buy us special bread if we could memorize the Lord's Prayer. The bread is called [Soboro bread](#), which is one of my favorite Korean breads. I am glad that there are two places in Ann Arbor where I can buy it. However, it was when I was in seminary that I learned about the meaning of the Lord's Prayer.

2. Why the Lord's Prayer?

Then why is the Lord's Prayer our new sermon series, especially now?

1) The Lord's Prayer is a summary of the entire Gospel. It brings us to the heart of Jesus' teaching and the source of the church's spirituality. Therefore, the Lord's Prayer should be a guideline for our lives and serve as a measure of our actions as God's Kingdom people.

2) We live in a broken world. The world needs light and salt, and the church is called to be that light and salt. However, we, God's special agents of grace, have been overwhelmed by what has been happening in the world. Pandemics, wars, and natural disasters all over the world. Divisions and hatred instead of tolerance and respect in our culture. Suicide is currently the second-leading cause of death among individuals aged 15-24. Many people are suffering from mental health issues like depression and anxiety, developmental challenges, and social isolation. Even though many of them have their own community on the internet, they feel very lonely and need a community where they can be embraced, understood, and cared for.

3) In the past few years, we have lost 25% of the churches through disaffiliations. The average Sunday worship attendance of the churches in our denomination is 38. What about the churches that left our denomination? Their Sunday worship attendance is the same, 38. We feel like we have been shaken to our foundations. Even though we are called the salt and light in the world, the light seems to get dimmer, and many seem to refuse the salt for their lives. Where should we start again to renew our status as a shadow, sign, instrument, and appetizer to God's earthly Kingdom?

Romano Guardini gave this advice some decades ago: “[And at a time when we feel so many things shaken to their foundations, we have every reason to grope our way back to the very core of the Christian realities wherein the undisturbed omnipotence of the Redemption reigns.](#)”¹⁰ (Romano Guardini, *The Lord’s Prayer*, trans. Isabel McHugh (New York: Pantheon, 1958), 8.

That is why, at this time, we must muse upon the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer.

3. The Lord’s Prayer As a Model Prayer for the Kingdom of God

The Lord’s Prayer is called a [Model Prayer](#) because it was given by Jesus Christ to his disciples as an example of how to pray. Therefore, all our prayers should resemble and follow the spirit and meaning of the Lord’s Prayer.

Matthew chapters 5 through 7 are called “[Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.](#)” The Lord’s Prayer is located at the center of the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 6. The theme of Jesus’ teaching in his Sermon on the Mount is “[the Kingdom of God](#)” or “[the Kingdom Ethics.](#)” That is why the Lord’s Prayer” is also called, “[The Kingdom Prayer.](#)” To live a life as God’s Kingdom agent, we are to pray this Kingdom Prayer and live out the prayer in the world.

4. Meaning of Today’s Scripture

1) Our Father

As we pray “Our Father,” we must first remember our relationship with God. Our relationship with God has been redeemed and renewed in Jesus Christ. We have a new status as the children of God. We are His sons and daughters through Jesus Christ. So, we are invited to boldly call God our Father. He is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of our lives. Also, He is our Father, our intimate Father.

Jesus prays at the Garden of Gethsemane, “[Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me, yet not what I want but what you want.](#)” (Mark 14:36 NRSV). Apostle Paul writes, “[Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'](#)” (Galatians 4:6 NIV). It reveals our intimate relationship with God as we were adopted as God’s children in the Spirit of Jesus who leads us to call out, “Abba, Father.” In our intimacy with God, we can reveal God’s power (God’s loving transforming power) to the world. Do you have this kind of intimacy, power, trust, and love when you pray the Lord’s Prayer?

Our Father is the ultimate source of our lives and the supreme problem solver. At the same time, we are His children. As His children, we will continually resemble our Father. So, our Father is our life’s ultimate destination. In our journey toward

our Father, we must resemble our Father. This is because our Father is right there with us in our lives as an intimate, loving, forgiving, and patient guide into Himself.

If we understand the grace we have received through Jesus as adopted children of God, we cannot tolerate our sins and impurities before Him. When we pray, “Our Father,” the grace in our hearts compels us to repent and seek God’s forgiveness. as we boldly call Him, our Father. In our intimacy with our Father, we can approach Him with contrite hearts, honestly and solemnly laying our burdens of sin before Him before continuing the Lord’s Prayer.

Jesus also commands us to pray “our Father, ”not “my Father.” Even in our personal prayers, we should remember that we are called as God’s children and family together. Our Kingdom prayer is not for our selfish and individual practice. We must always remember our call as the communion of believers and our obligations toward one another. That is why the church is called “One-Another Church.”

Let me quote Cyprian of Carthage, an early Christian bishop, writer, and martyr in the 3rd century. “Before all else, the doctor of peace and the master of unity did not want prayer to become solitary and private, such that anyone, when he prays, only prays for himself. For we do not say, “My father who are in the heavens,” nor, “Give me today my bread.” Nor does each one request that only his own debt be remitted, nor does he ask that he alone not be led into temptation and freed from evil. For us, prayer is public and communal. And when we pray, we pray not for one, but for all people, because we are a whole people together as one. The God of peace and the master of concord, who taught unity, thus desired that one person pray for all in the same way that he himself carried all in one.” (Cyprian of Carthage, *De oratione Dominica*. 8, PL 4, 523B–24A.)

2) Our Father Who Art in Heaven:

We Christians see our lives as a pilgrimage or journey to our true home in heaven. In other words, the destination of our journey together is our Father in Heaven. We are not of the world and can find no genuine fulfillment in it. Only God can bring about the kingdom. Our lives here are to demonstrate God’s Kingdom as we obey God’s loving reign in the world. Jesus commands us to pray the Lord’s Prayer and to live up to the Prayer so that we can be God’s instrument of His Kingdom.

3) Hallowed Be Your Name

God’s name is absolutely holy. “For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place and also with

those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isaiah 57:15 NRSV cf. Psalm 111:9 & Luke 1:49). The meaning of names in the Bible is about the person’s identity, destiny, and mission. The holiness of God is his identity, destiny, and mission. God’s love is an expression of His holiness. Wherever we find God’s holiness, we can experience God’s love. Wherever we experience God’s love, we can find God’s holiness. So, God’s love and holiness are his identity, destiny, and mission. As our Father’s children, we are called to grow more and more like Him and to fully and faithfully embrace our Father’s identity, destiny, and mission as our own. Our prayer is a promise and a determination to live out its words. So, when we pray, “Hallowed be Your name,” we are promising to live a life of holiness, resembling our holy Father.

5. Applications

Whenever I visit people in nursing homes, shut-ins, or who are homebound, I usually end my visit by praying the Lord’s Prayer with them. Even though some people haven’t attended church for years because of their physical situations, they never forget the Lord’s Prayer. Even those with dementia remember the Lord’s Prayer and can pray it with me.

Last week, I had a chance to visit one of our church members at a nursing home in Monroe. She had been an active member of our church and has cherished her loving memories with us. She is ninety-six years old. But she remembered the hymns “Blessed Assurance” and “Jesus Loves Me” and sang the songs for me. It was a delightful surprise. So, I asked her to pray the Lord’s Prayer with me, and she prayed the Lord’s Prayer with a clear and strong voice. It was a God-moment for me.

Please remember who you are as you pray, “Our Father.” You are a precious child of God. Our ultimate destination is our Father and His Kingdom. While living our lives on earth, we are to reveal God’s holiness as we pray, “Hallowed be Your Name,” which is one way to demonstrate God’s Kingdom here on earth.