

Week of April 7, 2024

“Teach Us to Pray: A Six Week Exploration of The Lord’s Prayer”

Week # 1 Participant Materials: Father, Hallowed Be Your Name – *Luke 11:1-4*

Pastor Douglas Scalise, Brewster Baptist Church

Connecting – Describe a skill or ability you have to the group. For example, are you proficient at knitting, carpentry, cooking, playing an instrument or sport, working on cars, etc.? Share what your skill is, and who taught it to you or how you learned it.

Background – For the next six weeks, we’re going to be learning from the words of Jesus that we call The Lord’s Prayer. Just as we’ve learned skills from people who were more adept or experienced than ourselves, the same principle is true when it comes to spiritual matters. The first disciples were inspired by Jesus’ close relationship with God, and they wanted Jesus to teach them to pray in a way that would enable them to experience God and life as he did. While there is likely one form of The Lord’s Prayer that is most familiar to us, there are many different translations of The Lord’s Prayer, and there is not one single, proper or correct version. Even in *Matthew 6* and *Luke 11* the two prayers are not exactly the same. Because we say and hear this prayer so frequently, it’s possible to recite it as a matter of routine and lose the depth of its meaning. Our hope is that spending time on The Lord’s Prayer will infuse our spiritual lives and times of prayer with renewed strength and meaning.

Discussion –

- 1. If you know The Lord’s Prayer, can you share when and where you learned it or who taught it to you? If you are not familiar with The Lord’s Prayer – that’s fine! That’s what this series is all about. :)**
- 2. If you pray The Lord’s Prayer, when do you usually pray it?**

3. Write out as much of The Lord's Prayer as you can below:

Read The Lord's Prayer in *Luke 11:1-4* (New Revised Standard Version)

“He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”² He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.³ Give us each day our daily bread.⁴ And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

4. Discuss what you notice about The Lord's Prayer in *Luke 11* taking note of any differences between the versions the group members wrote and what is in *Luke 11:1-4*.

This important prayer, given by Jesus and repeated in various forms for centuries, is an example of the form our prayer or communication with God should take. It is:

Brief – Jesus spoke about the futility of vain repetition in our praying. Jesus knew the wisdom of *Ecclesiastes 5:2*, “*Never be rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few.*”

Simple – It is less than 75 words in the most familiar English translation and even less in the original Greek. A child can learn it easily.

Comprehensive – It sums up Jesus' teaching in reflecting Jesus' attitude toward God and human life.

For our series we're going to highlight one piece of The Lord's Prayer at a time. The first petition of The Lord's Prayer is an invitation to praise the Living, Loving, Personal God who is worthy of our worship and adoration.

For Week One we're looking at three words or phrases:

Our, Father, Hallowed be your name

Our: In no version of The Lord's Prayer is the singular used; there is no "my" or "mine" it is all "our" and "us." **What does that teach us about our faith and about our praying?**

Father: The Bible uses many words and images to describe God, often conveying the greatness, holiness, the "otherness" of God, but in The Lord's Prayer, Jesus addresses God in the familiar word for "Father." Because we've always heard The Lord's Prayer this way, we miss how radical it was when Jesus said it. **It is hard to overstate the importance in all our prayer of our conception of the God to whom we're praying. What do you think is the significance of Jesus encouraging us to pray to God in this way?**

What does praying to God as Father mean to you?

Hallowed be your name: What does it mean to “hallow” God’s name? Read *Exodus 20:7* – “You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.”

What connection or relationship do you see between the Third Commandment and what Jesus says about hallowing God’s name?

Any final comments?

Closing Prayer by Henri Nouwen

Why, O Lord, is it so hard for me to keep my heart directed toward you?

Why do the many things I want to do, and the many people I know, keep crowding into my mind, even during the hours that I am totally free to be with you and you alone? Why does my mind wander off in so many directions, and why does my heart desire things that lead me astray?

Are you not enough for me?

Why do I keep doubting your love and care, your mercy and grace?

Why do I keep wondering, in the center of my being, whether you will give me all I need if I just keep my eyes on you?

Please accept my distractions, my fatigue, my irritations, and my faithless wanderings. You know me more deeply and fully than I know myself. You love me with a greater love than I can love myself. You even offer me more than I can desire. Look at me, see me in all my misery and inner confusions, and let me sense your presence in the midst of my turmoil.

All I can do is show myself to you. Yet I am afraid to do so.

I am afraid that you will reject me.

But I know – with the knowledge of faith – that you desire to give me your love.

The only thing you ask of me is not to hide from you, not to run away in despair, not to act as if you were a relentless despot.

Take my tired body, my confused mind, and my restless soul into your arms and give me rest, simple quiet rest. Do I ask too much too soon? I should not worry about that.

You will let me know.

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen