

## PRAYING LUTHER'S SMALL CATECHISM – Lesson 4 - “The Lord’s Prayer” 8-6-17

Trinity Lutheran Church Norman, OK. Pastor David Nehrenz

### Scripture Texts:

Matthew 6:5-15; 26:36-46; Luke 11:1-13; 22:40-46; 1 Tim 2:1-6; 1 Thess 5:17

Nowhere is it more evident that the catechism can be prayed than in Luther's exposition of the Lord's Prayer. "All true prayer finds the seed around which it can crystalize in the Lord's Prayer."<sup>1</sup> The Lord's Prayer is both the source and norm of all Christian praying.<sup>2</sup> From the Lord's Prayer all other petitions, intercessions, supplications, and thanksgivings are derived. At the same time, the Lord's Prayer serves to govern all for which the Christian prays, distinguishing true prayers based on the Lord's commands and promises from false prayers grounded in sinful desire and arising in contradiction to the Word of God. Such prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit: "Wherever there is a Christian, there is none other than the Holy Spirit, who does nothing but pray without ceasing. . . . A Christian without prayer is just as impossible as a living person without a pulse."<sup>3</sup>

The Lord's Prayer is God's Word to us, and as this word is received by faith it becomes our words to God. As Helmut Thielicke points out: "Prayer is not our action but our reaction. It bases itself on the preceding Word of God which makes it

#### **The Introduction**

Our Father who art in heaven.

Our Father in heaven.

#### ***What does this mean?***

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

Holy Father, with Your words You tenderly invite us to believe that You are our true Father and we are Your true children. Give us boldness and confidence to trust Your promises and so petition You as dear children addressing their dear father; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

#### **The First Petition**

Hallowed be Thy name.

Hallowed be Your name.

#### ***What does this mean?***

God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

#### ***How is God's name kept holy?***

God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

Heavenly Father, whose name alone is holy in itself, by Your grace grant that it may be kept holy among us also. Cause Your Word to be taught in truth and purity in our midst, and sanctify us by Your truth to live holy lives according to it. Protect us from false teaching and unholy living that would profane Your name among us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God. Amen.

### **The Second Petition**

Thy kingdom come.

Your kingdom come.

#### ***What does this mean?***

The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also.

#### ***How does God's kingdom come?***

God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

Merciful Father, Your kingdom comes by itself without prayers, but we implore You to let it come to us also. Give us Your Holy Spirit, heavenly Father, that by Your grace we believe Your Word and lead godly lives here in time and hereafter in eternity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God. Amen.

### **The Fourth Petition**

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us today our daily bread.

#### ***What does this mean?***

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

#### ***What is meant by daily bread?***

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

Generous Father, You certainly open Your hand to give daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people. We pray that You would lead us to realize this and so receive our daily bread with thanksgiving, recognizing that in Your bountiful goodness You daily and richly supply everything that has to do with the support and needs of our bodies; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **The Third Petition**

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

#### ***What does this mean?***

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

#### ***How is God's will done?***

God's will is done

when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come;

and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die.

This is His good and gracious will.

Blessed God, Your good and gracious will is done even without prayer, but we pray that it may be done among us also. To that end, we petition You, holy Lord, to break and hinder every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow Your name or let Your kingdom come. Strengthen and keep us firm in Your Word and faith until we die, and so fulfill in us Your good and gracious will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **The Fifth Petition**

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

#### ***What does this mean?***

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them.

We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor 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 sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

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Father in heaven, do not look upon our sins or deny our prayers on account of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that You would give them to us by grace, for we daily sin much and deserve nothing but punishment. So we, too, will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us. In Your mercy, hear us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

### **The Sixth Petition**

And lead us not into temptation.

Lead us not into temptation.

#### ***What does this mean?***

God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.

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God, You tempt no one to sin, so we pray that You would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that, trusting in You alone, we may finally overcome them and win the victory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **The Seventh Petition**

But deliver us from evil.

But deliver us from evil.

#### ***What does this mean?***

We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

Our Father in heaven, rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end and graciously take us from this valley of sorrows to Yourself in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **The Conclusion**

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and forever. Amen.

#### ***What does this mean?***

This means that I should be certain that these petitions are pleasing 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. Amen, amen means “yes, yes, it shall be so.”

Father in heaven, give us the certainty that the petitions we make according to Your command and promise are pleasing to You and are heard by You, so that with all boldness and confidence we might say: Amen, amen. Yes, yes, it shall be so; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who has taught us to pray in this way. Amen.

“Amen” is the great word of faith. It is the confession that God’s promises are true, reliable, and trustworthy. To pray according to God’s command and promise is to call upon the Father with the certainty born of faith, that is, with all boldness and confidence that He is not deaf to our cries but hears and answers according to His good and gracious will. Sometimes learning to utter the “Amen” is the hardest part of prayer, for with this word we commit our petitions to the Father who hears us not because of our many words stacked one upon another, as though we would be heard on account of the length, sincerity, or persuasiveness of our speech, but because He is our Father. The catechism teaches us to pray on the strength of the Amen in the way of 2 Corinthians 1:20, where Paul says all the promises of God find their Yes in Christ.<sup>59</sup>

So Luther’s explanation of the Lord’s Prayer ends where it began: (with faith.) Luther underscores the fact that

the efficacy of prayer consists in our learning also to say Amen to it—that is, not to doubt that our prayer is surely heard and will be answered. This word is nothing else than an unquestioning word of faith on the part of the one who does not pray as a matter of luck but knows that God does not lie because he has promised to grant it. (Where there is no faith like this, there also can be no true prayer.)<sup>60</sup>

Prayer is the voice of faith that clings to the promises of God and is bold to call upon Him on this basis. Prayer depends on the promise of Christ Jesus that gives us “the ground to nag and pester the Promisor.”<sup>61</sup> The Father delights in such nagging and pestering when His children rub His promises into His ears with the Amen of faith.