

# The Lord's Prayer (Part 1)

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Preacher: Tim Scoular

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Good morning, and we are reading this morning from Matthew chapter 6 verses 5 to 15, which is on page 970 of the church bibles.
- Amen. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.
- Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
- Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- [ 1 : 23 ]     But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. This is the word of the Lord. Well, good morning again, friends.
- Let's pray as we come to these great words from Matthew 6. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are a God who speaks, that you haven't left us by ourselves to work out who we are, who you are, what you've done for us.
- How to pray, what that should look like. And so, we pray now that you'd help us this morning to see you clearly, to see ourselves clearly, and to have that relationship right in our minds and therefore work into our hearts, that we might love you as your people.
- And we pray that in Christ's name. Amen. Do you know the story about the fox and the lion? The fox and the lion.
- This is one of Aesop's fables. Aesop, the ancient Greek storyteller who came up with stories like the tortoise and the hare. In all of his fables, there's always a moral to the story.
- [ 2 : 49 ]     And so, the moral of the tortoise and the hare is, slow and steady wins the race. See if you can work out the moral of the story of the fox and the lion. A fox had never seen a lion before.
- One day, as he walked through the forest, he came upon a lion face to face. So mighty and fearsome was the lion's appearance that the fox was absolutely terrified.
- He turned and ran as fast as his legs could carry him. On another day, the fox happened upon the same lion again. This time, though he was still nervous and trembling, he managed to stand his ground for a moment before walking away.
- The third time the fox met the lion, he boldly approached the mighty beast, nodded politely, and even struck up a conversation as if speaking to an old friend.
- What's the moral of the story of the fox and the lion? Familiarity breeds contempt.
- [ 3 : 59 ]     Familiarity breeds contempt. This week and next, we're going to look at the Lord's Prayer. And then the week after, we're going to see the words around it in Matthew's Gospel.
- And this is a prayer, I think, that we are probably very familiar with. We pray this together in services at St Silas.

If you've grown up in a Catholic environment, you might be used to thinking of this almost like medicine. We're going to prescribe to you in response to sin. Say a few Our Fathers as part of your penance.

Even if you've never set foot in a church before, you've probably heard the words of the Lord's Prayer on TV or in US politics somehow. We're familiar with it.

And familiarity can breed contempt. Contempt where the words wash over us and have no impact on who we are or how we pray.

[ 5 : 06 ] Let me say up front, when we actually look at the words of the Lord's Prayer, this is a difficult prayer to pray.

It's not an easy prayer to pray for anyone. And if it is, well, we've probably not understood it rightly. I think it's a prayer that rebukes you until it encourages you deeply.

So we'll see this morning that it's calling us to pray big prayers in line with God's will. Pray big prayers in line with God's will.

We're going to look at who the prayer is addressed to. Our Father in heaven. Then the first petition, hallowed be your name. And then our third point for this morning will be verse 10.

Your kingdom come, your will be done. And then we'll look at the rest of it next week. So, Bible's open, Matthew 6. You've got your outline there as well in the sheet that was handed out to you on your way in.

[ 6 : 11 ] First point for this morning, our Father in heaven. So we see this in verse 9. This then is how you should pray, our Father in heaven.

It begins with who we're praying to. And already here we see that every word in this prayer is going to be significant.

He is not just the Father, he is our Father. And he is a Father. Loving. Intimate.

Close. And he is in heaven from where he reigns and is supreme above all. Every word is going to be worthy of meditation in this prayer.

We're in a section of Matthew's Gospel here called the Sermon on the Mount. And Jesus is speaking to his disciples primarily, but there is a broader crowd of people who are listening in to see what Jesus says to his disciples.

[ 7 : 14 ] And in this part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is reflecting on doing righteous acts for God's view and not the view of other people.

So let me just sort of talk you through the structure of this, and this will appear on the screen. In Matthew chapter 6, verse 1, we see, Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.

If you do, you'll have no reward from your Father in heaven. And then there are three practices which Jesus draws out specifically that we are to do for God and not for the eyes of those around us.

So verse 2, When you give to the needy, 6, verse 1 applies. Verse 5, And when you pray, 6, verse 1 applies. And verse 16, When you fast, 6, verse 1 applies.

Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Because these three practices, giving, praying, and fasting, they are things that you might be tempted to do in order to perform your spirituality for others to see.

[ 8 : 32 ] That other people might think that you're part of the spiritual crowd. And as long as they think that, well then you've achieved your goal. But Jesus says don't do that.

Do these things in a way that you only care about what your Father thinks. That you only care about what your Father sees.

And this is tragically ironic. Because if there is a single prayer that is said today, that is said to try and fit in with a religious crowd, to give the appearance of Christian religion, it's this one.

And Jesus' word should be confronting here. Because he's saying that, well, there's two ways that you can go about this. There's two ways that you can pray. The first way to pray is to do the religious thing.

Right? You say the prayer so that you fit in when you're at church, that you get the approving nods of those around you. And Jesus says that's the extent of your reward.

[ 9 : 50 ] You wanted to feel the approval of other people watching on. Well, maybe you get it. But that's all you get. You'll have no reward from your Father in Heaven.

And the second way to pray is to fight through the religious facade and actually engage with God from the heart. To actually pray as if nobody else was there.

And the only person who will ever know what you prayed or that you prayed is God. God, your Father in Heaven.

And this idea that God is a Father is a new idea. It's a new concept. It's a revolutionary thing for Jesus' disciples. Israel, in the Old Testament, never prayed to God as Father.

It's a new teaching that Jesus brings. J.I. Packer, the English theologian who spent most of his career in Canada. He says in his book, *Knowing God*, everything that Christ taught.

[ 11 : 00 ] Now, that's a big claim. Everything that Christ taught. Everything that Christ taught. Everything that makes the New Testament new and better than the Old, everything that is distinctively Christian, as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the fatherhood of God.

And so, although the Lord's Prayer is, I think, a demanding prayer for us to pray, honestly, and although it's a prayer that, I think, rebukes us, it begins with a sweet embrace.

It begins with stability. It begins with security. And it is prayed in that context.

God is your Father in heaven. He is the one who you pray to.

And you can pray this by yourself, or you can pray it in a group, but the heart posture is that you're being invited to talk to your Father in heaven.

[ 12 : 17 ] And that makes all the difference. Because how do you pray when your conception of God is wrong? It impacts it. If you imagine God to be really busy, then you might think that you should rush your prayers.

If you imagine God to be distant, then you will pray without a confidence that He even hears you. If you imagine God to be cold or stern towards you, then you might pray groveling prayers, just trying not to upset Him.

But God is none of those things. He is our Father in heaven. And He longs to hear our prayers.

One of my favourite quotes on prayer is this, God includes and uses our prayers in His purposes much as a patient mother will let her three-year-old help with the cooking.

Even though it takes much longer and produces considerably more mess. A few amens in the room from the mums. God gathers our prayers into His purposes for our sake to help us learn to trust Him and depend upon Him for all things.

[ 13 : 42 ] God is a Father who is patient with you. He loves to welcome you into His kitchen for your sake. He loves to hear your prayers.

And He desires us to pray big prayers that are in line with His will. So, point two for this morning as we get to the prayer of the prayer.

The first thing that we ask for is that we petition Him point two, hallowed be your name. And this is where we start to be challenged, I think, with what are we actually asking God to do when we pray this prayer.

So, hallowed just means sanctified or revered as holy. And the question is, well, how will God's name be hallowed?

How will it be revered as holy? And for this, we've got to do a little bit of work. So, you ready to come on a bit of a journey? Yeah? Of course you are. Let's go.

[ 14 : 40 ] Alright, a bit of Bible trivia for you, St Silas, on a summer Sunday. What's the first prayer in the Bible? What's the first prayer in the Bible?

Well, I mean, Adam and Eve talk with God in the garden, but it's not really a prayer, it's just sort of conversation. The first prayer comes at the end of Genesis 4.

So, story of Genesis. Genesis 1 and 2, God creates the world, all things. Humanity is the pinnacle of His creation. Genesis 3, that pinnacle of His creation, humanity sins.

Adam and Eve in the garden, they eat the fruit, they rebel against God, they listen to the serpent instead of God, and so there's a fall and in verse 15 of Genesis 3, there is this promise that God makes, that one of the offspring of Eve will crush the serpent, the one who brought this chaos into the garden.

And that's a promise from the Lord God, Yahweh Himself. and then in Genesis 4, you've got a further descent into sin. Cain murders his brother Abel.

[ 15 : 56 ] So, neither of those two are going to be the one through whom this promise is fulfilled. But Adam and Eve have another son, Seth, and he has a son, Enosh, and as there starts to be offspring of Eve, as people are weary with the waywardness of the world, we read, Genesis 4, 26, at that time, people began to call on the name of the Lord.

Prayer is a yearning for God to vindicate His name by acting according to His promises.

How will the world know that God's name is holy, is hallowed when everything that God promises is done?

Because no one else is like that. No one else is that awesome. No one else is that in control. No one else is that sovereign.

No one else is that big. No one else is that concerned for this world. If God is God, then prayer is asking Him to show Himself to be God by carrying out His promises, acting in accordance with His Word.

[ 17 : 20 ] And through the Old Testament, this is the language that is used for prayer, to call on the name of the Lord and to pray in pursuit of His glory, His fame in the world and His name.

What happens when we come to the New Testament? Well, it's similar but different. You get prayer instructions like Ephesians 5.20, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father, so we're praying, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3.17, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. So prayer goes from calling on the name of the Lord in the Old Testament to calling on the name of Jesus in the New Testament.

But it's not just anything in His name, it is praying that He will vindicate His name, praying that what He's promised will come about, show His name to be the name above all names by being true to what He has promised.

And so in this way, the Lord's Prayer is a model for us in how to pray. You can pray it verbatim, word for word, word for word, just pray it as it is, great. Or you can take it as a model, as a shape for how prayer ought to be.

[ 18 : 52 ] And that's helpful for us because you can talk to God about anything, you can ask God for anything, nothing is off limits and the Scriptures would encourage us to pray honestly, deeply, and transparently, that's part of trusting God.

But not all prayer is equal. Not all talking to God is equal. Imagine a soldier who's at war and he's calling his superior officer on the phone and he talks to him regularly.

Every day, he has a phone call with his superior officer and it's from the front with the difficulties of things that he is facing. The conditions, the food, the morale of the troops.

all reasonable things to talk about, but he never asked his commanding officer, are we winning the war? That would be odd because the whole point of living the Christian life is that we believe Jesus is on the throne.

We believe that Jesus' name is worthy of worship from every nation and every tribe and every tongue and we believe that's going to happen. We are the ones who are yearning for Christ to return, to be triumphant, to rescue people who are perishing, to mature his people to obedience.

[ 20 : 20 ] and our prayer life should be filled with that. And so if your circumstances and not God's plans are always setting the agenda, we're not praying the Lord's Prayer.

Does that come as a rebuke? It does to me. Now the second half of the prayer is concerned with our needs. We'll look at that next week. But the first half is all about God and what he is doing and what he has promised to do.

So it's not just a prayer we can mumble half-heartedly and carry on with life. It's asking God to intervene in this world to bring his purposes to bear and to vindicate his name by fulfilling his promises.

Pray big prayers. in line with God's will. So we're praying to our Father in heaven. We're praying out of stability, out of security and we're praying for his name to be shown for the all-glorious name that it is.

And we're praying, point three, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. there's something quite radical and revolutionary, whether you like those phrases or not, I think it's true, there's something radical and revolutionary about being a citizen of a nation state, be it Scotland, be it Australia, be it wherever else, and praying that another kingdom will come and take over.

[ 22 : 06 ] Now we do that because the coming of the kingdom will be good news for the whole world. But it's worth noticing because again, this is not a small thing to pray.

As Matthew writes his gospel and he records Jesus' words for us, the kingdom of heaven is what is often on his lips. It's the major theme of his whole gospel.

So Matthew chapter 3, John the Baptist prepares for Jesus, he begins his preaching ministry. Chapter 3 verse 2, repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near. In chapter 4, Jesus begins his preaching ministry, his first words in the book.

The first words he says are, repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near. And Jesus wants the kingdom of heaven to be at the centre of all of his teaching. And so when he sits down with his disciples to start the Sermon on the Mount, what we're looking at here, he begins the sermon with these words, verse 3 of chapter 5, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

When Jesus sends his disciples out on mission in chapter 10, he says as you go proclaim this message, the kingdom of heaven has come near. When Jesus tells parables to his disciples, he says things like the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

[ 23 : 26 ] Do you notice the theme? Right, Matthew, as he records Jesus' words in this gospel, is emphasising the kingdom of heaven.

It's not an isolated concept in the Lord's Prayer. And what this tells us throughout the gospel is that Jesus didn't come so that your flatmate would clean up after themselves, though it would not be a bad thing if they did.

Jesus didn't come so that you would live in the house you've always yearned for. Though it's not a bad thing to live in a nice house. Jesus didn't come so that your kids would go through life without issues.

Though it's not a bad thing if they do. Jesus didn't come so that your loved ones won't pass away. Jesus didn't come so that your life would be comfortable.

Jesus came because he looked at the kingdoms of the earth and he saw people like you and me.

[ 24 : 35 ] And he saw injustice and he saw evil and he saw bullying and he saw victimisation and oppression and bigotry greed sexual immorality he saw all of that as he looked at the kingdoms of earth and he said let me go there and bring the kingdom of heaven and I'll die on a cross so that the whole world will know that I'm a different kind of king to earthly kings because my kingdom is different to earthly kingdoms.

Jesus came and he did that for us and he ascended to heaven and we are awaiting his return that's where we're at and so the prayer that God's kingdom will come that his will will be done on earth is a prayer born out of a dissatisfaction with the present and not a dissatisfaction that can be solved by creature comforts but a dissatisfaction that can be only solved by the person of Jesus.

It's the sort of thing that you pray when you look at the world through glasses that have kingdom lenses in them. It's a prayer that doesn't let you yearn for comfort and worldly things because your kingdom lenses show you everything in our world that is not the way that it's supposed to be.

And so it's a prayer that rebukes the worldliness in us and drives us to action for the kingdom because what you see with your kingdom lenses brings a heartfelt desire to pray Lord change the world around me and Lord change me.

And what that means is if you're happy with your life just the way that it is and you want it to continue exactly the way that it is well don't pray the Lord's Prayer because the Lord's Prayer is asking God to bring change to the things that you don't want to change if that's who you are and where you're at.

[ 27 : 07 ] and if you want it to change well you need to trust your Father in Heaven that as your life changes He is changing it for His glory for the sake of His name and for your good because that's how the kingdom works.

God I'm going to lead us in the Lord's Prayer in just a moment as we close off our time looking at Matthew 6 and I want you to take 30 seconds to reflect on these words that we've considered this morning and decide whether you want to pray a prayer that is so big and heed Jesus' warning right be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them don't pray this so that the people around you are happy that you're praying it you're better off remaining silent if you're not going to pray this from the heart perhaps today is the day that you want to pray this for the first time and mean it to Jesus as your king that would not be a bad thing to do you should tell someone if that's the case but take a moment I'm going to invite the band up now if you guys want to come up and if we can have the words to the

Lord's Prayer on the screen that would be great and just reflect on those words for a little bit and then I'll lead us in the Lord's Prayer together together our Father in heaven hallowed be your name your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us today our daily bread forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for the kingdom the power and the glory are yours now and forever amen up so so so so