

Why Should We Pray?

Sunday, 7/28 – 9:00 + Monday, 7/29 – 7 PM

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost / Sixth Sunday after Trinity – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ:

- + Think about your life... *do you have a problem?*
- + If yes, *have you taken that problem to God in prayer...*
or are you trying everything else first?

We have all sinned, *which separated us from God*, but God took action to save us, *which restored our relationship with Him*. Now, through Jesus, *we can pray to God, our Father!* In this sermon, we will touch on what it means to pray the Lord's Prayer, the topics of the Lord's Prayer, and some things that should encourage us to pray. The full version of the Lord's Prayer is in **Matthew 6**, while **Luke 11** has an *abbreviated version*. In Matthew, *Jesus taught the prayer during the Sermon on the Mount*; today, as recorded in Luke 11, *Jesus gave a slightly shorter and different version*. What should we learn from those differences? We should learn that praying to the Father and addressing certain topics are more important than *using certain specific words*.

- Jesus Taught Us to Pray:** ¹ **Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."** // Jesus most likely went to a *private place* to pray, but, *when He returned to the others, "one of his disciples,"* – probably one who had not heard the Sermon on the Mount – asked Jesus to teach them as John the

Baptizer had taught his disciples. John and Jesus were both rabbis and had disciples; *it was common for a rabbi to teach his disciples a prayer that would identify them with their teacher.* Therefore, when we pray the Lord's Prayer, *we are identifying with Jesus who is our Teacher!*

2. **Important Topics to Pray:** ² **And he said to them, “When you pray, say:**
- a. **“Father, hallowed be your name.** // In other words, Father, let us treat Your name as holy; why? Because: **‣You are holy, ‣Your name is holy, and ‣You have made us holy in Your sight through Your Son!**
 - b. **Your kingdom come.** // With those words we ask our Father to keep reigning over us in the Person of Jesus, *and to bring others under His reign.* The third petition is absent here in Luke – *because Jesus taught an abbreviated version;* also, the essence of third petition, *Thy will be done,* is included in petitions one and two.
 - c. ³ **Give us each day our daily bread,** // In Matthew Jesus said, “give us this day,” while here in Luke He said, “each day,” why the difference? **“‘this day’ fits the laborer who earns on one day what he eats the next ...[‘each day’] includes also the rich who in one day get what will feed them for many a day”** (Lenski, 623).
 - d. ⁴ **and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone [owing] us.** // The Bible has many words to describe sin; for example: trespass, disobedience, transgression, lawlessness, iniquity, wickedness, and debt.¹ When we sin against God or a person, *we owe*

¹ Go to these two sermons for much more on words for “sin” in the Bible:
<https://bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/Sermons/6105/Details>
<https://bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/Sermons/7107/Details>

that person; when they forgive us, they cancel our debt. As God continues to forgive us, so it is vital for us to continue to forgive all others!

- e. **And lead us not into temptation.”** // Does God lead us into temptation, so that we must ask Him to stop? By no means (James 1:13-14); instead, we are asking Him to lead us so that we are not tempted. Also, where is the rest of the prayer? As the third petition is included in one and two, so the seventh is included in five and six. Finally, where is the conclusion? Though its contents are Biblical, *it is a human addition to the Lord’s Prayer*, so it does not appear here, nor in the Matthew version.

3. **Jesus Encouraged Us to Pray:**

- a. ⁵ **And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷ and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? //** The story includes ▶an unexpected need, ▶an awkward request, and ▶a response of rejection.
- b. Then Jesus explained: ⁸ **I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence** [*shamelessness, thus insensitivity to what is proper*] **[his friend] will rise and give him whatever he needs.** // If one person can get what he needs from another person – because of his willingness to ask, *how much more will God give to us!*
- c. Then Jesus told us how to go to God with our needs: ▶notice how each section is more intense AND ▶notice

the promises that are made: ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it WILL be given to you; seek, and you WILL find; knock, and it WILL be opened to you. [With every need, we should keep asking, seeking, and knocking – not being repetitious (*Matt. 6:7*), but coming continually – like the man who needed the bread!] ¹⁰ For everyone [asking] receives, and the one [seeking] finds, and to the one [knocking] it will be opened.

- d. Then Jesus made a comparison: ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those [asking] him!" // As earthly fathers generally give good gifts to their children, *HOW MUCH MORE SO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER!* Finally, why did Jesus mention about the Father giving the Holy Spirit? "...the highest and greatest spiritual gift [thus the Holy Spirit]... involves every other spiritual gift and certainly thus also every necessary temporal gift" (Lenski, 631). Since the Father gives the greatest, *He will certainly give all else!*
- e. Summary: Now, ♣ knowing the Jesus' connection and the topics, and ♣ being encouraged in many ways to pray, *let's do it first and often!*

This Week's Challenge: Now that we know many good reasons to pray, *let's plan for it, do it, and reap the benefits!*

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, *TY for the privilege to pray!*

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