



The Lord's Prayer Devotional Study – Day 1

We have been truly blessed over the last 40 days by studying faith together (*thank you to all who contributed*) from chapter 11 in the book of Hebrews, where the writer took us on a 'roller-coaster' ride through what is often called "The Hall of Faith". It taught us about ordinary men and women who modelled faith and how they lived and moved by faith, trusting in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who is faithful whether we are on a mountain top or in a valley. The study concluded beautifully by encouraging us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (I Corinthians 13:12)*

So let's continue our journey together to grow in faith as we look forward to gathering again at the end of this month. Let's press on toward the goal to win the prize to which we are called heavenward and look at the prayer life of Jesus.

But first, let me ask you a question: If you were to ask Jesus to teach you just one thing, what would it be? What would you truly want to know how to do, that He does so well? Would you want Him to teach you how to turn water into wine; would you want Him to teach you how to multiply fish and loaves or would it be on which side of the boat to catch a great haul of fish? I've often asked that when I've been fishing off the rocks in Carvoeiro with Rodrigo – His reply was always "I've called you to be fishers of men"!

Well it might surprise you to learn what Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them; we find the answer in (Luke 11:1) *"Lord teach us to pray"...*

That's seems amazing to me, since Jesus' disciples had witnessed incredible miracles, they had listened to His word speak power and authority over everyday situations of life and death; they had seen how He lived close to and loved His Father in heaven, as well as loving His neighbours, yet they asked *"Lord teach us to pray"*! There must be something so important in prayer that we may have been missing; let's take a closer look until Pentecost.

We understand that we are not born with a natural ability to pray and we often feel overwhelmed, underqualified and too often under pressure to pray!

It becomes even more difficult where 2 or 3 are gathered together in His name; we don't know what to say for fear of embarrassment. Perhaps God seems distant and unresponsive to our words and why would He want to hear what I have to say? Surely there must be others more gifted than me, others who are eloquent in speech and full of wisdom; able to express themselves with great passion and spiritual fervour. Is this your thought-life in prayer, do you need teaching how to pray? Then let's ask:

Q: How do I break through the spiritual ceiling which prevent my prayers from rising up like a sweet aroma, they echo back like a weakened sonar unable to penetrate the spiritual barrier that exists between me and the Father?

A: Lord teach me to pray!

Over the next few days let's look at how the Lord taught His disciples to pray and see if we can discern the pattern of prayer the Master taught His followers, as they grew in the knowledge and wisdom of Him who prayed *"yet not my will but Yours be done"*, Amen



DAILY DEVOTIONAL – Day 2

The four Gospels give us many accounts of Jesus praying and here are just a few examples i.e. *In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there; another, But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray; and still another, One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.*

The Lord's Prayer is found in Luke chapter 11 and a slightly longer version in Matthew chapter 6.

I would like point out this is not a strict formulae on how to pray but rather a pattern of prayer, especially when first beginning to pray. I have to confess I grew up learning the Lord's Prayer "parrot fashion" and it became something of a routine I had to do at night before going to sleep, it was never a personal conversation with God but a prescription I could recite without even engaging my brain. You may have had a similar experience growing up as a child or perhaps more recently as you wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds, which is the government's recommendation to wash away coronavirus!

So let's begin to study the first two verses of the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-10

"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Luke 11:1-2

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

May I suggest to you that Jesus' prayer life set an example that encouraged the disciples to ask Him the question we find in verse 1 of Luke chapter 11. There is an important principle here for us too, as the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to *set an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.* The way we live our lives is constantly being observed by those around us and our lifestyle, if not our prayer-style, may just lead someone to ask the question, just as the disciples asked Jesus *"Lord teach us to pray"*.

We can see that prayer doesn't begin with asking or telling God anything but rather with worship, worship to *'Our Father in heaven'*. Romans 8:16 says that *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children* and we therefore exalt God as *'Our Father'* yet we give Him the honour and reverence He richly deserves, by praying *'hallowed be your name'*.

We continue to exalt Our Father in heaven by praying *'your kingdom come'* as He is the King of kings and Lord of Lords; we humbly acknowledge ourselves as coming under His supreme authority and rule, as His subjects, even though He calls us His children. There is a right relationship between us and God, as He is close to us as a Father (immanent) yet seated in Heaven as Lord of all creation (transcendent).

We go on to agree with God that *'your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'*. We never enter into conversation with God only to ask Him to agree with 'my will' and to do what 'I want done' on earth. We choose rather to accept that His will is good, pleasing and perfect. However, we remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit which we find revealed in scripture.

Let's pray: *So Lord we ask that your will be done this and every day in our homes, our work, our families, our relationship with You and with one another, in fact in all that comes our way today. Let us test and approve how good, pleasing and perfect Your will is, in Jesus' name, Amen.*



DAILY DEVOTIONAL – Day 3

Yesterday we looked at how The Lord's Prayer began with worship and this morning we move on to petition and lift up those things which are essential to our physical wellbeing. So let's study the next verse of the Lord's Prayer together.

Matthew 6:11 ¹¹ *Give us today our daily bread.* **Luke 11:3** ³ *Give us each day our daily bread.*

As we begin to worship in prayer and acknowledge God, exulting His power, majesty and authority (that is His *capability* to answer our requests) we are then ready to call upon His mercy, love and grace (that is His *desire* to grant our requests). Jesus taught this principle in the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 6:31-33** ³¹ *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* ³² *For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.* ³³ *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* King David put it this way in **Psalms 34:9** *Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.*

Our personal and intimate relationship with 'Our Father in heaven' gives us confidence and trust to ask Him for all that we need, not what we want, as we ask Him 'Give us today our daily bread'. I remember Ton always opened with that request in prayer and it has stuck with me ever since. However, we all too often have it the wrong way round, Lord give me what I want, not what I need!

Notice two characteristic words that stand out in 'Give us today our daily bread', they are 'us' and 'daily'.

The first characteristic word is not to look just to our own interests but also to the interests of others. This is the heart of the Lord's Prayer and resonates with the greatest commandment in **Matthew 22:36-39** ³⁶ *"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"* ³⁷ *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* ³⁸ *This is the first and greatest commandment.* ³⁹ *And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.* Therefore, we are to pray with, and for others as prayer is not a selfish 'wish list' of things that I want from my heavenly Father but rather the things that we all need from 'Our Father in heaven'.

There is a lovely acronym which has been around for many years (J.O.Y) that stands for Jesus, Others, and Yourself. When we look to Jesus and pray for others as well as for ourselves, we will be filled with an inexpressible joy.

The second characteristic word is to ask 'daily' as the Lord knows all our needs and is willing and able to supply them on a daily basis. He wants us to remain in relationship with Him and be dependent upon Him, never lacking in our basic needs. King David said in **Psalms 37:25** *I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.*

The sense we have from scripture is that the Lord does not want us to become independent from Him by storing up treasures on earth...but rather dependent upon Him for His gracious provision. We all remember the account in Exodus where God rained down bread from heaven in the desert for 40 years. Just enough manna was to be collected daily for each person and only on the 6th day were they to collect a double portion, so they could rest on the Sabbath. We see that also in the Lord's Prayer as our daily bread is a fresh opportunity to experience His abundant provision.

Let's pray, Lord we ask that you would look to the needs of your church family this morning, to the needs of our own families and friends and to rain down *every good and perfect gift, which comes down from you, the Father of heavenly lights...* Amen.



DAILY DEVOTIONAL – Day 4

The Lord's Prayer began with worship of our Father, we then lifted up our basic need for daily bread. This morning we turn to our Spiritual need of fellowship and ask the Lord to forgive us our debts and help us to live in a fallen world.

Let's study the next verse together in the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:12

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Luke 11:4

4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us

We already know that when we repent from sin and confess with our mouth and believe in our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, scripture says we are saved; saved from the Day of Judgement (which is in the future) and saved from the power of Satan, sin and death (which is in the present).

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that we are born again of the Spirit when we believe in Him, the night-time encounter goes on to reveal one of the most quoted verses in the bible, John 3:16. The Apostle Paul agrees that we are new creations in Christ, the old has gone the new has come! So why do many of us struggle as though this were not true and why would the Lord teach His disciples to ask for forgiveness of sin or more correctly forgiveness of our debt to God and to one another if we are already saved? You will notice Matthew and Luke use different words at this point and I understand sin to be a metaphor for debt.

Scripture is clear that if we confess our sin, that is to agree with God, then the shed blood of the Lamb is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; not just from past sin but from all sin, past, present and future. Why then do we continue to doubt this truth if we are already forgiven and enabled to walk in the light, as he is in the light? The word says *'His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness'*.

Perhaps you are losing the spiritual battle against sin and unable to enjoy fellowship with the Lord and other believers; maybe you feel powerless to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil? This struggle always seems to stem from not knowing or understanding God's truth and we lack the wisdom and power to walk in the light as he is in the light.

The Apostle John put it this way in I John 1:5-9 *This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

So far so good but the next verse goes on to say that ¹⁰ *if we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.* Other versions say *'the word is not in us'*, so if the word of God is not in us its absence leaves us powerless to conquer and overcome the obstacles to fellowship with God. **Psalm 119:11** *says I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

This petition in The Lord's Prayer to *'forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors'* helps to keep us humble before God, as we are aware of our many faults and failings, yet we rejoice that we are loved, accepted and forgiven by the grace of God and all through the sacrifice of Jesus, despite our poor performance. This truth also enables us to extend the Father's heart of compassion towards those who also fall short of His glory. His word transforms our thinking and renews our minds, which then empowers us as to live in the Father's will, even in a fallen world.

Let's pray: *Heavenly Father, thank you that you died to save us from The Day of Judgement and for the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. We thank you for your promise and power to conquer Satan, sin and death by the blood of the lamb. We call upon your name to forgive us where we fall short and enable us by that same power of your word and the presence of your Holy Spirit to walk in the light as you walk in the light and that we may enjoy sweet fellowship together with all the saints and express our faith in love both now and forevermore, Amen*



DAILY DEVOTIONAL – Day 5

Let's read the Lord's Prayer together to conclude our study on how Jesus taught His disciples to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ *"This, then, is how you should 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 today our daily bread.
¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.*

Luke 11:2-4

² *He said to them, "When you pray, say:
"Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.
³ Give us each day our daily bread.
⁴ Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
...And lead us not into temptation."*

Oscar Wilde, a 19th century Irish poet and playwright said "I can resist anything except temptation." Today we live in a culture where yielding to temptation has become an acceptable practice, encouraged and even admired!

The Apostle Paul said in his day, *"Everything is permissible," but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible," but not everything is edifying.* May I suggest that yielding to temptation will tear down the Christian life, not build it up; it can never lead to life and godliness! The fruit of falling short will always break our fellowship with the Lord and with one another.

Before conversion by faith in Jesus, our pattern of thinking and by extension, the choices we made, were well established and ingrained in our mind and lifestyle. Though we are now new creations, those thoughts and desires remain alive, lurking under the skin. When we are tempted, we sense the battle has begun again, when we should be declaring 'the battle belongs to the Lord'; After all He has already won the victory on the cross!

What are we to do, how are we to overcome temptation and resist evil? Yesterday we looked at **Romans 12:2** which says *do not conform to the pattern of this world...*it goes on to say the word will transform and renew our mind, enabling us to respond in a new way and live in the Father's will. **1 Corinthians 2:16** concludes that we now *'have the mind of Christ'*, so why not *'take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ'* thereby resisting temptation and be delivered from evil?

However, when we do sin and the inevitable consequences follow, our old nature typically wants to blame someone or something else and we hear the excuse, 'I was born that way'; 'you don't know the upbringing I've had'; 'my life is so difficult I just needed some fun and let to off a little steam or worse 'it's God's fault for making me this way'!

James 1:13-15 explains where the true problem lies: ¹³ *when tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.* There did you see it, there is no one to blame but ourselves? Instead of feeling alive and 'born again', sin entangles us, so we are unable to break the cycle and we end up feeling 'dead again'!

However **1 Corinthians 10:13** says *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.* So there it is, we see how to resist temptation and be delivered from evil, there is a way out after all and Our Father in Heaven is faithful to help us when we ask Him.

So let's pray: *Thank you Lord that you have overcome the world and that you promise to 'lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'.* Help us in our time of weakness to call upon your name and your word to provide an escape so we can remain in your will and enjoy sweet fellowship with the Holy Spirit; for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen