



Surrey Hills

BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Lord’s Prayer – A Model Prayer”

Dr. Wendell Lang

In the life of our fellowship, this is the Year of Prayer. Last year in our fellowship was the Year of the Bible. We began by reading the Bible all of the way through, and many took the challenge to read the Bible through last year. This year, the Year of Prayer, we had a 24-hour prayer vigil in which we asked you to sign up for one-hour prayer slots. Many of you shared with me how God blessed you, and you realized that you could actually pray for an hour. This week, next week, and the following week, we will continue to talk about prayer. If you will remember, last year I preached through the Old Testament, the major highlights of the Old Testament. In about 3 weeks I am going to begin a series concerning the Sermon on the Mount. We are going to go verse by verse, word by word, and allow our fingers to do the walking through the pages of life in what I think is the greatest sermon ever preached. We are really gearing up for prayer.

I remember very well not having grown up in the church. The first real time I heard the Lord’s prayer was at a baseball field, and we were about to play a baseball game. The coach had gotten everyone together, and he asked someone to pray. We started praying the Lord’s Prayer together. Toward the end, the emphasis started growing, and the energy started going that by the time they ended the prayer everyone was excited and ready to play! How many of you grew up in a tradition where you quoted the Lord’s Prayer in every worship service? We are going to talk about that and about the significance and the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer. I find it interesting that the Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that we are to “*pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*”

The context of our passage today is that Jesus has just given the scribes and Pharisees a what for because they were praying vain repetitions. They were praying the same thing over and over and over again. If you go to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem today, you will see people who are going through some kind of mantra. They are rocking back and forth and they are putting the scripture on the wall or they will put pieces of scripture on their heads or their arms called “phylacteries.” I think this is really what Jesus is talking about when He says, “Don’t pray these vain repetitions.” I don’t think at all that He is saying, “Don’t make the same prayer request over and over again.”

Last week we started this series concerning the Year of Prayer, and we talked about the method and the function and the power of prayer. Today, we are going to talk about practicing the model prayer.

Matthew 6:9, “*Therefore, you should pray like this:*

*Our Father in heaven,
Your name be honored as holy.*

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come.*

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ *Give us today our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts,*

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ *And do not bring us into temptation,*

but deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power

and the glory forever. Amen.”

I contend that this passage may be one of the most familiar yet most difficult, perhaps most abused, passages in the Bible. You might find it interesting that nowhere in the Bible are we commanded or instructed to pray this prayer. It is listed one other time in Luke 11, where the disciples at that time said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” It is significant. The disciples didn’t say, “Teach us to preach.” They didn’t say, “Teach us to administrate.” They didn’t say even, “Teach us to evangelize.” The disciples knew that this was one thing that doesn’t come natural. Of all the spiritual disciplines mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount, perhaps getting alone and praying is the hardest thing for me. But Jesus’ disciples said, “Teach us to pray.” So, therefore, everything we need to know about prayer is given in this model. Really this is more accurately described as not the Lord’s Prayer, perhaps the Model Prayer, definitely the Disciples’ Prayer.

Let’s see what the Bible has to say to us concerning the direction of our praying. Notice again in verse 9 as we see this direction of prayer. *“Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father.”* We are going to stop right there because that tells us who we are to pray to—Our Father. I did some reading this week. I was amazed. I don’t know if I believe this, but someone put out a survey that said that the average father spends 8 seconds solely with his children and 20 minutes partially with his children. Some of you might not have a real good father image. It is difficult for me. I wasn’t raised with a father in our home. There were some other guys that were in and out, but I have had to learn that I can’t take the image that I have of an earthly father and project that to the Heavenly Father because the Heavenly Father is with us 24/7. Our Father is who we pray to.

To call someone “father” means one of two things. It means either you were born into the family, or you have been adopted into the family. Either way you can say, “Our Father.” If you haven’t, you need to come to that place in your life that you say, “Jesus, I surrender my all. I give my life to You. I want You to be my Lord and my Savior.” Then you can say, “Father.”

It also speaks of the community of faith. Notice the word “Our.” If you look historically, particularly in the context of the word, God typically works through community. We believe in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but God typically works with community. Look at the children of Israel—community. Look at the early church community. For us to be able to say “our,” we are saying collectively (those who are part of the household of faith) we are praying to “Our Father.”

The next question under this direction of prayer is, “Where do we pray to?” Notice what the Bible has to say, *“Our Father in heaven.”* Right now the Bible says Jesus is at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. So we pray to the Father through the Son and by the Spirit. We make our direction to the Father in Heaven. Just imagine that for a minute. Think about it—the Sovereign of the universe. You are able to connect with Almighty God. Aren’t you glad it is not the man upstairs? Aren’t you glad that when we come before the Father that it is a reverence; it is holy. You don’t pray with your feet up on the desk and slouched back. That is why someone might raise their hands in surrender—to say, “Father, I submit myself to You.”

How do we pray? Notice the last part of verse 9, *"Your name be honored as holy."* I have said this several times, but I wasn't raised in the church. I used to hear this, and they would say, "Hallowed be Thy name." I thought they were saying, "Hollow wood." I just didn't get it. Then after I figured out they were saying "hallowed," I still didn't know what that meant. So let's talk about it. "Hallow" means to honor. It means to set apart. It means to reverence as holy. So when you pray, "Our Father in Heaven holy/hallowed/honored be Your name." We are getting pretty clear instruction here concerning this whole idea of "hallowed."

Let's look at the next word, *"Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy."* I thought of sharing with you about all the Old Testament names of God. We know about Jehovah Jireh (Our Provider) and Jehovah Rapha (Our Healer). There are all of these Old Testament names. As I began to consider, the Bible says that there is only one name by which we can know salvation, and that is at the name of Jesus. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess. Therefore, that is why we pray in Jesus' name. It is not some kind of a tack-on thing that we say at the end of the prayer to wrap it up. We are saying, "In the authority of Jesus Christ." The scripture says the name of Jesus should be honored as holy. The Bible says clearly in 1 Timothy 2:5 that we have one mediator to the Father, and that is Jesus Christ.

I told Gary's class earlier that as one of my New Year's things, I'm starting to Tweet this year. I'm on Twitter, and if you are you can follow me. I wrote some stuff last night about prayer. Last night I wrote, "We don't pray to change God, but we pray to change us." I think that really sums up what we are about.

The last question concerning the direction of our prayer is, "What do we pray?" There are two things. Notice the first one: *"Your kingdom come."* What does that mean? The word 'kingdom' means 'rule.' It is the righteous rule of God in the heart of an individual. That constitutes the kingdom of God. And so when you pray, you start with praise. Then we say the righteous rule of God in the heart of an individual be done. It is just a wonderful lesson for us to understand concerning how we pray.

When we pray, *"Your kingdom come,"* we are saying that we are anticipating Jesus coming back. I think the old timers had something on us in this regard. We don't preach enough about the sweet bye and bye. We seem to be so caught up in the ugly here and now. I want us to understand that when we are saying, *"Your kingdom come,"* it is the idea of the kingdom of God on earth, but there is going to be a day when He is going to appear and He is going to bring us to Himself, and then we will literally enter into the presence of the kingdom of God.

It is also a personal request. Notice that it does not say, "My kingdom." You can't say, "My will be done." You have to say, "Your will be done." There are some people who are into commanding God to do certain things. That is not what this is saying. This is saying, "Sir, Your will." I'm not speaking something into being. I'm not making something that isn't. We want to get on His page. We are not trying to get Him on our page. Something very different, and it is a very personal request. That is why Matthew 6:33 says, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."*

One of our friends for a few years now came to know Christ as her Savior on Friday. We have been rejoicing over her getting saved. When we say, *"Your kingdom come,"* what we are really saying is, "Lord, would you bring those under my sphere of influence to a saving knowledge of who You are?" God does all of the work. God does all the glory. The Holy Spirit does all the calling, but God often chooses us to be the conduit by which we communicate that powerful gospel.

Verses 11-13 will talk about the petition of our prayer. Notice in verse 11, *"Give us today our daily bread."* Initially, we pray for our physical needs. Here is what I think is very cool about this. When God meets our physical need, it is an opportunity to give glory to God because the Bible says, *"I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread."* (Psalm 37:25) The Bible says, *"God will supply all your needs*

according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19) When we have our physical needs met, it is an opportunity to give glory to the Father who is in heaven. Bread—that has to do with our daily provision.

I learned something this week. I like it when I learn something new. This model prayer says, “*Give us today our daily bread.*” Isn’t that interesting? Don’t we worry about the future, about tomorrow, about next week, and if there is going to be more month at the end of the money? But this prayer says, “*Give us today.*” For me this was revelatory this week because I think we spend so much time saying, “God, I don’t know what the future holds.” But we already know who holds the future. Here we see, “*Give us today.*”

He gives us our physical needs, but He also gives us the opportunity to pray for spiritual needs. Notice verse 12, “*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*” We have gone through the physical (our daily bread) to the spiritual—the whole idea of forgiveness. A debt is something owed that must be paid back. Here are a few examples: sin is a debt that we owe, trespass, short comings, resentments. These are all things that we owe God for because we have broken His royal law. I love the old statement: “The greater the saint, the greater the sense of sin and the awareness of sin within.” We begin by forgiving ourselves. The greatest issue most people have is forgiving themselves. I want to clearly state that it does not matter how bad you have been, God says, “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*” (Matthew 11:28) Some of you may be carrying a load of guilt about a decision you made when you were a teenager. If it is under the blood, leave it under the blood. I believe it is a sin to fret about something God has already forgiven. The Bible says it is cast, “*As far as the east is from the west.*” (Psalm 103:12) You come up to God and say, “Remember I asked forgiveness, but I am coming to you and asking for forgiveness again.” God doesn’t know what we’re talking about when we do that. We must forgive ourselves.

Also, we must forgive others. If you have not had the opportunity to need to forgive someone, you’re not old enough. People will disappoint you. I will disappoint you. There is only one person who won’t disappoint you when you get to know Him better, and His name is Jesus. We get all caught up when some pastor has fallen or someone has broken your heart or hurt your feelings. The Bible says that we need to be forgiving of others. An unforgiving spirit will totally destroy one’s prayer life. If you are unable to forgive, then you are not going to be able to pray. Society exalts vengeance. It is told that in some football games coaches have put a bounty out on another player. They will actually pay guys extra money to whack someone and get them out of the game. It is true. They do it because the player has done something. Society flaunts this idea of revenge. Is that Christ-like? It’s really not. Hebrews 12:15 says that what happens when we are unable to forgive is that we acquire what the Bible calls the defiling “*root of bitterness.*” You get bitter, and you are unable to be productive for the Lord because you’re bitter. If you are harboring a root of bitterness, don’t be surprised that people don’t want to be around you. People don’t like that. It is going to totally stunt your ability to be productive for the Lord when you have this defiling root of bitterness. It takes spiritual surgery sometimes for God to cut that out of our lives. You’re never more like God than when you are forgiving. What did Jesus say on the cross? What were His last words? “*Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing.*” (Luke 23:34) We live in such a myopic, selfish world. Are you surprised that the lost world is not nice to you? They are lost. They don’t have the love of Christ in them. Don’t expect good things to come out of a lost man. It is just simply not going to happen.

It is only reasonable to forgive others if you have been forgiven yourself. Failure to do so is trouble. It results in bitterness, resentment, loss of fellowship. James 1:13 says, “*Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God.”*” God doesn’t tempt us. God tries us to make us better, but the enemy tempts us to make us bitter.

We want to be delivered from temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, “*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,*

but with the temptation will also make the way of escape.” In other words, it is saying that there is no temptation you have where you are the only one. You might think you are the only one. Not really. And God will provide a way of escape to that. How did they overcome the enemy? Revelation 12:11 says, *“They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not love their lives in the face of death.”* We can indeed overcome.

We have looked at the direction of prayer. We have looked at the petition of prayer. In verse 13, I want to talk about the circumference of prayer. *“And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* As I said, God doesn’t tempt us. What this model prayer is saying is, “Allow us not to fall prey to the tempter.” Verse 13 continues, *“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”* The circumference of prayer is the sovereignty of God. God is not taken by surprise when something happens to you. After all, He is God and we are not. The sovereignty of God allows us to see how far the circle of prayer goes. Furthermore, I want you to see that there is a tremendous power in prayer. It is demonstrated in one’s life when they will actually exercise the discipline of prayer.

I want to close by sharing with you a verse of scripture that really typifies everything that we are about. There is a passage in John that says, *“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”* (John 14:13) That is the circumference of prayer that the Father may be glorified. When you are praying for your lost relative, it is so that the Father may be glorified. When you are praying for your financial plight, it is that the Father may be glorified. When you are praying for an occupational situation, it is that the Father may be glorified. When you are praying for a family situation, it is that the Father may be glorified. It is all that the Father may be glorified.

Here is how we pray the ACTS paradigm. We start out with Adoration. “Father, I adore You. I lay my life before You.” The “C” is for Confession. Confession means we agree with God about our sin. We aren’t telling Him anything He doesn’t know. We are agreeing with God that we have missed the mark. The “T” is for Thanks-giving. *“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18) The “S” is for Supplication. Supplication is really a petition. We often start out by saying, “Give me, give me, give me.” But according to the ACTS paradigm, that is the fourth thing we do.

Here is what I gathered from this prayer: I cannot say, “Our,” if I live only for myself. I cannot say, “Father,” if I do not endeavor to act like His child. I cannot say, “Who art in heaven,” if I am not laying up treasures in heaven. I cannot say, “Hallowed be Thy name,” if I am not striving for holiness in my life. I cannot say, “Thy kingdom come,” if I do not hasten to the wonderful event of His presence. I cannot say, “Thy will be done,” if I am disobedient to His word. I cannot say, “In earth as it is in heaven,” if I will not serve Him in the here and now. I cannot say, “Give us this day our daily bread,” if I am dishonest in my gain. I cannot say, “Forgive us our debts,” if I harbor a grudge against anyone. I cannot say, “Lead us not into temptation,” if I deliberately put myself in the path of temptation. I cannot say, “Deliver us from evil,” if I do not equip myself with the armor of God. I cannot say, “Thine is the kingdom,” if I do not live in loyalty to the King of Kings and to the Lord of Lords. I cannot attribute to Him power if I fear what men may do. All our prayer is that the Father may be glorified.