

## The Lord's Prayer June 21, 2020

### Matthew 6:9-13

9 "Pray then in this way: 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 this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one" (NRSV).

Last Sunday I talked about Jesus having to deal with an ingrained problem of society. The religious leaders made up a portion of the elite ruling class and took advantage of their positions of power. They abused the people and feigned piety by pretending to be devout and righteous. They took it to the extreme by showing off acts of faithfulness in public. Well, that is all about self gratification, pride, and ego, instead of being about God. This is the environment that Jesus comes into. So, Jesus, early in his ministry, in front of a very large audience, preaches the Sermon on the Mount. In the sermon he condemns hypocrisy, condemns their public display of piety, and tells the people how not to pray. Do not use empty phrases in order to be heard or make a public display in order to be seen. Because that kind of action does not lead others to God or get people closer to God. What it does is it mainly gains attention for the self.

Now this poses a problem. Jesus has taught the audience what not to do. So, now the people don't know what to do. Because, what they have learned is from the religious leaders and if that is the wrong way then they need to know what the right way is. This brings us to today's Scripture. The NRSV is quite different from our common liturgy because our liturgy is based on the KJV. **Matthew 6:9-13** Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen (KJV).

I want to point out that it is tough to follow all of the teachings of Jesus. You really have to work at it because Jesus took the law to a higher level. "Your righteousness has to surpasses the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. You have to practice and teach these commands. If you are angry with your brother you will be subject to judgment. How much you forgive is the measuring device for your forgiveness. Do not swear at all. Give to everyone who asks. Be perfect as God is perfect." We have to be honest with ourselves and look at who we are and where we are in our relationship with the Lord. Honestly, we fail to be the people that Christ says we are to be. All the violence that is going on in our society today goes against the will of God, the teachings of Jesus, and your Christian confession. I know of a full proof and guaranteed way to prevent all of these crimes against humanity and all of the protests. Regardless of race, gender, social status, or sexual orientation. It is simple, everybody follow the teachings of Jesus. I will rephrase this for emphasis. If everybody in society followed the teachings of Jesus there would be no crimes against humanity. Everybody would get along and respect each other and there would be no rights violations regardless of race, gender, social status, or sexual orientation. When you follow the teachings of Jesus everyone gets along. There is no blaming or judging, no need for laws, courts, jails, or police because there are no violations of human rights. There would be no disagreements, no abuses, no oppression, and no poverty. But it does not happen in our world because our world has fallen away from God. If we only follow teachings of Jesus none of this stuff in the news today would

happen. We would not need police because we would have peace because no one would violate the rights of others, or pose a risk to others. Everybody would respect one another. We live a society that is polarized by self righteous indignation. People respond out of their emotions instead of logic. One offense becomes a catalyst for another offense. Situations spiral out of control as if igniting a powder keg resulting in death and destruction. We live in a society where social ills are considered criminal instead of being treated with the dignity that humans deserve.

The religious rulers were hypocrites. Jesus shined a light on the problem now he needs to teach the people what to do, how to pray, and what the focus of prayer is to be. This then is how you pray. Our Father - the word "Father" being used to refer to God is paternal which ends up becoming patriarchal which is not the intent of the prayer. The intent is a parent figure in a loving relationship. Our relationship with the Lord is based on love as the children of God. In heaven - reminds us of the holiness of God. There is transcendence, our place is here on earth and God is in heaven. Hallowed be your name - hallowed is consecrated holy, your name is holy. A name is more than what one is called by; it indicates the nature and personality. God's name reveals God's holiness. Your kingdom come - the Kingdom of God is central to the message of Jesus. In the beginning of his ministry we see "From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Mat 4:17). Jesus mission is salvation but it includes education about God, the will of God, and the kingdom of God. Your will be done - the most important thing is the will of God. This demands submission to God's will. Humanity has fallen into its own will. To get right with God takes complete surrender to God's will. On earth as it is in heaven - God's will is enforced in heaven. The bad guys got kicked out. God's will is to prevail on earth like it does in heaven. It is very important for us to get this, it is never about human will. Give us today our daily bread - this is a matter of giving thanks to God for food and our basic needs for survival. We should thank God for everything; life, air, and the surplus blessings bestowed upon us. Thank God I have food to eat today. When I had a foster child one of them would pray for food. This is good. But then he would be picky and not eat most of it. I told him that he was not being faithful or sincere. If you pray to God and thank God for the food but then not eat the food, it means you are not thankful, you don't appreciate the food. Jesus teaches in the Lord's prayer sincerity of prayer. Forgive us our debts - these are sins and transgressions. Prayer includes repentance, asking God to forgive you. We have a broken relationship with God, everyone sins and everyone needs repentance. As we also have forgiven our debtors - see, I told you following the teachings of Jesus is hard. Here in teaching people how to pray Jesus teaches our own forgiveness is mandatory. Being forgiven has a positive correlation to our own forgiveness; we are forgiven according to how we forgive others. Do not bring us to the time of trial - lead us not into temptation. We all face temptations. What tempts one person may have no impact on another. For some it may be drugs, alcohol, or sex. For others it may be anger, or vengeance. There is a long list of vices. Everyone has a weak spot, an issue, a flaw. We need help from God to strengthen and empower us to resist. Deliver us from evil - the Bible is clear, there is evil in this world. Pray to God to protect you from evil.

This prayer that Jesus teaches brings God into our lives. Let us pray daily to our loving and caring God as a child of God. Let us keep God's name holy for God's kingdom has come to us, hand delivered by Jesus. Let us pray daily for God's will to be done here on earth. Let us be sure to thank God for our food. Let us appeal to God as often as we

can for forgiveness and make sure that we also forgive others. And let us pray to God for the power to avoid temptation and for God to deliver us from evil. Amen.