

## **The Lord's Prayer, The Prayer that Re-Focuses our Lives - Luke 11:1-4**

Good day family and friends and everyone listening online around the world today.

We thank you for being with us this morning as we ready ourselves to dig deep into God's Word.

Prayer

My message this morning, straight from God's word, is titled.

The Lord's Prayer, The Prayer that Re-Focuses our Lives - Luke 11:1-4

If you have been coming to church for any period of time, you have either seen or heard or both— what is central to who Jesus is and what he is doing..

Let me refresh and remind us,

His bringing God's kingdom....

God's reign and rule.

And he is offering the potential to become restored to life with God..

and in him...we see such life connected.

Jesus reveals that the world around you will one day be transformed ...

but more importantly, as I believe, Jesus is talking about the world within you -

right now we can begin to live in relationship to eternal life with God in heaven.

We may naturally ask:

How do we connect in this reoriented way?

Let's pick up in the Gospel of Luke...

11

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."

2 And he said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.

3 Give us each day our daily bread,

4 and forgive us our sins,

Here is the context:

There is a moment that comes when the request is made by the disciples:

"Lord, teach us to pray..."

You know what else they specifically asked Jesus to teach them?

Nothing.

Jesus taught about many aspects of life...and many asked him questions.

But there is nothing else at least recorded...that his disciples want to learn to do from Jesus.

Perhaps this isn't so surprising...

because they had seen withered hands restored instantly:

they had seen lepers cleansed and the lame walk.

They had seen Jesus raise the dead and all of that flowed out from prayer.

But praying for others was not what seems to be at the forefront here.

Jesus had already been teaching them and sending them to pray for healing and deliverance.

What we read here is — that Jesus was in the process of personal prayer, when they came and asked him to teach them to pray.

What they wanted to learn...was how THEY — could have the life of personal prayer that connected with heaven like he did.

His whole life operated out of what was formed by such personal prayer.

And it is this Jesus responds to.

"WHEN you pray..."... not IF but WHEN.

Prayer is not some optional part of life with God...it is life with God.

It is not any more optional than breathing is to life.

Connection is what we deeply long for...

and there is no connection more profound and powerful than connection with God.

That I submit is the power of prayer.

Prayer is our opportunity to connect to God, the Creator of the universe.

Prayer is where our spiritual nature connects with the Spirit of God...

the very Spirit which created the world...

the very Spirit who breathed life into our material nature.

The words we just read may sound familiar to most.

They have become known as the Lord's Prayer...

and become as familiar as perhaps any words spoken by Jesus.

Some of you may have noticed they sound a little different than what we may have heard or recited over the years...

briefly than what we are generally familiar with.

That is because we usually recite the longer version found in Matthew's Gospel. (Matthew 6:7-15)

This version that Dr. Luke records...

likely on a different occasion...

It is briefer...but nearly the same at its core.

And that itself suggests that Jesus' words were never understood to be merely something to recite...

but rather they were meant to be something that shapes the very nature of all prayer.

These words are certainly rich enough to be recited and prayed together...

but it is helpful to realize that they were given more as a model...or pattern.

The disciples wanted Jesus to teach them to pray... not teach them a prayer.

Jesus was teaching them HOW to pray by offering that which is fitting for us to live in connection with God.

In these words we discover something very different than what we commonly think about prayer.

We tend to think it is about placing an order...

almost like a shopping list that when it grows to a point of big enough need...we should bring to God.

Or prayer can be spoken of as if it's fitting as an emergency protocol...

it's common to hear someone say...

"Well there is Nothing left to do but... pray."

We tend to think we know who we are and what we are doing...

and when we need a little help... we'll check in.

But the truth is that without knowing our primary reference point...we are lost.

Utterly lost.

And we've lost our most basic orientation to the way that life is.

Just as disorientation can refer to the danger that firefighters face in a blazing house fire...

or hikers in the mountains...

or pilots flying planes...

Jesus sees our relationship in relation to the whole of life.

Jesus sees human life as operating in relationship to the ways of this lost world...

and not in relationship to the true reality of the eternal realm of God.

Prayer is that which orients us with ultimate reality.

Prayer is about aligning with the way things are.

Here Jesus presents what realigns/refocuses the soul with true life... that which reorients the soul.

Jesus knows that we are no longer naturally oriented in relationship to God.

And prayer is an essential prescription for the soul.

So let's engage what are my four points of reference.

Prayer is Re-Focusing or if you want Re-Aligning Ourselves with...

1. Our True Center

Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

With these words...Jesus begins by realigning us with our true center of existence.

This is as life defining as anything our soul will ever know.

Take a moment to let your soul ponder these truths...

Our existence has a Center.

We are not it.

Our existence is intimately and eternally connected to that Center...as our ultimate Father.

Father... is who Jesus is restoring for us to know.

This is why he came.

And while we may speak of everyone as a child of God...

in terms of being created as such...

We in our human sinful nature, for the most part, have all chosen to go our own way.

The inner condition of human life is one of emancipation.

Our very nature operates by autonomous rule...

and as such... though God may be our ultimate Father...

our emancipation means all rights and relationships are no longer in place.

That is why Jesus says he has come as the true eternal Son to give us the right to become restored as children once again.

Christ came to be what we could not be...

human life united with the Father... to then give us his position... and his spirit to live in us.

So, if we receive Christ...

his life...

his death on our behalf...

and his life now lived in us...

we are restored as children of God...

and God is our Father.

This prayer begins with declaring the greatest truth that any human soul can know...

that the source of all existence is our ultimate Father...

and He welcomes us home through His own provision.

This morning in order to be transparent!  
However, please believe me I am not condemning,

but truth be told, my father was often unapproachable, not very connected with me, and to be honest, to the best of my recollection, in his 91 years he never told me that he loved me or was proud of me.

And for some of you this may also be true.

In such a case, and it took me a very long time to realize this truth — I found the one way to overcome this situation in my life was to know that God is everything I ever wished for in a father, and this is the same for everyone of us.

God can become for you the fulfillment of your dream for an honorable and decent father who loves you unconditionally.

Prayer is becoming realigned with God who provides the ultimate in a father's heart, a father's love, a father's strength, a father's concern for the best interest of his children, and a father's commitment.

God is the ultimate source of all love, and we find our home in Him.

God is the ultimate source of all goodness...

whose nature we honor as distinct ...

whose will we give ourselves to.

We have a Father...and honor that Father for who he is.

So Jesus follows identifying God as our Father with...  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

... extended in the account in Matthew 6:9-10 as...

"...hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." -

"Hallowed be your name."

We don't use that word "hallowed" very often unless it's with the word "Halloween."

The word "hallow" means "the setting apart as holy".

The word "Halloween" simply means "holy evening."

Jesus is reorienting our souls to know that the center of all existence... is God our father...

whose name...which means his nature...

we must understand it as holy...

which means set apart...

set apart from being desecrated by our nature.

His name ...his nature... is not ours.

Our Father is honored when we honor his superior nature...and goodness ...and beauty.

While it may help some to refer to God as "the man upstairs" ... or "the big guy in the sky" ...

to be honest those terms bug me something terribly, let me explain my reasoning why.

We must not lose the sense that He (God) is the source of all existence...

all power... all beauty...and all goodness.

And the true Center operates from His good will...not ours.

As Jesus includes in Matthew's account...

"Your will be done...on earth as it is in heaven."

What a defining shift.

In some instances, we tend to live as if we are the center.

As If there is a God... and He is free to serve our will.

And prayer is then the work of pulling Him into our gravitational pull.

How arrogant it will prove.

Why?

His is the center.

He is the gravitational power.

His will be done.

This prayer is not so much about our power to change that will...but to align ourselves with that will.

Jesus' focus was on the will of the Father and in seeing his kingdom established in all He did and wanted to do.

John 6:38 – “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”

If we are going to pray like Jesus, we have got to make doing His will a priority in our life.

And to truly live that way, we have got to be praying for that.

To truly see the Father’s kingdom and will, established on this earth, we need to recognize that it needs to be established in our own hearts.

Jesus tells us in...

Luke 17:20-21 - 20 Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,

21 nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

We must ultimately ask:

Is God’s kingdom being established in us?

Are we prioritizing His will in our lives, or have we prioritized our wants and desires?

This is what we declare in our worship...

and should declare more and more throughout our entire week.

For some this is the hardest element of prayer.

It’s the hardest because most of us have a hard time getting out of our own orbit... breaking out of our own gravitational pull.

We tend to relate to ourselves as the center... the subject...

and God as the object...the one which we direct...

and control...with our words and our wills.

It takes effort to break out of our gravitational pull.

And that is where the power of praise and thanksgiving serves us well.

As you may know, if you ever watched the launch of the Space Shuttle most of the fuel a rocket carries is expended in the very start...

the process of lifting up and out of this gravitational pull...

and in the same way ... we need the power of worship and giving thanks to lift us out of our own vain self-centered nature.

And there is so much to acknowledge when we choose to.

There is no limit to all that we can honor in God's beauty ...and goodness...and mercy.

Prayer is Re-Focusing Ourselves with...

## 2. Our True Source

Give us each day our daily bread.

"Give us each day our daily bread" may at first glance seem irrelevant to most of us.

While there certainly are people right here in this community and in other countries that are not sure where their next meal is coming from, statistically, most of us today have plenty to eat.

However, when we pray, "Give us each day our daily bread," we are saying that we trust God as the source to supply all the physical needs of our lives.

The word bread is really a broad term meaning all of our physical needs. ....

all that nourishes our lives.

This includes bread course...but naturally represents all basic needs... food, water, clothing, shelter, friends, and the like.

We need to ask and pray about our physical needs, not for the Father to know what we need, but for us to recognize and remind ourselves of who it is who provides for our needs.

Notice that this trust in God is for each day.

In the first century, bread had to be made on a daily basis.

They couldn't just buy a couple loaves and put them in the freezer.

Today we live with refrigeration...and bank accounts...

and so many ways in which we think we have provided for ourselves...

and if we come up short at any time...

And then, in that circumstance, we might... just might...consider having needs we tell God about.

But in truth...it's an illusion... every source of need is ultimately from God.

We do well to consider the wisdom of Proverbs, when the writer says...

Proverbs 30:8-9? Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me,

lest I be full and deny you  
and say, "Who is the Lord?"  
or lest I be poor and steal  
and profane the name of my God.

The author wanted to keep his reliance on the Lord daily and did not want anything to come in the way of that relationship or to be put in a position where he might dishonor the Lord.

And it is also beneficial to help remind ourselves of the distinction between needs and wants.

The point of the prayer is not for us to get what we want, but to receive what we need.

At the root of our deadly separation from God... is that which wants to claim our independence.

We want to take the goods and denounce the giver.

We don't want daily dependence.

We want independence from God.

We want God to dump a billion dollars on us and we'll get back with Him when we run out of funds.

This is the prayer that realigns our souls to our true source.

Prayer is Re-Focusing Ourselves with...

### 3. Our True Accountability

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

Jesus sees that in terms of accountability..

we are lost.

Separated from God...

the human conscience is seared.

We cannot escape the problems of guilt...

but we have no way of truly being free.

We are left only looking to others.

So we try to justify ourselves...

comparing ourselves to others...

which leaves us in the mire of merely relative rightness.

We externalize our conscience...  
confusing looking good with being good.

We become afraid of "getting caught"... when the truth is that we are completely seen.

To pray "Forgive us"... is to realign ourselves with our true accountability which lies in God

...the source of all good

...the One whose goodness we violate.

...the One whose forgiveness we ultimately need.

So Jesus places this into the very core of prayer.

And confession is the very nature of being able to live close with God our Father.

We may wonder...why express what he already knows?

Because it makes all the difference to our relationship.

Even if a parent knows what their child has done... until the child admits it... the relationship bears distance... separation.

Confessions restores relationships.

- 1 John 1-9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

The Father knows our struggles.

His desire is for our agreement, placing ourselves "on the same side" of the struggle.

Only in such open agreement can His relationship empower us.

We do well to regularly ask ourselves...

What are you most aware of in your life (thoughts, heart, behavior),

that is not in alignment with God's heart and will?

And Jesus has told us that in seeking his forgiveness...we agree to forgiving others.

As the Scriptures tell us...

Colossians 3:13 -

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.

If we sincerely seek grace...

We must live by grace towards others.

If we know that we live by mercy not merit...

we will not refuse mercy to others.

We forgive...as we are forgiven.

And finally...

Prayer is Re-Focusing Ourselves with...

4. Our True Guide

And lead us not into temptation.

He is not suggesting that God is the one who tempts us.

The Scriptures clearly tell us that God "does not tempt anyone" (James 1:13).

What this prayer recognizes...is that we need help.

We need God's Spirit to lead us through the temptations and dangers of this world.

Rather it accepts the danger of temptation, acknowledges our deficiency in dealing with it, and asks for deliverance from it.

Our guide cannot be merely laws and legislation.

Nor what may become socially acceptable in common culture.

We need a shepherd of our souls.

The Bible refers to us as sheep...  
who needs a shepherd to see us safely through danger.

I believe most of us are familiar with Psalm 23 which describes... "The Lord is my shepherd...  
he leads me."

And if we follow his lead...we will not have to "fear any evil."

And ultimately Jesus comes as "the good shepherd"... who knows his sheep.

Closing:

With this prayer...Jesus is providing a massive reorientation for our souls.

He is providing that which we deeply need to realign our souls with true life.

These are not simply a few words to recite...but matters for the soul to be transformed by.

If the worship team would come up.

I read this quote in preparation for this message.

Henry Ward Beecher, was a famous leader in the last century wrote of the Lord's Prayer,

"I used to think the Lord's Prayer was a short prayer;

but, as I live longer, and see more of life, I believe there is no such thing as getting through it.

If a man, in praying that prayer, were to be stopped by every word until he had thoroughly prayed it, it would take him a lifetime."

So the big question for today!!

There is no more valuable question we can ask ourselves today than this one:

How disoriented am I?

This prayer invites us to connect with God...by reorienting our lives.

My hope is that you will consider with me... praying through this prayer every day this coming week.