

Week of April 14, 2024

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

Week #2 Participant Materials: On Earth As It Is in Heaven

***Matthew 6:7-13* (key verse, *Matthew 6:10*)**

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Connecting: Share an experience about a trip or mission trip you have taken, experienced, or heard of, with the group. Invite others to share about their experiences, as well. For example, it might be a family trip, an annual destination, a church trip, or a work trip. Emphasize some of the lessons you learned or what you enjoyed about the journey.

(Try to keep this part between 5 and 15 minutes or less; it’s ok if it only takes a few minutes.)

Background [someone in the group can read this part]: Last week, we talked about praying to God as Father. How was that experience for you this week? Were you able to make time to “hallow” God’s name? As Jesus’ followers spent time with him, they began to have a sense of how living as part of God’s kingdom was different from being part of any earthly kingdom. They saw that Jesus spoke in ways they had never heard before, performed miracles before their eyes, and talked about themes of eternal life, coming down from heaven, and returning to the Father in Heaven. Pray about how you can be part of this kind of different living.

In this week’s portion of The Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” (*Matthew 6:10, KJV*), Jesus makes God’s will a priority for his followers. Throughout his earthly life, Jesus was guided by God’s will, and in the critical moments near the end of his earthly life, Jesus prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (*Luke 22:42*). From the beginning of his life to the end, Jesus’ life was part of God’s will.

Last week, we focused on *Luke 11:1-4*. This week, we are looking at *Matthew 6:7-13*. When you hear the Matthew Gospel reading, take a moment to reflect on the differences between these two versions of The Lord’s Prayer. The reminder that two of the earliest followers of Jesus differed in their account of how Jesus taught us to pray is a wonderful reminder that our prayers can be different from each other, too. Embrace the spirit of unity that Jesus shares as you study and pray The Lord’s Prayer this week.

Discussion:

1. Do you remember when we shared the embodied Lord's Prayer during worship last week (April 7)? What was an action that you remember, and what made it memorable?
2. This week, instead of debts, we used the word "trespasses." How does the use of the two different words help us think differently about what we are praying?
3. Write out a different version of The Lord's Prayer than you wrote last week.

Read The Lord's Prayer in *Matthew 6:7-13 (NIV)*.

⁷ *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

⁹ *"This, then, is how you should pray:*

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,*

¹⁰ *your kingdom come,
your will be done,*

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ *Give us today our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'*

4. How was Matther's version of The Lord's Prayer different for you in comparison with Luke's version, *Luke 11:1-4 (NRSV)*?
 - Matthew's version is longer and more familiar from liturgical usage.
 - Luke's version has a one-word address ("Father").
 - Matthew's version has three "You" petitions and four "We" petitions (or three, if the Sixth and Seventh Petitions are counted together as one).
 - Luke's version does not include the words "Your will be done" and "Deliver us from evil."

- Matthew's version is part of the Sermon on the Mount, while Luke's version is in response to a disciple's request to teach them to pray.

Jesus came to earth with an **embodied ministry** that took place in a region still hotly contested and that can still be visited today in the Holy Land.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1, NIV) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14, NIV)

He came from **heaven to earth** to make life on **earth reflect God's kingdom in heaven**. Pray for God's reign of peace to reign in the Middle East where Jesus lived and served during his earthly life.

5. The scriptures tell the story of God's interactions (who is in heaven) with people on earth. Reflecting on this Sunday's message, "On Earth As It Is in Heaven," which example stood out to you about life on earth as it is in heaven? Do you have another example you would like to share?
- The Garden of Eden (Pentateuch: *Genesis* 2)
 - God's Home Among the People of Israel: Tabernacle and Temple (History: *Exodus* 26, *1 Kings* 6)
 - A House of Prayer for All People (Prophets: *Isaiah* 56:7; *Jeremiah* 7:11)
 - The Life and Ministry of Our Lord Jesus (*Gospels*: Jesus' Nativity, Growing Years, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection)
 - The Birth of the Church (*Acts* 2)
 - The Promise of Heaven on Earth (Apocalyptic Literature: *Revelation* 21:4)

What picture does the scripture paint of life on earth possibly being as it is in heaven?

International Ministries (internationalministries.org), also known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, provides a great overview of three primary Ministry focus areas (called priorities) that seek to sustain life "on earth as it is in Heaven."

(Website: <https://internationalministries.org/ministry-priorities/>)

- Inviting People to Be Disciples of Jesus Christ
 - Proclaiming God's Reign of Justice, Peace and Abundant Life
 - Equipping the Body of Christ to Engage in God's Mission
6. Which of these can you do in your sphere of influence? How can you join in this kingdom work with others in our community? What is one thing you can do to make life on earth more like God's heavenly realm?
7. What did Jesus say about where the kingdom of God is, and what does that mean for our group? Our church? The world?

"the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21 (KJV)

Any final comments?

Closing Prayer, from *John 17:20-26 (NIV)*. (If possible, two people read verse 20, then two more people read verse 21, until you get through Jesus' prayer for unity in all who believe in him.)

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."