



GPS GUIDE: MAY 29, 2022

Grow. Pray. Study.

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Sermon: Under Construction

Each day this week we will focus on different stanzas of the Lord's Prayer. Pray it daily as you offer your devotion to God.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Monday: Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

When we pray the Lord's prayer we say "hallowed be thy name." - THY name. I like to use the more modern word - YOUR name. the word *thy* is too close to *my* making it too easy to make a slip of the tongue - hallowed be *my* name. When I think about it, I like for my name to be honored. I like to hear my name associated with praise. Don't you? It's not necessarily a bad thing, but how often do I, do we, take the credit for what is happening that we are involved in? How often do we give the credit (privately or publicly) to God's action in our lives? Jesus is teaching us in this prayer to open our eyes, ears, minds, hearts to recognize that God is active in our daily lives. That is what Jesus consistently did in his own life and ministry. When others gave him credit, Jesus always gave God the credit. In John's gospel Jesus says, "If I glorify myself, I glorify nothing. It is my father who glorifies me." Jesus' teaching through his life and this prayer reminds us to adjust our eyesight for our own lives. How can praying the prayer Jesus taught help you to align your life with God's holiness, God's ways, so that others will see God's glory shining through your life?

Tuesday: Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

When Jesus talks about the kingdom we often get confused about what he is teaching through his prayer. The gospel writer of Matthew speaks about the *kingdom of heaven*. When we think about the kingdom of heaven we tend to think about where we go when we die, the pearly gates, and streets lined with gold. But the Lord's Prayer is not talking about that. There really isn't anything about death in the prayer. It's a prayer about life!

Jesus' instruction about how to pray - God's kingdom come, God's will be done, on earth as it is in heaven - is about bringing God's justice into being right here and now, rather than in another far distant reality. Jesus is teaching that it should be God who governs our lives together - God's sense of economic justice - God's sense of social order - that's what should rule our life together.

One of the challenging things about that for us is that when we start praying *God's kingdom come* we leave the personal realm of prayer. We tend to feel comfortable with a personal Lord and Savior, but it is much more challenging for us, scary even, to talk about the political nature of our faith. Jesus challenged the political structure of his time. Not King Herod's will be done, but God will! Not Pilate's kingdom, but God's kingdom be lived out. When we pray *thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven* what that means for me and for you in practical terms is that we commit to put aside what we want and work toward what God wants.

The incredibly difficult part about being a Christian is not *not knowing* God's will. Most of the time we know what God would have us do in a situation. The challenge isn't knowing it. The challenge is DOING IT - Loving our enemy, picking up our cross, loving our neighbor as ourselves, acting in humility, for equality, and working to bring about God's shalom. To pray for the kingdom of God to come is a reminder that we are not in charge...God is. It is remembering that our elected officials are not king...God is. We are not lord...Jesus is. We pray the prayer Jesus taught and it rolls off the tongue, but it takes practice for us to live it out...Thy kingdom come...thy will be done...in my life - in our lives. Practicing God's will begins in prayer...but it cannot stay there. Prayer moves faithfully into action to live into God's will to be done in the here and now. How will you work for God's justice in the here and now? Today? This week?

Wednesday: Give us this day our daily bread

In today's line from the Lord's Prayer there is a Greek word that seems to have been made up particularly for use in this prayer. It's a word that is found nowhere else in the scriptures except for in Matthew's and Luke's writing of the Lord's Prayer. The word is *epiousion* and it's what we translate as *daily*. Give us this day our *daily* bread. *Epiousion* means what's necessary - what we need right now - what we need for today. It means *enough*. God give us enough for this day, give us enough for tomorrow, supply our basic needs. give us enough. But we are not a culture accustomed to having just enough. We like more than enough - supersize meals, supersize homes, supersize cars. We prefer to pray "God give us this day *more* than we need." Jesus teaches his disciples, teaches you and me, how to pray *give us this day enough* - enough to sustain us, enough for us to offer

sustenance to others. This I think is the heart of what Jesus meant when he said, "When you pray, pray like this." When you assess your life do you have more than enough? How can you turn your prayer for God to supply your daily need into a practice of living that helps you to rely on more fully, trust more fully in God? How can we as a church live out God's generosity to provide in ways where everyone has enough?

Thursday: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

Forgive us God as we forgive others. That's not a prayer I would come up with on my own. My prayer would sound more like, "God forgive me despite the way I'm able to forgive others." But Jesus says pray like this, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." And you know, I've struggled with what it means. What I do know is that the way I forgive, and the way God forgives me are wrapped together - intimately connected. I believe that the God we meet in Jesus Christ is GRACE - pure grace. God loves us just as we are. God forgives us. God welcomes us. And it doesn't depend on who I am, or what I think. God gives and forgives and it is pure grace.

But to be a disciple of Jesus, to follow him with our very lives, means to learn to live in the way Jesus calls us to live. To do the things that God calls us to do. And forgiving others makes the top of the list.

Anne Lamott says it so clearly in one of her books:

I'm not one of those Christians who's heavily into forgiveness. To forgive is a miraculous process and boy is it hard. When I'm in my dis-ease, I think that if I could just explain to Jesus how heinous someone has been, that He would agree with me, that the person should rot in hell for one third of eternity and then come to heaven but have a really bad seat. But apparently--and I hate this--no. My understanding is that there's no one Jesus feels this way towards. I used to cry out to God, but what about So and So? The answer I got, which I didn't like was, "Nope." If you can't or won't forgive, then it will make and keep you toxic. It will rob you of life force. I used to tell people I'm not one of those Christians who's heavily into forgiveness. But I've discovered there's no other kind.

There's no other kind! How will praying the Lord's prayer move you from words to actions of forgiveness toward others? Toward yourself? How do we as a church practice forgiveness as part of our public witness to our faith?

Friday: And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

Jesus knows that to be human is to struggle with temptation. So, Jesus teaches us to make it a pattern in our lives to ask for God's guidance around the temptations we face. *Lead us* - It's interesting in the Bible that God is always trying to lead God's people. God led the Israelites by a column of smoke and a pillar of fire. God gave them the 10 commandments and says if you'll listen to these words, and live by them, you will find blessing and life. The prophets came to remind and correct the people because they kept listening to other voices and going astray. The Psalmist,

who gives us the most beautiful and comforting words, reminds us of who God is and what God does for us, "You lead me beside still waters, you restore my soul. you lead me in the paths of righteousness for your name's sake."

In the New Testament Jesus tells us what it means to become disciples, "If any would be my disciples let them take up their cross and *follow* me." "I am the good shepherd. My sheep know my voice and they *follow* me." "Lay down your nets and *follow* me." We come to understand that to be a follower of Christ, to be a Christian, means that we want, not to follow our own desires, our own ways, but instead to be led by Jesus. We want to go in the direction he wants us to go. We want to listen to and follow his voice. Jesus teaches us to pray this prayer, a prayer that brings life to us, that moves us closer to God's goodness. Jesus instructs us to listen to God's voice. And so we pray, "Lead us, Lord. Don't leave us to our own devices. Deliver us from the evil that we are capable of. Lead us, Lord. We want to follow you. How will praying the Lord's prayer in faithfulness move you toward deeper discipleship, following Christ with your actions?"

Saturday: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The earliest manuscripts we have of the prayer Jesus taught end with "Deliver us from the evil one." And the Doxology, the ending words that we focus on today do not appear in Greek manuscripts until the late 200's. So how did this ending, this doxology, become attached to the Lord's Prayer? Probably when people began praying it together in community they just started adding in a line of praise, or thanksgiving, to the end of the prayer. Throughout the Bible you'll find these short words of praise, doxologies, giving glory to God. That's what the word Greek word DOXA means – *glory* - an affirmation of praise - a word of praise that people said after they prayed the prayer that Jesus taught.

The Lord's Prayer directs us toward a power beyond our own. It rightly points us toward releasing our need to be in charge, hold power, and seek glory, and places it back in God's possession. *Yours* is the kingdom...not mine. *Yours* is the power...not mine. *Yours* is the glory...not mine. In praying these words that come at the end of the Lord's Prayer we remember that we *can* pray, "Our father, give us our daily bread, forgive us our trespasses, help us to forgive others, lead us, not into temptation. We can pray all these things precisely because God is the one whose dominion, whose power, and glory will never end.

In the end a doxology is much more than words spoken at the end of a prayer. A doxology comes at the end of the prayer to remind and instruct us to live out this prayer in our lives as Jesus did. Jesus taught us to pray with more than just his words. He taught us to pray through his life. A life that was, and is, bound up in the authority, power, and glory of God. How will your life become more closely bound up with God as you not only pray, but seek to live out the Lord's prayer in discipleship?