

The Foundation of Prayer

by Stephen Kaung

The Lord's Prayer is a model for corporate prayer that teaches us how to pray and what to pray for, and it is a way of life that involves a deep relationship with God and a commitment to following Him.

Duration: 1:16:13

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:1-4, Acts 2:42

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and the ministry of the word. They highlight the example of the apostles who recognized their limitations and delegated the task of serving tables to others. The sermon also discusses the significance of prayer in the life of Jesus, stating that his entire life was saturated with prayer. The speaker encourages believers to not only believe in Jesus but also to obey him and become his disciples, allowing him to transform and mold them.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to Matthew. Matthew chapter 6. I'm going to read something that probably all of you are very very familiar with. Matthew chapter 6. We'll read from verse 9. 9 through 13.

Thus therefore pray ye our Father who art in the heavens. Let thy name be sanctified. Let thy kingdom come.

Let thy will be done as in heaven so upon the earth. Give us today our needed bread and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but save us from evil.

And again please turn to Luke chapter 11. We'll begin with the first verse. And it came to pass as he was in a certain place praying.

When he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray. Even as John also taught his disciples. And he said to them, when ye pray, say, Father, thy name be hallowed.

Thy kingdom come. Give us our needed bread for each day. And remit us our sins.

For we also remit to everyone indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we do praise and thank Thee that we can gather together here in the name of Thy

beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We do thank Thee knowing that where Thy name is, there is Thy presence. So we are in Thy presence and we just pray that Thou will speak to us through Thy word. We pray that Thy word may be life and spirit to us tonight.

We do commit ourselves to Thee and trust Thee to do the work that Thou hast ordained for tonight. Even before the foundation of the world. And to Thee be the praise and glory in the name of our Lord Jesus.

As I waited before the Lord for this time with your dear brothers and sisters, I feel led to use this opportunity to share with you on the so-called Lord's Prayer. I know we all know this prayer. Probably from our childhood we have been reciting it.

But even though we are so familiar with the words, do we really know what we are praying? Do we really understand what we are asking? And do we really pray from the very bottom of our hearts? And not only from our hearts, but with understanding. You know, this is called the Lord's Prayer. It is recorded once in the Sermon on the Mount.

And then another time we find in Luke, when our Lord Jesus was praying. His disciples saw Him praying. And evidently they were deeply impressed.

There must be something different there. You know, the disciples, they prayed. As Jews, of course, they did.

And as the Lord's disciples, certainly they did. But when our Lord Jesus was praying, it must be something different. And because of that, they asked the Lord, Lord, teach us to pray.

And the Lord taught them how to pray. We call it the Lord's Prayer. Of course, oftentimes we say it is a wrong term.

Because it is really the prayer that our Lord Jesus teaches His disciples to pray. So sometimes we say it is the prayer of the Church. It is the prayer that our Lord Jesus teaches His Church to pray.

And I think that is true. But on the other hand, I think even if we call it the Lord's Prayer, we are not too wrong. Why? Because our Lord Jesus will never teach us to pray that which He has not Himself prayed.

He always practices what He teaches. So evidently, the prayer that our Lord Jesus teaches His Church to pray is His own prayer. He must be praying that prayer Himself.

And because He has been praying that prayer, He wants us to join with Him in this prayer. So it is both the Lord's Prayer and the prayer of the Church. You know, as God's children, we have the right to pray.

Before we were the Lord's, we were strangers to God. Not only strangers, but even enemies to Him. And of course, we will never pray to Him.

But when we are saved, the Holy Spirit enters into our renewed spirit. And it is the spirit of sonship, of adoption. Therefore, you will find immediately at the very moment that we are saved.

We cry out, Abba, Father. Prayer is the right of God's children. You know, in John chapter 1, we find that as many as believe Him and receive Him, to them give Him the right, the authority, that is the right, to

become the children of God.

Now, as God's children, we have rights. Just like earthly children to their earthly parents. Before your children were born, they had no right whatsoever.

But after they were born to your family, in a sense, they do have some rights. They have the right to be fed. They have the right to be clothed.

And maybe they have the right to be educated, to be nurtured. Have the right to have a shelter. These are the rights of children.

And as God's children, we do have rights. We have the right to pray. We have the right to go to our Heavenly Father, to commune with Him.

We have the right to ask Him to supply all our needs. Whenever we have a need, it is our right as God's children to go and ask Him for the supply. And we find our Heavenly Father who cares for us.

He will never refuse us. He always supplies our needs. These are the rights as God's children.

So as God's children, we do not need to be told to pray. I think if we need to tell a believer that he should pray, something is wrong. Because if he is a child, or she is a child of God, certainly he has cried out of a father, and following that, a prayer becomes his very breath.

It is natural to him. It is spontaneous. It is his desire to go to the Father.

Not asking all the time, but communing all the time. So, as God's children, we really do not need to be told that we ought to pray. And as a matter of fact, here you find the Lord does not tell His disciples that they ought to pray.

They were praying, they prayed, but what the Lord tried to teach them is how to pray. And what to pray for. Now brothers and sisters, I wonder if you sometimes do not feel.

You do not know how to pray. You know you should pray. And you want to pray.

But sometimes you do not know how to pray. And at other times, you wonder what you should pray for. And this is a problem not only with us individually, but you find this is a problem with us together especially.

You know, maybe you know how to pray or what to pray for in your personal private prayer. Well, you pray for yourself, of course. You pray for your immediate family, of course.

You know, we are self-centered and our horizon is rather limited. And so we know how to take care of ourselves and of our immediate family. Certainly we know what to pray for.

But even so, sometimes we do not know how to pray. You know, sometimes we may pray for ourselves and pray the wrong prayer. We may pray for our family and we may pray amiss.

And that is the reason why sometimes we find our prayers are not answered. And thank God sometimes he answers opposite to what we are asking for. And that is answering our prayer.

So, individually sometimes we have this problem. I do not know if any one of us have outgrown that kind of problem. In other words, you really know how to pray and what to pray for is not a problem to you anymore.

I wonder if you have outgrown it. I have not. But especially when God's people come together.

And then you find a real problem. You know, when God's people come together to pray, the problem is what to pray for and how to pray. Are we continuing just bringing all these individual private prayers to the prayer meeting and instead of praying by yourself, ask your brothers and sisters to pray with you and you pray with your brothers and sisters.

And it is all these individual personal matters. Are these what we should pray for when we are together? Do you consider this as the prayer of the church? And if you really feel that there is what is called the prayer of the church, then you begin to wonder how to pray. Now, how am I going to take up these burdens, these big things as it were, and how am I going to pray and express it? So, no wonder we find that in the book of Romans, we find that we do not know what to pray and how to pray for, but we thank God because the Holy Spirit helps us.

He knows our infirmities. He knows that we do not know. And that is the reason why we find the Holy Spirit is there to teach us.

Now, brothers and sisters, may I ask a question? Have we come to a point that we can so pray that we do not need the help of the Holy Spirit? We know how to pray. We do not need to wait upon the Holy Spirit. We do not need to ask the Holy Spirit to show us how and what to pray for.

Have we come to that point? If we have come to that point, I think it is a very dangerous point. And maybe, individually, maybe you have come to that false point, but concretely, I think most God's people, when they come together to pray, they are very conscious of their weakness. They just do not know how to pray and what to pray for.

Now, thank God we have the Holy Spirit within us, in the church, that is helping us. And on the other hand, we find that our Lord Jesus does teach us how to pray and what to pray for. So, we do see that this Lord's prayer, or the prayer that our Lord Jesus teaches His church to pray, is very, very necessary.

We just mentioned that as God's children, prayer is natural to us. It is our right. But, when you read these two passages, do you realize that our Lord Jesus, in these two passages, that record the so-called Lord's prayer, do you realize that He is not just teaching this prayer to anybody? For instance, in Matthew chapter 6, we know that Matthew chapter 6 is one of the three chapters that we call the Sermon on the Mount.

Now, if you go back to chapter 5, you will find that our Lord Jesus went up to the mountain. There were so many people following Him. So our Lord Jesus climbed the mountain.

And after He arrived at a certain point, then His disciples came before Him. And He opened His mouth, and He addressed His disciples. In other words, you will find that even though there was multitude there, but He was not talking to the multitudes.

He was not teaching the crowd. He was talking to the disciples. Those who have followed Him.

Those who have believed Him. Those who have followed Him. His immediate family, as it were.

And there you will find our Lord Jesus spoke to them. The other people, the crowd, they overheard what the Lord was saying. But the Lord did not speak directly to them.

And when our Lord opened His mouth, He said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Happy are those who are poor in spirit. If you are not poor in spirit, then what the Lord is going to say is not for you.

Or, to put it in another way, you are not able to hear it. You may hear, and you do not hear. It will not register.

You will misunderstand. But only those who are poor in spirit. Only those who are pure in heart.

Only those who hunger after righteousness. Only those who are merciful. Only those who are peacemakers.

Only those who are the light of the world. The salt of the earth. Only those who have committed their lives to the Lord Jesus.

Not only believe in the Lord, but committed their life to the Lord Jesus as His disciples. Now, what is a disciple? A disciple is a person who has committed himself to his master. He puts himself under his master.

To be taught, to be trained, to be formed, to be molded. That is a disciple. And here you find, when our Lord Jesus was teaching the Sermon of the Mount, He was not teaching the world of a new ethics.

He was teaching the disciples of the things of the Kingdom of the Heavens. So you find that in that connection, the Lord teaches us the so-called Lord's Prayer. So the Lord's Prayer is not the spontaneous, natural cry of a child of God.

Now, as a child of God, we have a natural, spontaneous cry unto our Father. Whenever we are in need, we cry out. And that kind of prayer is natural to us, as a child of God.

But when you come to the Lord's Prayer, you find it is not natural. It is supernatural. You find that it is a prayer that unless you are a disciple of the Lord, you are not able to pray such a prayer.

Or you are afraid to pray such a prayer. But because if you pray such a prayer, you don't know what it will happen to you. It is a prayer that is directed to the disciples.

Only the disciples are in a position to take up such a prayer. Dear brothers and sisters, if you are not a disciple of Christ, then you may be a believer. Strictly speaking, you cannot be a believer without being a disciple.

Now, that's the truth. But unfortunately, sometimes we receive half-truth. In other words, you find that people believe in the Lord Jesus, because believing in Him is all grace, is all gift, and it is all for you.

So you find that people believe in the Lord, you thank God for that, and they become the children of God, and they have the right, and they exercise their right, asking for help from the Father, and the Father does help them. That is true. But strictly speaking, according to the Word of God, you find that at the moment

that you become a believer, you are a disciple of Christ.

You have received Jesus not only as your Savior, you must receive Him as your Lord. The Gospel is not only to be believed, but the Gospel is also to be obeyed. So as we believe in the Lord Jesus, we also give ourselves, as we receive Him, we also give ourselves to Him, and let Him train us, let Him mold us, and let Him transform us and conform us to His image.

Now, this is what a disciple is. And being a disciple, the Lord said, this is one of the lessons you have to learn, how to pray, the so-called Lord's Prayer. Now, if you read Luke, you find the same thing.

The disciples noticed how Lord Jesus was praying. Now, whether they overheard what He prayed, or whether they were at a distance, just saw how He prayed, they were impressed. They felt that they do not know how to pray as He prayed.

You know, the prayer of our Lord Jesus, in a sense, creates a hunger within His disciples. Now, we have prayed, but we have never prayed like that. Now, teach us.

Teach us how to pray. Brothers and sisters, do we have such a desire within us? Do we really think that we know how to pray and what to pray for? Or do we really feel there is a longing within us? We want to pray as the Lord prays. We sense our weakness.

We sense our lack in prayer. And we do want to be taught in prayer. You know, prayer is one of the basic lessons the disciples of Christ must learn.

And unless we learn this lesson, all the other lessons will not be learned well. It is a basic lesson that we have to learn. So, not only as God's children, we pray.

But as we pray, we must pray as the disciples. And in that, we have to take up the so-called Lord's Prayer. Now, the Lord's Prayer, we have already mentioned.

It is the prayer of the Church. Christ is the Head. The Church is His Body.

And as Christ has so prayed, so He teaches His disciples His Body to continue that prayer. And we find that this prayer is not an individual prayer. It is a corporate.

Now, that does not mean that we cannot say this prayer individually. I believe we have done that, and probably we will still do it. And I do not see anything wrong by doing that.

But, when you pray that prayer, you must see that it is not a personal, private, individual prayer. It is a corporate prayer. Why? Because you find in the very beginning it says, Our Father who art in the heavens.

It does not say, My Father. It says, Our Father. Give us our daily bread.

Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from the evil ones. You find that the prayer is a corporate prayer.

It is not an individual prayer. When you pray as an individual, you are really representing the whole body. Now, that is the way you pray.

Do you realize that in our prayer life, there is more than that personal, individual prayer? Do you realize that when you are praying, sometimes you pray as an individual, but at other times when you pray, you are really taking up the whole body with you in prayer. You are not just praying for yourself. You are

praying for the whole church.

You are praying for the kingdom of God and His righteousness. It is not just a limited, narrow, self-centered, earthbound kind of prayer. You find that when you pray that prayer, it releases you.

It releases you from yourself. It releases you into the body of Christ. It releases you into heaven.

It releases you into a boundless sphere. It is a tremendous thing if we know what the Lord's prayer is, and if we know how to pray it. I do not see anything wrong when you repeat that prayer.

But of course we know when the Lord teaches us that prayer, He does not mean to say that we just repeat the words. He has given us the principles of prayer. And we need to pray after such principles.

Even though we sometimes may repeat the words, but brothers and sisters, if they really come from our heart, it is not vain repetition. It can be effective. So anyway you find that we are not bound by any mechanical, technical ways.

We are free in the spirit to take up this prayer alone or together. And even though we do not necessarily recite the Lord's prayer together, and yet the principles we are taught in that prayer, that prayer is what we need to take up individually and especially together. So that is the Lord's prayer.

When we go into this Lord's prayer, we find there are three things we would like to share this time. And tonight we will share on the foundation of prayer. And God willing tomorrow we will share on the centrality of prayer.

And Sunday morning, the universality of prayer is based on relationship. Maybe before we go there, let me go back a little bit. Prayer is not only the right and enjoyment of God's people.

Prayer is also the life and the vocation of the disciples of Christ. You know, often times we think of prayer as our rights. That's true.

We do have the right. We think of prayer as enjoyment. That's true.

We enjoy our Father and we enjoy the gifts, the grace, the help, the supplies that come from our Heavenly Father. It is so. But we need to go a step further and see that prayer is a life.

It's our very life. And it is our vocation. There is more in prayer than just enjoyment.

Sometimes it is a work. Other times it is a warfare. It is a responsibility as well as a privilege.

Now we need to grow into that. You look at the life of our Lord Jesus. You find that the life of our Lord Jesus is a life of prayer.

Especially if you read the Gospel according to Luke. Why? Because the Gospel according to Luke is a Gospel that speaks of Christ as the Son of Man. In other words, we know that the Gospel of John speaks of Christ as the Son of God.

But in Luke, He is described to us as the Son of Man. Now as the Son of Man, as a man upon this earth, you notice that His whole life is just lived in the spirit and the atmosphere of prayer. And that's the reason why you find in the Gospel of Luke, many times we find our Lord Jesus was praying.

You know when He went to be baptized in Luke chapter 3? He went to be baptized and when He came out of the water, the Bible said as He was praying, the heavens opened. And the Spirit of God descended upon Him and aborting Him as a dove. And there was a voice saying, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Now this happened when our Lord Jesus was praying. And then you go to chapter 4, you find early in the morning our Lord Jesus went out to the desert. Now even though Luke didn't mention why He went out early in the morning to the desert, but if you read Mark chapter 1, you'll find it is said He went out praying.

He was praying. And people went out to find Him and said, here were the needs. You know He was in Capernaum and many came to hear Him and people got healed and they needed Him.

The need was great in Capernaum. But our Lord Jesus, because He prayed in the desert, He prayed to know the Father's will, so you find that He was not governed by needs. He was governed by the Father's will.

Even though the needs were there, but the Lord said, I have to go to other cities. That is the Father's will. You know, brothers and sisters, often times we are governed by needs.

If there is a need, surely, if there is a need, that's our call. But not always. Sometimes you find that the need may be there, but it may not be your call.

It may be somebody else's call. And we have to be governed by the will of God instead of by needs. And how do you know the will of God if you do not pray? So here you find our Lord Jesus, He prayed and He knew the will of the Father.

Then as you read on, you will find in chapter 6, He prayed the whole night. Why? Because He was to choose His disciples. He chose twelve disciples.

He did not choose according to what He likes or He does not like. Now if this is to be done, I wonder whether the twelve will be chosen. So far as we know, none of the twelve seem to be very attractive.

Some more, some less, unattractive. But I don't think anyone is attractive. But here you find our Lord Jesus, He spent the whole night in prayer.

Why? Because in choosing His disciples, He was not choosing them according to His own idea. He was seeking the Father's will. And if the Father's will is for Him to choose a Judas, He will do that.

And He did. He prayed. He prayed.

And then when you come to chapter 9, what do you find there? And there you find our Lord Jesus, He went to Caesarea Philippi. You know, at that time it was the beginning when the Jewish elite began to reject Him. So He retreated to the border city.

And there He asked His disciples, whom do you say that I am? You know, before He asked a question, He prayed first. Do not ask a question before you pray. Because if you do, you may expose yourself to some answers that you are not ready to receive.

But here you find our Lord Jesus, He prayed. Before He asked His disciples, whom do men say that I am? Who do you say that I am? It's the result of His prayer. Second one, you find Peter said, you are the

Christ, the Son of the Living God.

There is a revelation from the Father. And then afterwards, in the same chapter, you find our Lord Jesus took three disciples, and they went to the Mount of Transfiguration. And as He was praying, He was transfigured.

And then His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white, whiter than anything. While He was praying. And of course, in Luke 11, He was praying.

And the disciples saw Him praying. In chapter 18, you find His holy disciples pray and do not faint. And in chapter 22, you find our Lord Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane.

And what He was doing there, He was praying. Not my will. Father, Thy will be done.

Three times. And of course, chapter 23, you find the Lord was on the cross. And while He was crucified there, the first thing He did was to pray.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And at noontime, you find that the sun was darkened. Because at that moment, He became the scene offerer.

And He cried out, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And then finally, you find He prayed again at three o'clock, when He gave up His spirit. Father, I surrender to You. Now, you find the life of our Lord Jesus, it is saturated with prayer.

His life is a prayer life. Prayer is His very breath, His very atmosphere. He is praying.

Now, these are just a few occasions we find in the Scripture. But these just show us, you know, like windows, show us that our Lord Jesus literally lived a life of prayer. He prayed without ceasing.

In His spirit, there is always that communion with the Father. And deep down within Him, there is always that cry. Thy kingdom, Thy name, Thy will be done.

Now, this is the life of our Lord Jesus. And then, when we come to the early church. You know, our Lord Jesus, after He died, He was buried for three days.

And then He was raised from the dead, to prove that He is the Son of God. And by His resurrection, we are justified. And then, after forty days of appearing to His disciples, He ascended up to heaven.

And on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came. And a hundred and twenty disciples, they were baptized into one body. Now, before they were baptized, now we often say that is the beginning of the church.

How did the church begin? It began with prayer. A hundred and twenty disciples, they were together for ten days, praying with one accord. And it is through prayer that the church is born.

You know, this is the principle. Wherever a church is born, you will find that it must be preceded by prayer. You know, we can play the church.

We can form what we call the church. But it is not the result of prayer, of prevailing prayer. It is a human organization.

It is not the body of Christ. Not the church, as the Bible says. So, through the prayer of the hundred and twenty people, you will find on the day of Pentecost, the church is born.

They were baptized into one spirit. And you know, on that first day, three thousand were added to the church. And what did the Bible say? In Acts chapter two, verse forty-two, it says, They all persevered in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer.

You know, the church from the very beginning took up the prayer of our Lord Jesus. They began to pray. And throughout the book of Acts, which is the history of the early church, you find that the early church is soaked in prayer.

In chapter three of Acts, you find Peter and John, they went to the temple at the hour of prayer. And that's where the miracle happened. In chapter four, when the disciples were threatened, you know, the apostles were threatened, they went to their own, and the whole church just took up the burden and prayed.

And as they prayed, the place shook. And it was filled with the Holy Spirit, and they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ with boldness. When you come to chapter six, you find that the apostles said, It is not right for us to take care of everything.

You know, the apostles not only preached, but the apostles also served tables. And at that time, you'll find there were ten thousands, more than ten thousand believers there. And many, many widows there that needed to be taken care of.

And the fellow apostles, even though they may be supermen, they couldn't do all the job. And you'll find they were murmuring and things like that. And finally they realized they were just men, not supermen.

So they say, It is not right for us to do that. We must devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Let seven be chosen among you to take care of the table.

And here you'll find how God's people worked together. So, again you'll find the importance of prayer. And then of course, when Peter in chapter ten was praying, you know, it was noon time and evidently the family probably prepared the lunch a little bit late.

And he was hungry. So he, I think it's good when you're hungry, go to pray. And so he went up to the roof and to pray.

And as he prayed, you'll find he was given a vision. A vision. And that's how the gospel entered into the house of the Gentiles.

The house of Cornelius. You know, it is a tremendous debt. Without such prayer, that door would not be open.

And even if that door is open, Peter wouldn't go. He was so bound by Jewish tradition. But thank God that he was praying and God was able to reveal his mind to him.

Even today, we as Gentiles, we are in the good of it. You know, and then in chapter twelve you'll find Peter was put in prison by Herod. He was kept there after the feast.

He was going to be killed, just like James. And you'll find the church. And as they prayed, God sent his angels to open the iron gate.

And set Peter free. And you can go on and on. In the book of Acts, you'll find that how the early church, they literally lived in prayer.

If they are not praying, they couldn't live. And when they prayed, you'll find it is not just a limited, narrow, self-centered, private kind of prayer. But you do find that when they prayed, they prayed that the earth will shake.

They prayed that the kingdom of heaven will be manifested. The will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, that is the prayer life of the early church.

Now, brothers and sisters, we are living at the end of this age. We do not know how long. But we know that the coming of the Lord is imminent.

And we are at the very closing of this age. We are at the end of the church period, in a sense. Brothers and sisters, we know that the Lord is doing a work of recovery among God's people.

He has to recover us to the original purpose. And certainly, in the recovery work of God, there is one thing needed. And it is the recovery of the prayer.

If the church does not pray, if the church does not know how to pray, then you'll find the kingdom of God cannot come in. The will of God cannot be done on earth as it is in heaven. The church has to pray.

And to pray the prayer of the Lord. Take up that prayer. So I do feel very deeply in my heart that this is the time that we, as God's people, as the disciples of Christ, as His church, we have to know how to pray this prayer, the Lord's.

Now we come to this matter of the foundation of prayer. Our Father, who art in heaven. Prayer is based upon a relationship.

And that relationship is come to us by revelation. You know, in the Old Testament times, God has revealed Himself to His people as the Creator, as Jehovah, the God of covenant, as the Most High, as El Shaddai, the All-Sufficient God, as the I Am, the Great I Am. So He revealed Himself to His people as such.

But His people, as they approach God, they approach God from afar. God is transcendent. He is Most High, Most Holy, Most Powerful, Most Loving, Righteous, Glory, Glorious.

But you find in the Old Testament times, people approach God with a distance. They dare not approach God in an intimate way. Because God is God transcendent.

High up, to be feared. See, that's what is revealed to them. Their relationship with God is this kind of relationship.

They do not have that intimate, close relationship. Because God was not revealed to them as such. Now though in the Old Testament you do find a few places where God is described as if He is Father.

For instance, in Psalm 68, verse 5, He is the Father of the fatherless. Or in Psalm 103, verse 13, you find that as the Father chastises the Son, so God chastises those who He loves. Or in other places, a few places, like in Malachi, say, a son honours his father, I am your father, where is my honour? Now you do find there are a few places when God is talking to His people as if He is Father to them.

But let us remember that in the Old Testament time, the fatherhood of God, so far as man is concerned, is only in relation to creation. In other words, God is the Father of mankind. Why? Because He is the Creator of mankind.

So, that fatherhood is based upon creation. And because it is based upon creation, like all families took the names from the Father, Ephesians chapter 3. So it is a matter of creation, and because it is creation, you find there is a distance between the Creator and the created. So you could only worship God at a distance, and you were at His mercy, as it were.

If He wanted to show mercy, He will. But, in the New Testament, at the coming of our Lord Jesus, you find a new revelation has come into this world. You know, the revelation of God as our Father, real Father, who begets us, who gives His life to us.

There is a life relationship of Father and children. That intimate relationship, we find, only comes in the New Testament, through our Lord Jesus. No one has ever seen God.

It is the one who is in the bosom of the Father who declares Him. So here you find our Lord Jesus, when He was on Earth, He was telling us about His Father. Now, people don't understand that.

People even think that is blasphemy. How could you call God your Father? Who are you? But our Lord Jesus, you know, His testimony to the world is, My Father. He is trying to reveal His Father to us.

He represents His Father. He manifests His Father. He is declaring His Father to us.

But remember, when He was living on Earth, God is His Father. And He is trying to describe His Father to us. He is trying to express His Father to us.

But God is not our Father. He is our God. God is His Father, but not our Father.

But He tells us of His Father, as a preparation. Because He knows that one day His Father will be our Father. So when His Father becomes our Father, we will not be strange.

By His death, burial and resurrection, He removes our sins. He releases His life to us. And the Holy Spirit is able to beget us into life.

Into a relationship with God as Father and children. So you remember, immediately after the Lord was raised from the dead, He said, My Father, Your Father, My God. Now that is a new revelation.

A revelation that never been upon this Earth. It came from our Lord Jesus. He revealed that to us.

And He made it real to us by His redemptive work. So thank God we will believe in the Lord Jesus today. We have an intimate relationship with God.

A life relationship. A relationship of Father and children. And that relationship, as we already mentioned at the very beginning, becomes our rights.

We have a right with our Father. But we cannot remain as babes. We have to grow up.

You know, God's purpose is for us to be sons and daughters. Grown-ups. He does not want a heaven full of babies.

That would be a nursery. He wants sons and daughters. That relationship between Father and son is more than a relationship of a daddy and a baby.

It is a relationship that develops until the son has grown to a point that the son is able to share the Father's. The children have grown that they are able to know the Father's will. And to do the Father's will.

Now brothers and sisters, this is what God is expecting of us as His children. Therefore we need to grow up. And as we grow up, then we are able to enter into the prayer that He gives.

Now again I say, this prayer is based upon Father-Son relationship. But it is a relationship that has developed to a point that you are able to take up that prayer. Not all children of God are able to pray that prayer.

Only those who are growing up, they are able to take up such a prayer. Why? Because they are concerned with the Father's business. Instead of their own business all the time.

You know, as children we are concerned only with our own business. That's all. Only when we grow up, then we begin to be occupied with our Father's business.

And it is at that point that we are able to take up the so-called Lord's prayer. In a real and living way. Our Father, it is still Father.

It is Father. But we are so enjoined to Christ, not only in life but in will, that we want everything that the Father desires. Our Father, who art in the heavens.

Now here is a point. Maybe in some of your translations, I do not know. Our Father, who art in heaven.

In singular. But if you read the Greek original, you'll find that it is Our Father, who art in the heavens. Pronoun.

In the heavens. You know, according to the Word of God, we see that heavens have three levels. We have the first level of heaven, that is the air around us.

You know, in Genesis chapter one, verse six, it said, God divides the waters above and beneath, and the firmament that divides the water above and the water beneath, call it heavens. In other words, here is our first heaven. The first heaven is the air around us.

That's the first heaven. And then we have the second heaven, where the stars are. God has let out his stars in numbers, and he named every one of them.

And no one of them fails. That is the second heaven. And then we find the third heaven, in 2 Corinthians 12, you'll find Paul was raptured up to the third heaven.

And the third heaven is where the throne of God is. And you'll find that Our Father, who art in the heavens. Our Father is not only in the third heaven, he is in the second heaven, he is in the first heaven too.

You know, this is very, very important to understand. Why? Because You remember how Lord Jesus said, 2 sparrows is worth a penny. A penny can buy 2 sparrows.

But not one of the two will fall into the ground without your Father's permission. Someone who knows Greek said, this is not the exact translation. The exact translation is, not one sparrow will fall without the

Father.

Period. Not the Father's permission. It is true.

The Father's permission must be given, that's true. But there is a difference here. You see, the Father's permission is, He permits the sparrow to fall into the ground.

But without the Father, it means that when the sparrows fall upon the ground, the Father's fall with Him. Together. Comes down together.

See, that is the real thought behind it. Now that's wonderful, you know. Because whatever we pass through, whether through fire or through water, the Father is always with us.

You know what the air is? The air is now served as the headquarter of the evil spirit. He is called the Prince of the Air. That is his headquarter.

But he has to ask the Father's permission to do anything, even to a sparrow. Now how much more He has to ask permission to do anything to us? Are we not worth more than these sparrows? Now why should we be anxious? Why should we be afraid? Why should we worry? Without your Father's permission, the enemy of the air cannot do anything to us. God is in charge.

He is the God of the first heaven. And even if something should fall upon us, remember, He is with us. He does not give the permission and let you go.

He says, I'll go with you. And He goes through with you. That is our Heavenly Father.

That is our Heavenly Father. Now we do not realize that. We do not know our Father that well.

Now if we really know that this is our Father, what have we to fear? The enemy cannot do anything to us. Without His permission. You remember the case with Peter? Our Lord Jesus said, Simon, Simon, Satan asks permission to get you.

And God gives the permission. Because there is a lesson there. But the Lord said, I have also prayed for you.

That your faith will not fail. And after you are recovered, strengthen your brothers. You know, through the testing you become stronger.

So dear brothers and sisters, here you'll find we are praying to our Father who art in the first heaven. He is in charge, not the enemy. And He is always.

Now what about the second heaven? You know, when you read, say, the Book of Judges, you'll find a very strange expression. The stars fight for the Israelites. And in the Book of Joshua, you'll find when Joshua prayed, the sun stopped.

And in the case of Hezekiah, you'll find that the sundial goes back ten degrees. Now who is in charge? Who is in charge of the suns, the stars, and the moon, and the second heaven? Our Father is in charge. And He can move the heavenly forces to work for His own.

This is the Father whom we are praying to. And then the third heaven, of course. We know that our Father, His throne is set in the third heaven.

All the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, He has blessed us. Brothers and sisters, do we realize that we are praying to our Fathers who are in the heavens? Our Fathers who are in the heavens. Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now here you'll find, as it is in heaven, the heaven here is singular number. It is original.

It is singular number. It refers to the third heaven. So, people who knows Greek tells us that as in heaven, so on earth.

This phrase, as in heaven, so on earth, is not just qualifying the last phrase, last clause. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Actually, that qualifies all the three preceding clauses.

In other words, Hallowed be thy name on earth as it is in heaven. Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Now, what does it mean? It means that the prayer is to bring the heavenly will, the heavenly order down upon this earth. You see, the name of God is hallowed in heaven. His name is unchallenged in heaven.

But His name is not only challenged, His name is rejected, despised on earth. And that's the reason why we have to pray that the heavenly order will come upon this earth. That the name of God, of the Father, will be hallowed on earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom of God in heaven is supreme, unchallenged. But, on earth, we find that kingdom is not only resisted, opposed. We need to pray that the heavenly order will be brought upon this earth as it is in heaven.

The will of God in heaven is done, is carried out, without any delay, without any opposition, but not so on earth today. And this is why we need to pray to bring the heavenly order upon this earth. Brothers and sisters, do we realize what prayer is? Prayer is bringing the heavenly order to the earth.

What is in heaven shall be so on earth. Now, that is prayer. That is the essence of the Lord's prayer.

And that is what the Lord teaches us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, as in heaven, so on earth. You know, in many manuscripts, you do not find the closing quotes.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. In many manuscripts, you do not find that.

But evidently, the translators find that that is a very rightful conclusion. So, they adopt it from somewhere else in the scripture. You find that in other places, of course.

I mean, there is no problem with the fact. Whether it is there or not, we don't know. But, we do see that it is a very natural conclusion.

Now, why do we pray such a prayer? For thine, Father, is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. This prayer is a declaration. We declare to the world, seen and unseen, that the kingdom belongs to our Father.

Power belongs to our Father. Glory belongs to our Father. It is a declaration of faith.

And that declaration of faith becomes our testimony. So, this is the way that the so-called Lord's Prayer ends. May the Lord, our Father, who art in the heavens, we do praise and thank Thee that Thou art our Father.

And what a Father we have! Thou art not only in the third heaven on the throne, but Thou art in charge of the second of the first heaven. Thou art in charge of the whole universe. We do declare that the kingdom is Thine, the power is Thine, and the glory is Thine.

So, our Father, we just pray that Thou wilt teach us. Teach us how to pray this prayer. Oh, that we may join our hearts with Thee and pray, Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Thy precious name.

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