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| Topic | Lord’s Prayer |
| Reference  | Matthew 6:9–13 |
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| Speaker | Pastor Massimo Gei |

The Lord’s Prayer many of us has heard it, many of us have ideas about it, most of us have done a Bible study on it if you have been a Christian for a while. There are lots of different opinions on the Lord’s Prayer and there are so many books on the Lord’s Prayer. It seems that almost every great writer has written something significant on it. Actually the Lord’s Prayer is worthy of 9-10 sermons. One thing we have to really know about the Lord’s Prayer is this that it is situated in the Sermon of the Mount. It is very important to know this because what is the Sermon of the Mount. The Sermon of the Mount is where Jesus came and he preached his first sermon, where he preached how we should live our lives. Sermon of the Mount is like being obedient to the gospel, how do we live our lives; it is a standard of living that God has set for us. Another way of looking at the Sermon of the Mount is the character and the conduct of a person, how we are supposed to be and how we are supposed to behave.

We learned about various things about the beatitudes, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Then Jesus talked about the salt and light, how we are supposed to be salt and light. He talked about divorce. He talked about how we supposed to be charitable and then He comes into prayer and later on He will go into fasting. So how are supposed to live our lives. So when he says, let me teach you how to pray, I don’t think it was just a teaching on how we should pray but what kind of people we need to be to pray this kind of prayer. If we dissect this prayer, we see it is really all kind of priorities on heaven of Christ coming kingdom is contained in this petition. It talks about our father, it talks about son-ship, it talk about hallowed by thy name, it talks about worship, your kingdom come (evangelism), your will be done (mercy and justice), give us this day our bread (generosity and contentment), forgive us our debts (redemptive community) and lead us not into temptation (spiritual warfare).

So really this prayer is about Christian lifestyle. The question is what kind of person must I be to be able to pray this prayer. Jesus before he gets to Lord’s Prayer he says don’t be like the hypocrites, don’t be like the Pharisees, don’t be like the pagans who lift up their hands with empty phrases, they heap up empty phrases, they pray just to be seen, they pray to be known and he says they will receive their rewards. Don’t be like them but rather go into a secret and pray in secret and what the father hears in secret he will give you. What he is trying to tell us, it is not about what we say, it is about how we feel, what we know who we are, what we really mean in our hearts when we pray. There must be sincerity in our prayers. The question is, for us to sincerely pray the Lord’s Prayer what kind of person must we be? So we will look today through Lord’s prayer and see what it has in store for us.

What does it mean to be a true disciple to be able to pray this prayer?

**Our Father in Heaven:**

First of all it says Our Father. So yes even though Jesus said go privately in your closet and pray, he says Our Father. So it does not go against communal prayer. He says Our Father; it is something we pray in community. What does it mean for us that God is our father? Immediately he talks and gives us a relationship that we are supposed to have with God and do we see God as our loving father who loves us, who only give us good gifts. It is very important that we have this intimate relationship with God when we pray. Now many of us base the concept of fatherhood from our earthly experiences and some of us have great experiences and some of us have not so great experiences, but we shouldn’t base the concept of fatherhood on our earthly experiences but we should base this on what scripture has to say. The scripture says that God will provide, God is a father who loves us, who cares for us, who will give us good gifts. Ultimately when we understand that God is our father we must be able to say this statement.

*I am a cherished, chosen, enjoyed, forgiven, wanted, royal, treasured, and dearly loved child of God, who has been delivered from the slavery of sin, who has been made alive to God with a new heart, who is not alone but indwelled by the Holy Spirit, who is ﬁlled with the power of the kingdom, who is being slowly transformed into the glorious image of His elder brother Jesus, and who one day will be fully glorious like Him and share in His inheritance of a perfect world!*

That is the attitude we must have and we understand we are children of God. God sent his son to die on the cross so that we may be adopted as children of God into his family. We are now members of the family of God.

**Hallowed Be Thy Name:**

So we see the tension between the intimacy we are supposed to have with God and the reverence we are supposed to have with God. Our Christian life lives in a tension between those two concepts. I remember Francis Chan in his book Crazy Love, his first chapter is called “Stop Praying”. He does not mean that you should stop praying, but he says “Stop Before You Pray”. Do you know who you are praying to? Do you understand that God is in heaven that he is holy that he is so different from us. We need to have a high view of God. If we have a high view of God then the fact that he is our father and cares for us and loves us breaks our heart even more. When I hear Hallowed by the name immediately the picture of the throne room comes into my head. Revelation 4:

8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

That picture of the throne room with 24 elders and everybody is bowing down and kneeling down and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy that is our God that is our father. Do we understand that about Him? It is so important that we have this concept of God being both father and Holy because everything else in this prayer flows from there. If we do not understand that he is holy and unique and different from us but yet loves us we will not understand the rest of the prayer. It is not just a statement O Lord you are holy but it is a petition saying God may your name be Holy. We are not saying God make yourself holy because he is truly holy. What we are asking is the desire that God will make his holy name known that worship may rise up, that our country, our nation, this church, the world may recognize God as the holy one and who he is, that God may cause it to be so.

**Thy Kingdom Come:**

Are we the kind of people who can pray that prayer? Do we really desire for his kingdom to come not as a twofold understanding of that. Firstly, we must understand thy kingdom come is that we want his name to be known. Do we desire that everyone knows his name. The picture portrayed in the Book of Revelation of all the nations and all the tribes and all the tongues standing together before God worshiping him, is this the desire in our heart, can we pray that prayer. If this is truly our desire then are we going and proclaiming the good news. In the Gospel of Mark we see, repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. They had urgency to proclaim the kingdom of God. Do we have that urgency? Are we going out to our neighbors, in our workplaces, in our communities, in our schools, in our families and telling people the good news of Jesus. Do we want his kingdom to come because His kingdom comes when everybody knows his name, where everybody is subject of the kingdom. It must be a heartfelt desire that is the mark of a true desire. So evangelism is what must rule our lives.

There is second fold of this prayer, may thy kingdom come, which is are we ready for Lord’s return. There is still time to come where everything will be made new, where new restoration will happen when Jesus will return and his kingdom will fully come. Do we desire that, are we ready for that? Do we pray, O Lord come tomorrow? Are we prepared in our hearts for that? If you would know that Jesus is coming tomorrow, do you have a huge checklist of things you must still do. How about our own lifestyle, how about our own lives?

**Thy Will be Done:**

Do we desire for God’s will to be done. Again we have a twofold understanding. What is God’s will? We know from the Sermon of Mount that there is certain amount of social justice that he wants to happen. God’s will is that no mouth will be left hungry, that nobody will be left unclothed, as a desire for social justice and it is our duty as a church to provide social justice. If we want to obey this command “thy will be done”, we must go out and do God’s will, follow God’s moral will. There is a big difference between God’s moral will and God’s sovereign will. God’s sovereign we cannot control, God’s moral will we can choose to follow. We can do the things that Bible says and demands of us. People always ask the question, what is the difference between free will and predestination and I came to my heart to that conclusion. *Whenever I have been given a choice I will choose to do God’s will and whenever I am left without a choice I trust that he is in control*. I think that is the tension that we must live in and that is the tension that it says, thy will be done. Our desire to go out and do social justice and our trust that in situations where we cannot control that God is in control. I think the prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. He says, let this cup past from me, nevertheless nor as I will but as you will.

Do we trust that God is a good father that regardless of what situation happens we can say your will be done. Every time I think of that statement I think of this hymn

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

[Horatio Spafford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horatio_Spafford) wrote that after receiving much tragedy in his life. His son died in the fire, he lost his business in the fire then he was supposed to go overseas and because he was arranging all the tragedies that was happening there. He sent his wife and his four daughters to go ahead on a boat, the boat sank. His four daughters died and then he wrote this song.

Are we people who can say thy will be done regardless of what situation in life we are in. It is interesting that thy will be done comes into a section where most people would say, now we have looked at God, we have looked at God’s name, we have looked at God’s kingdom, we have looked at God’s will, now we are looking at ourselves. We are looking for daily bread, we are looking for forgiveness, looking for deliverance and it is important to see that it starts with, thy will be done and then only we come into this petitions.

**Give Us Our Daily Bread:**

We have to understand who He was saying it to. He was saying it to a bunch of Jewish people, who had daily wages. So they had to go day in and day out hoping that they will make enough money for the day, trusting that God will provide that make enough money for the day. Now many of us are not in that situation, many of us are blessed, many of us have been provided with much more than just daily bread, but the true spirit behind this is whether we trust and depend on God’s provision and I think the test for us in our lives today is, how we conduct our businesses, how we live our life in the workplace. What corners are we willing to cut, what corruption are we willing to go into because if we are willing to do that we may not be doing his will and we are not trusting on his provision but trusting in our own provision. I think the test for us in our lives is how are we conducting our corporate lives, our businesses, how are we behaving in our workplaces. Do we trust in God that He will provide whenever we do the right things or do we cut corners because we have to provide for ourselves? Do we make unrighteousness business deals? Do we participate in corruption? Do we bribe? I think these are indications of the things that we have to ask ourselves. Do we trust in his provision?

Another way to look at is this. It says give us this day **our** daily bread. It does not say give us today **my** daily bread. It is a communal prayer. See we are all brothers and sisters here together in this church. So the question is can we look at our brothers and sister and say, “wow, give us today our daily bread. I hope that everybody is provided for”. In a church we see nobody lacking, nobody not eating, nobody not having enough money for clothing, nobody who is capable of lack of education. In Acts 2 we see that there is this community of people who come together and they were sharing everything together that nobody may lack. It is a communal prayer. Give us today our daily bread. So what should happen is a spirit of generosity should rise up. If God has provided us more than our daily bread we should be generous, we should be generous people living generous lives, giving generously to others who don’t have or have less, giving our time, our hands, our money, giving justice, giving them the word of God, giving them sustenance. Give us today our daily bread is a call for generosity because it is a communal prayer.

**Forgive Us Our Debts As We Also Have Forgiven Over Debtors:**

It is the most difficult and hardest section of this prayer. I think it is the crux of the prayer. It is so important that you will see low end of verses that Jesus repeats it and he says, whoever does not forgive, the father will not forgive. This is important about forgiveness that we must forgive and stressed here. See it says; forgive us as we also have forgiven our debtors. We must be forgiving people. It sounds like I must forgive first before God forgives me. God’s forgiveness gives us grace, gives us unmerited favor, yes it does. I don’t think it is a chronological issue here. You must see the importance of forgiveness put in the concept of the whole scripture.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Luke 6:37 “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

There seems to be this direct connection of us receiving forgiveness and us giving forgiveness. I think one of the best passages that describe that sentiment is in Matthew 18: 21-35. Peter comes up to Jesus and he ask this

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

We are supposed to continuously forgive others and then he goes into the parable of the unforgiving servant. This parable goes like this. There was a man who had great debts, it says 10,000 talents he owed the man. 10,000 talents is something like a few million dollars. One talent is about16 years worth of wages. It is an enormous amount. It is probably billions of dollars that is how much he owed somebody and when he was being judged he was supposed to pay back. He pleaded for forgiveness and the master found mercy upon him and forgave him his debts. Then the same servant who had been forgiven went out and found another servant who owed him 100 denarii (it is about 100 days worth of wages), a very insignificant amount. And he held him and said, you must pay me back. When the person pleaded he did not forgive him and he put him into jail and says, you will be into jail until you have paid me back. Then Jesus ends the parable in this way, he says

32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Forgiveness seems to be a very big theme in the scripture. If we understand how we have sinned against God and we understand how He forgives us, it is an infinite amount of forgiveness. If we get that gospel then the spirit of forgiveness must rise up in us. We cannot but be left unchanged. Grace traumatizes us into a state that we might also forgive. See if we don’t forgive then we are saying, “I am bigger than God. God might forgive but I will not”. We are making ourselves more important than God.

My father has inherited a home from his family in Italy, so for many years we enjoyed the place and my parents went and renovated it very beautifully and because of some financial matters and some arrangements my father took that home and he wrote it over to my uncle, his brother, so that my uncle could manage the home. Recently as we were planning our family trip my father was calling his brother to tell him that we are coming, can you pick up the keys and go there and then my uncle said, “That is no longer your home”. The audacity of him to say that this family home is no longer our family home, just because my father for some practical reasons wrote it over to him he now has decided it is his house. Not only that he stole it but he even denies us entry into it. We may not even visit it. It was unbearable for us. When I first was confronted with this I was looking through Colossians and it says,

3:13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

It says bearing with one another. There are people outside that are unbearable like my uncle. My first thought in our family meeting, my idea was let’s go to Germany as he lives in Germany and let’s burn his house. That was my first reaction and after a while I was struggling through the scripture and I was looking at I must forgive and there are three different family members of ours dealt with forgiveness. My way of dealing with it was, I looked at Romans and it says, while I was yet sinner, while I was still a rebel against God, while I still hated God, while I was unbearable towards God, God forgave me. God sent His son to die for me. How can that lead me unchanged. You see God purchased me with a price; it is no longer my life I live but Christ in me. So it is actually no longer my life, it is no longer my forgiveness, it is Christ’s. How can I withhold that forgiveness to anybody else. It is easy for me to have that forgiveness because I didn’t really have that much of an emotional connection with my uncle or that home, because I only visited about three to four times in my life. I was able to forgive because the love of God spoke to me and it quickly overpowered the hate I had for my uncle. My father dealt with it differently. My father loves his brother and even though he was hurt and angry after some reflection he remembered the good times he had with his brother. The love he has for his brother and that love for his brother grew stronger as he was reflecting upon it. The Bible teaches that we should love each other with brotherly affection. Suddenly the relationship with his brother became more important to him then the house, more important than being right because he has every right to be angry, but the Bible teaches us to love others. So he was able to forgive because he seeks the relationship with his brother more than the desire to be in that house. The Bible teaches we should not come before the altar until we have made peace with our brothers. It says in this prayer, **our father** in heaven. So even as a church we are brothers and sisters in Christ. So just how my father deals with his brotherly affection towards his real brother we should deal with brotherly affection with each other and we should be able to forgive.

There is a third way of dealing with forgiveness that is how my mom dealt with it. She has been the Christian for the most amount of years in my family and she had the hardest time. She was more angry than me because she had a closer relationship with my uncle. She knew him better. She had a bigger emotional connection with the home because she invested in it. She picked out the furniture, she decorated it, spent a lot more time. So she was burning with anger and I was talking to her many time and telling her to forgive, but she said “I cannot forgive I am still angry, how can I forgive when I am angry” and I told her you are angry because you haven’t forgiven and she got the theology of it. She did Bible studies on forgiveness, she read a lot during those weeks and she got it in her head, she understand I must forgive but her heart was not feeling it and I think that is how many of us feel. We know we must forgive but we are not feeling it. We just cannot do it in our hearts, it is difficult, it is painful then how do we deal with it and finally she came together with a friend of hers from her small group and they sat down and they prayed and she said “Lord, help me, help my unforgiving heart”. See repentance is another way how we deal with forgiveness. If we cannot forgive we need to repent of that spirit. We need to bring it to God, father help me, help my un-forgiveness. We are fallen short of your glory, I cannot do what you ask me to do, help me and when we realize that we are falling short of God’s glory in our un-forgiveness and suddenly we receive grace all over again. We feel mercy all over again. Even though we are falling short, even though we are re-sinning against God through our un-forgiveness he gives us grace and he gives us forgiveness and through that repentance we experience grace and mercy all over again and again that cannot leave us unchanged. The next morning she woke up and she was able to forgive because she again experienced God’s forgiveness. We must be ambassadors of forgiveness. We must be ambassadors of grace. Grace and forgiveness are always costly. It cost God his son to give us forgiveness. Tim Keller in one of his sermon says, “*Christ suffered not that we might not suffer but that in our suffering we might become like him*”. If God can send his son, if Jesus can die on the cross for our forgiveness, can’t we die a little bit to ourselves to forgive others, can’t we suffer just a little bit to give others forgiveness.

**Lead Us Not Into Temptation:**

We know that Bible says that God will not tempt. In James we read that God will not tempt us, so let nobody says that God tempts or that God can be tempted. So the better understanding is lead us not into trials. James also says that trials are good, trials give us character, and trials give us wisdom. So why should be pray something which is ultimately good for us? Well again I go to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is there, he knew the trial was going to come. He knew the difficulty was going to come, he knew it was good yet he fell on his knees and he prayed, take this cup away from me but not my will but your will be done. It is a prayer of desperation. Are we desperate for God? Somebody once asked me what is spiritual vitality, what is spiritual health is. I had no answer. The only picture that came to my mind was this. If over a period of time, say a month or two, I don’t fall on my knees and in the middle of the night I don’t cry out to God and say “Lord, I cannot do this. Father help me, I am weak, I am insufficient, I cannot do life without you, who to me a man with unclean lips, my temptations, my desires I fail O Lord”. If I don’t regularly fall on my knees and ask God help me, deliver me, I think I have become spiritually unhealthy. When it says lead us not into temptations we ask that God may not bring us into trails that we may not succumb to trials. There is the evil one who is waiting for us to fail, we ask that you lead us away father. Deliver us from evil. We must be desperate people. The beatitude says, blessed are the poor in spirit. Are we poor in spirit, we realized that we are spiritually bankrupt, we realized that we cannot do it on our own, my flesh and my heart my fail but Lord is my portion forever. We need God in our lives, without him we will fail. Are we desperate for his mercy, are we desperate for his name, are we desperate for him to be holy, are we desperate for his kingdom to come, are we desperate for his will to be done, and are we hungry and thirsty for righteousness. It says hunger and thirst; it is a call of desperation.

Let us think, is there anybody in our lives who we have not forgiven, are we desperate for his forgiveness.