

Message Notes and Questions: The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be Your name
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory
For ever and ever
Amen

Jesus was no ordinary Rabbi. Always calm and capable in any situation. Never perplexed by a difficult question. Always in the right place, but never rushed to arrive, never stressed. A man of deep compassion. A man of authority and power. Who wouldn't want to be like Him? Jesus was a man of deep, passionate prayer. Was this the key? Perhaps one disciple thought so (Luke 11:1).

As a result of Christ's finished work on the cross, we who are born again no longer walk in the flesh (Rom 8:9) or in the old spirit of slavery. Rather, we walk in the spirit of Sonship (Rom 8:15). The Holy Spirit within us testifies to our spirit that God is our Father (Romans 8:15-16). What a profound privilege! Our first priority in prayer and in life is to hallow His Name (Matthew 6:9). This means to honour His Name as Holy and to glorify His name in all we do (1 Cor 10:31). To revere Christ as Lord (1 Peter 3:15). To do the good works He has prepared for us (Eph 2:10), and in doing so to let our light shine (Matt 5:16). To bear much fruit (John 15:8). Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit so we should avoid anything that will defile the consecration of our bodies and cause spiritual blindness (1 Cor 6:18-20). We have a good Father. Let's consecrate our hearts to Him and pray that He will be glorified in and through our lives and through Rangeville CC. In doing so, we will see His Kingdom Come.

In the bible story, we see mankind was created to have rulership of God's kingdom on earth in Eden. Because of the fall, mankind and the kingdom were corrupted and rulership usurped by the rebel spirit, satan. Through the triumph of the cross, satan was disarmed, all authority now belongs to Christ (Daniel 7:13-14), mankind is restored, and God's kingdom rule is re-established in the hearts of believers. We serve as Christ's ambassadors on earth. The kingdom of God is within us and advances one heart at a time in the 'now, not yet'. As we serve our King in the 'now' we look forward to His appearing, to the full manifestation of God's kingdom on earth, and to our ultimate glorification as Sons of God who co-reign with Christ (2 Tim 2:11-12; Heb 2:5-8). Our prayers should reflect our hope in the return of Christ and the full manifestation of the Kingdom of God. They should also reflect our privilege to be ambassadors of Christ this day and to see His Kingdom advance one heart at a time as we bear witness to Him.

The kingdom of God is within us, yet we have this treasure in jars of clay. While not our first priority, we are encouraged to pray daily for our physical and emotional needs, i.e., our daily bread (Luke 11:3). As we pray, we are to do so trusting that our Heavenly Father is pleased to meet our needs out of His riches in Christ (Phil 4:19) as we walk with Him moment by moment. We have a good Father who is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than we can ask or imagine (Eph 3:20). A Father who has forgiven us all our sins (Col 2:13), who has washed us (1 Cor 6:11) and purified us. He has given us the Spirit of sonship in place of the spirit of slavery (Rom 8:15). The Spirit of sonship is a Spirit of freedom, tenderness, compassion, mercy, love and forgiveness (Eph 4:32). It is not hard to forgive and set another free when we flow in this spirit. It is a joy. But we must be careful that we do not go back to a spirit of slavery, since a slave is not in a position set another free. We must not believe the lie that God is angry with us and judgemental when we fail. We should forgive ourselves since we have been declared innocent (Prov

17:15). We should not put on the pretence of forgiving when we are badly hurt, but recognise that healing and forgiveness take time in such circumstances. Our Father and Christian brothers and sisters will help us on this journey.

With the right attitude, the normal trials of life have the positive impact of causing us to grow and become mature (James 1:2-4). When Jesus instructed His disciples to pray 'save us from the time of trial', I believe He was referring to a time of trial coming on the earth (Matthew 24:21-22). It has no precedent. At this time, no kingdom work can be done (John 9:4). Jesus promised the church members of Philadelphia that He would keep them from the time of trial (Rev 3:10). Our Father has patiently withheld this time from the world not wanting anyone to perish but all to come to salvation (2 Peter 3:3-4,9,15). How much long will our heavenly Father be patient? We should feel urgency for kingdom mission, but we should also express our urgency with wisdom (Col 4:5). The impact of a quiet, humble life that reflects the character of Jesus (the fruit of the Spirit) is of incalculable value, since how we live has a greater influence on non-Christians than what we say (1 Thes 4:11-12).

As we move forward as a church, let us plan, pray and give with Kingdom Mission in mind. Above all, may we be motivated by a desire to glorify our Father, proclaiming His Wonders and His love. May we consecrate our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ, bearing witness to His sacrificial love, that the Kingdom of God may advance one heart at a time. May we nurture those He gives us, ministering to physical, emotional and spiritual needs, that those added to our number experience healing, wholeness, deliverance and the freedom to forgive, thus becoming mature, equipped ambassadors of Christ with a glorious future. May we watch for our Lord's appearing, while faithfully doing the good works our Father has prepared for us.

Questions

1. Familiarity with Jesus did not breed contempt. Rather, it bred profound respect. You are not perfect (of course!), but when you review the characteristics of Jesus in the first paragraph, can you relate? Do you see those qualities developing in yourself? Discuss.
2. How do you address God when you pray?
3. How do you seek to glorify your Heavenly Father? Is your desire to glorify Him reflected in your daily prayers and in your life?
4. The coming Kingdom of God is revealed in many passages of the Old Testament. The current reality of the Kingdom however is referred to by Paul as a 'mystery' (Col 1:27). What do you think of when you pray, 'Your kingdom come Your will be done'?
5. Do you trust Your heavenly Father to meet all your needs according to His Riches in Christ? To answer this question, do a spiritual health check. Is the peace of Christ ruling in your heart? If so, then I believe you are trusting Father. If not, this is a warning symptom that, in your current circumstance, your trust is not wholly in your Father.
6. Generally speaking, do you find it easy to forgive? Share about your experiences. Is there currently someone you need to forgive? If you are willing, share about this and ask the group to pray for you.
7. Read 1 Thes 4:10-12. Is Paul's advice overly simplistic? Should we be shouting from the rooftops?

Spend some time praying for one another about the issues that have arisen.