

⁵ And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶ But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁷ And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: 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 forgive our debtors. ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Text: Matthew 6:5-13 A 10/8/17 1 Samuel 1:9-20 Philippians 4:4-7 Resp. Ps.: 145
Hymns: 11, 540, 459, 792

JESUS TEACHES US TO PRAY

- 1. Jesus teaches us how to pray**
- 2. Jesus teaches us what to pray for**

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

In his Gospel Luke tells us that the disciples asked Jesus, “*Lord, teach us to pray,*” (Lk. 11:1). In response, Jesus taught them what we know as “The Lord’s Prayer.” As He taught His disciples, so **JESUS TEACHES US TO PRAY. Jesus teaches us how to pray. And Jesus teaches us what to pray for.**

– 1 –

Jesus says, “*When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*” The Pharisees put on a public show of their praying so people would think how pious they were. Jesus says, “*They have their reward,*” which, sadly, was only that some people were impressed by them. But God isn’t impressed by outward shows of piety. He wants our prayers to be offered by faith in Him, from our heart. When we gather together in worship, we pray because each of us needs to, and wants to. Our prayers go from **our** hearts to **God’s** heart.

The Bible urges us, “*Pray continually*” (1 Thess. 5:17). We don’t just pray at church, we pray during our private Bible study and prayer time, and wherever we are. James reminds us that prayer is “*offered in faith*” (Jms 5:15, NASB). We pray by faith in the living God – the God of the Bible. We pray, believing and knowing, as God promises in His Word, that He hears our

prayers and answers us. We're told, *"Your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."* The Pharisees showy prayers brought them praise from others. Prayers offered to God in faith bring us God's answers, and His blessings in our lives.

Jesus tells us, *"Ask..., seek..., knock,"* in the original text, literally, *"Keep asking..., keep seeking..., keep knocking"* (Mt. 7:7). Jesus tells us to keep praying and not give up until He answers us. Jesus is talking about something different when He tells us, *"When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them."* Notice Jesus is talking about *"the heathen"* here: unbelievers. Some religions teach that if a person says the same prayer over and over enough times, the repetition **itself** will bring an answer from God. But God doesn't answer people's prayers simply because they've said that same prayer many times. We pray, believing in God. Whether we need to pray about something one time or many times, God answers our prayers because He loves, and He promises He'll answer us.

Jesus says, *"Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."* God doesn't need us to tell Him what we need in order for Him to know. He's God. He already knows. But we need to ask Him for it because we need to rely on **Him**. When Jesus says, *"Ask..., seek..., knock,"* He's not only inviting us to pray to Him, He's commanding us to pray to Him. James says, *"You do not have because you do not ask"* (Jms. 4:2b). Sometimes we just don't think to ask God about something. Sometimes we pray to God about something only after 'everything else fails.' Sometimes we think we have something all figured out and under control, so we don't ask God about it. Sometimes, because of pride or fear or some other reason, we don't ask God about something because we're not really open to whatever His answer may be. Scripture says, *"In **everything** by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* (Philip. 4:6). Jesus promises us, *"Your Father who is in heaven [will] give **good** things to those who ask Him!"* (Mt. 7:11).

– 2 –

Jesus says, *"In this manner, therefore, pray."* Jesus proceeds to tell us what to pray for, in the words of The Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father in heaven." In the Small Catechism Martin Luther explains: "With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that we may pray to Him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father."

"Hallowed be Your name," that is, *"May we treat You and Your name as holy."* When we hear the name of someone we know, we think of that person. When we hear God's name we think of Him and what we know about Him. What we know about God is everything the Bible tells us about Him. When we pray to God, *"Hallowed be Your name,"* we're praying that what we

believe and the way we live honors God and His name and His Word. Luther says, “God’s name is kept holy when His Word is taught in its truth and purity and we as children of God lead holy lives according to it.”

“Your kingdom come.” We pray that God rule in our hearts and lives and in the hearts and lives of everyone else through faith in Him. We pray that God would take all of us to heaven. Luther says, “God’s kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life now on earth and forever in heaven.”

“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In our prayers we tell God what we need and want, and then ask Him to do what **He** knows is best. Luther says, “God’s will is done when He breaks every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our flesh... And God’s will is done when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and in the faith as long as we live. This is His good and gracious will.”

“Give us this day our daily bread.” We look to **God** to provide us with our food and with everything else we need each day, and we thank Him for it. Luther says, “Daily bread includes everything that we need for our bodily welfare.” “God surely gives daily bread without our asking, even to all the wicked, but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.”

“And forgive us our debts” (our sins) *“as we forgive our debtors”* (those who sin against us). We are sinners who don’t deserve God’s forgiveness and blessings. But Jesus died for all of our sins on the cross. God in His grace for Jesus’ sake forgives all of our sins and richly blesses us. Scripture says, *“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you”* (Eph. 4:32). When we pray, *“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,”* we’re asking God to help us forgive others and be kind to them just as He is so forgiving and kind to us. Luther says, “We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins or because of them deny our prayers; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we ask, neither have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will forgive from the heart and gladly do good to those who sin against us.”

James says, *“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed”* (Jms. 1:13-14). So when we pray, *“Do not lead us into temptation,”* we’re asking God to lead us away from, and protect us from, things that tempt us to sin. Luther says, “God surely tempts no one to sin, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us or lead us into

false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.”

“But deliver us from the evil one” (or, *“But deliver us from evil”*). We pray that God would keep bad things from happening to us, which He often does. And because we live in a sinful, imperfect world, when bad things do happen to us we pray that God would see us safely through them. We know that in heaven God will deliver us from every evil forever. Luther says, “We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation, and finally when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to Himself in heaven.”

“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” We pray, knowing that our almighty heavenly Father listens to our prayers, and answers them. Luther says, “We can be sure that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and are heard by Him, for He Himself has commanded us to pray in this way and has promised to hear us. Therefore we say, ‘Amen,’ [which means] ‘Yes, it shall be so.’”

Jesus teaches us how to pray, and what to pray for. He has given us the Lord’s Prayer. Since the words are from Jesus Himself, as we pray the Lord’s Prayer God’s power is working through His Word. In The Lord’s Prayer Jesus gives us a pattern to follow in making up our own prayers. He shows us things that are important for us to pray for, and pleasing to God for us to pray for. He shows us what we can expect from God in answer to our prayers.

“Lord, teach us to pray.” Amen.