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The Lord's Prayer – Part 3

Introduction to Series

Series: Near to the Heart of God

**Rev. Andrew Hawkins, Ph.D.
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I. **Review**

A. **Lord's Prayer**

1. **Matthew 6.9-15; Luke 11.2-4**
 2. Text
 - a. **Matthew 6:9–15** (ESV) —
 - b. 9 Pray then like this:
 - c. “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
 - d. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 - e. 11 Give us this day our daily bread,
 - f. 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 - g. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 - h. 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,
 - i. 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
 3. Luke – learn that it's misnamed
 - a. That it's actually the Lord's instruction on prayer
 - b. He's teaching us how to pray
 4. Familiar – Leads to a couple of dangers
 - a. Rote, repetitive use – pray it frequently as a prayer; memorized
 - b. To avoid rote, repetitive use, we tend not to use it
 5. Believe prayer that is not spontaneous is somehow not genuine
 - a. That to use someone else's words robs it of meaning for us
 - b. Careful – every time we sing we use someone else's words
 - c. Often hymns are prayers!
 6. Important thing – not merely a formula to use
 - a. Jesus is teaching us how to pray with a model, a pattern
 - b. Teaching us what matters in prayer that is consistent with the will of God
- B. Jesus, in teaching the Lord's prayer, is preparing us for prayer
1. Prayer is the most intimate, loving of relationships
 - a. Call God “Father”
 - b. Confident in coming to Him

2. Most majestic, holy, supreme Being
 - a. “In heaven”
 - b. Confident in His ability to respond
3. Reminds us of our community context
 - a. “Our”
 - b. We are never praying by ourselves, for ourselves – even when we’re praying by ourselves!

II. **Structure of the Prayer**

A. **Petitions concerned first with God**

1. Hallowed be Your name
2. Your kingdom come
3. Your will be done

B. **Petitions concerned second with ourselves**

1. Daily bread
2. Forgive debts
3. Lead not into temptation

C. Cf **Ten Commandments**

1. God-relationship centered commandments – first table
 - a. No other gods
 - b. No idols
 - c. No use of God’s name in vain
 - d. Keep Sabbath holy
2. Human-relationship centered commandments – second table
 - a. Honor father and mother
 - b. No murder
 - c. No adultery
 - d. No stealing
 - e. No false testimony
 - f. No coveting

D. Just as the Ten Commandments teach us how to live

1. The Lord’s Prayer is also a primer on how to live
 - a. Why we should use it frequently
 - b. As a prayer
 - c. As a guide to our praying in our devotions

III. **God-centered Petitions**

A. Focus of these petitions is God

1. Our own good is clearly involved when He is glorified, His kingdom comes and His will is done
2. But the nature of our asking is for Him and for His glory

B. Proper time and place to ask for ourselves

1. To disregard the first set is to pray selfishly

C. As we pray we must be influenced to work for His glory, kingdom and will

IV. **Human-centered Petitions**

- A. Preceding portions prepare us for these
 - 1. Recognize who we address
 - 2. Recognize our relationship to Him and His people
 - 3. Submit ourselves to His glory
 - 4. The petitions we ask for ourselves are thus concerned for His glory
- B. **Give us this day our daily bread**
 - 1. Asking for all our body requires in our present earthly condition
 - a. Not just food, but clothing, etc.
 - 2. **Entrust our lives into His providence**
 - 3. Assumption is that God cares about our earthly, material existence
 - a. Destroys gnostic orientations – physical is either evil or not really existent (Christian Science)
 - b. Physical creation is important, not evil
 - c. Spiritual concerns are greater, but not to the exclusion of this life
 - 4. Father asks us to trust Him for even minute, earthly details
 - 5. Addresses a fundamental distortion of human nature
 - a. More concern for the physical than the spiritual; body over soul
 - b. Tendency to trust God for our souls, but still anxious about the body
 - c. This prayer is meant to reverse that order
 - 6. If we trust God for the lesser gifts of the physical, we can then be free to look to Him for the greater gifts of the spiritual
 - 7. **Prayer is the fundamental exercise of faith**
 - a. Basic exercise – trust God for material needs
 - b. Major progress is made in Christian life when these needs are entrusted into God's care
 - c. Fundamental orientation of most Christians is materialistic
 - (1) Not because God has answered this prayer
 - (2) But because Christians reflect the materialistic culture and are consumed with seeking material well-being, even accumulating wealth
 - 8. Give us
 - a. **All is a gift from God**, even when we prepared or earned it!
 - b. As sinners – no right to expected anything but death
 - c. To pray this is to humble ourselves and recognize our dependence on God for the most mundane things
 - 9. ... this day... daily
 - a. **Contentedness** must accompany prayer
 - b. Asking not for tomorrow but for today
 - c. OT manna – great lesson for Israel
 - d. Asks not for extravagance, luxury; destroys the health and wealth gospel!
 - 10. ... our ...
 - a. **Asks for what God gives to us legitimately**

- b. Don't want what causes injury to others
 - c. Don't want what belongs to others
 - (1) Cf Ten Commandments – stealing, covet, adultery, etc.
- C. **Forgive us our debts**
1. Essence of the New Covenant in the last two petitions
 - a. **Jeremiah 33:8** (ESV) — 8 I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me.
 - b. **Jeremiah 31:33** (ESV) — 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
 - (1) Holy Spirit given
 - c. Forgiveness of debts
 - d. God's protection and support against temptation
 2. Debts
 - a. Luke has "sins"
 - b. Debts are proper here because a **punishment is owed** – death
 - c. Debt we could not possible pay
 - d. Debt must be forgiven if the punishment is to be avoided
 3. To ask God to forgive is to acknowledge our utter inability to place ourselves in right standing with Him
 - a. **We are at His mercy alone**
 - b. We appeal to His mercy in this petitions
 4. All expectations of satisfying God by our own merits is rejected
 - a. To go to God with our own merit, goodness is to appeal to His justice – bad idea!
 5. Not only do we acknowledge our past sins, we acknowledge our present ones as well
 - a. No perfectionism
 - b. **1 John 1:10** (ESV) — 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
 - c. Balance between first and second half
 - (1) First half – perfection is set before us as the goal
 - (2) 2nd half – we admit that in the flesh we don't see that perfection
 - (3) Errors if we neglect either aspect of this prayer
 - (a) The pursuit of godliness, the gaining of victory over sins
 - (b) The acknowledgment of sins, flee to the remedies God provides
 6. As we forgive our debtors
 - a. **Matthew 6:14–15** (ESV) — 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if

you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- b. Cf **Matthew 18.21-35** – parable of the unmerciful servant
 - (1) Extent of our sin against God overwhelms the extent of others’ sins against us
 - (a) No one can offend me more than I have offended God
 - (2) Do you want to stand before Him expecting His forgiveness when you have not forgiven the pittance of offenses done to you?
 - c. So crucial to relationships within the church
 - (1) No excuse for bitterness, holding grudges, etc.
 - d. Keep a short list
 - (1) How about no list at all
7. Forgiveness of our debtors is not the ground of our forgiveness
- a. Christ alone is the ground of our forgiveness
 - b. Forgiving others is not a work we must perform to secure our standing before God
8. Forgiveness is an indicator of who really belongs to God
- a. True conversion involves the implanting of the new life – life of the Spirit
 - b. If truly converted, one will not be long in recognizing the incredible debt paid by Christ
 - c. To harbor enmity against another will agonize the soul
 - (1) Believer will recognize the fault and repent
 - d. You must forgive, or else I am forced to wonder if you really were converted!
- D. Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil (the evil one)
- 1. **Recognize our weakness and sinful tendency**
 - a. Recognize the continual warfare
 - b. Recognize our inclination to succumb to temptation
 - (1) Pride says, “I can handle this”
 - (2) Humility says, “I know I can’t handle this. In the flesh I will succumb. Either don’t send me into temptation, or give me the gracious supply of the Spirit to enable me to stand.”
 - 2. Appropriate that which God has given for our protection and victory
 - 3. Types of temptations
 - a. Obviously evil things
 - b. Good things whose proper place is distorted and incline us away from God
 - 4. Lead us not – not complete eradication of temptation in view here
 - a. Really implied in temptation beyond what we can bear
 - b. **1 Corinthians 10:13** (ESV) — 13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you

be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

- c. It is by temptation that God grows us
 - (1) An exercise of faith
- 5. **God doesn't tempt – Satan does**
 - a. Cf James: **James 1:13–14** (ESV) — 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.
 - (1) Why should we ask God to not do what He would never do anyway?
 - b. Issue is one of purpose
 - (1) Satan's purpose – drag us down, sin
 - (2) God's purpose – strengthen our faith
 - c. **Tempt and test are the same** in Gk
- 6. Deliver us from the evil one
 - a. Whether Satan or sin – no difference
 - b. Contemporary preoccupation with Satan
 - (1) But Satan works by appealing to our flesh
 - (a) Accuses us
 - (b) Tempts us
 - (c) Always to get us to sin
 - (2) To be delivered from Satan is to avoid sinning in the context of temptation
- E. **The communion of saints**
 - 1. All three petitions involve the communion of saints
 - a. Our daily bread
 - b. Our debts
 - c. Lead us not...
 - 2. **Building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ**
 - a. Can't do it alone
 - b. Must be done together
 - c. Lord's prayer highlights that great truth!
- V. **Epilogue – Yours is the Kingdom...**
 - A. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, Amen.
 - 1. Not in the original – but clearly consistent with the rest of scripture
 - 2. Ground of our confidence in the prayer
 - 3. Fitting conclusion
- VI. **Summary**
 - A. Implications of this prayer
 - 1. Lawful prayer – Tertullian
 - 2. Calvin: since Christ has taught this prayer, “Accordingly, this prayer is complete in all its parts, so complete, that whatever is extraneous and

foreign to it, whatever cannot be referred to it, is impious and unworthy of the approbation of God. For he has here summarily prescribed what is worthy of him, what is acceptable to him, and what is necessary for us; in short, whatever he is pleased to grant. Those, therefore, who presume to go further and ask something more from God, first seek to add of their own to the wisdom of God (this is insane blasphemy to do); secondly, refusing to confine themselves within the will of God, and despising it, they wander, as their cupidity directs; lastly, they will never obtain anything, seeing they pray without faith. For there cannot be a doubt that all such prayers are made without faith, because at variance with the word of God, on which if faith do[es] not always lean it cannot possibly stand. Those who, disregarding the Master's rule, indulge their own wishes, not only have not the word of God, but as much as in them lies oppose it."

3. Calvin: "It omits nothing which we can conceive in praise of God, nothing which we can imagine advantageous to man, and the whole is so exact that all hope of improving it may well be renounced."

B. Not that the words must be spoken according to formula, but that prayers must be congruent with these petitions

1. Rest of the study will contain prayers that differ in wording
2. Psalms are filled with prayers which differ in wording
3. We will see that all are congruent with the Lord's Prayer