

Radical Prayers – Praying Out of the Ordinary

Praying the Lord's Prayer

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Matthew 6:7-13

Last week I finished the series on the Holy Spirit by speaking on what it means to pray in the Spirit – that is, the Holy Spirit. I said that praying in the Spirit is to be conscious and purposeful in listening to the thoughts given to us by God through the Holy Spirit as we pray. When we pray in the Spirit, we join in heaven's work, praying God's thoughts. Moreover, God speaks through us in our prayers because we become agents of His work.

Such praying is much greater than merely praying in a form of prayer. It is also stronger than merely praying formal prayers or praying predetermined words. This is radical praying, because we are not just doing religion. We are engaging with God to change our world for His kingdom.

We start our series with Praying the Lord's Prayer. We are so familiar with this prayer we often skip over its radical nature. For many in orthodox Christianity, this is simply a prayer to memorize. Some Christians are taught that if you pray special prayers you will receive a special blessing. Such teaching is magical religion. Jesus did not give us the prayer so we would have a special magical prayer. In fact, he taught against such thinking.

Matthew 6:7-8 NIVO

⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

You are not heard better because you pray long prayers. If you study the recorded prayers of Jesus, most of his prayers are very short. In paganism, the idea is to get the attention of the spirit by doing special things. You don't have to do that with God. Praying a phrase over and over has no power in the spiritual realm. We don't need babbling. What we need is a few words that are powerful. Jesus gives us an example of such a prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13 NIVO

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 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. '

***For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen .'* (Matt. 6:13 NAS) This tag is not found in the earliest manuscripts. It is believed to have been added later when the prayer was part of Church liturgy. CF. 1 Chr. 29:11**

Often, when Christians pray this prayer, they think of the end of the age. Yet, there is nothing in the prayer that suggest the end of the age. These phrases are about the activity of the present. For example, you ask for daily bread every day. You ask for deliverance of evil every day. So, the first part of the prayer is as much about daily reality as the end of the prayer.

1. Pray for our world to revere God.

Our Father, Who (is) in the heavens.

Father
—
your | who | is
—
in heaven

Let be made sanctified (verb) / your name.

(It) / Let be sanctified / name
—
your

ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου· (Matt. 6:9 BGT) This aorist third person passive imperative is stronger than a subjunctive passive verb (Would that your name might become sanctified. As an imperative it has greater force, the force of a command. In the third person, it forms a permissive imperative, such as – let it happen. In the aorist, the verb indicates a complete action, an accomplishment.

It is not a command made of God, which would be in the second person – “you do this.” As a prayer in a permissive imperative, it has the force of asking for an action to be permitted, or a power to be released. It is not a future action that is sought, as in thinking of the end of the age. Instead, it is a desire to see the force of the action in the present, the here and now. Moreover, it is seeking the accomplishment of that action immediately and completely.

Here is the effect of this concept:

Our Father in heaven, let it be, here and now, everywhere on earth, every person, everything, regard you as holy. The name in Eastern thinking is more than a personal name. It is more than saying “God,” or “Jesus.” The name is the whole of the person.

The only places presently where God’s name is absolutely revered, sanctified is heaven and hell. In both places, no one steps out of line regarding God’s holiness. In heaven, the sanctity of God’s name forms the beauty, freedom, joy and love of those who live in the joy of his presence. In hell, the sanctify of God’s name is enforced upon those who have rejected God’s holiness in life. This may be why many think of the prayer has being for the end of the age. However, we might see a greater work of God’s presence in our world if we actually believed that God would choose to reveal His holiness to this world here and now. It is the presence of God’s holiness that leads people to repentance. It is his drawing near that brings awakenings to communities.

2. Ask God to invade the earth with obedience to His will.

Make earth like heaven, Your kingdom revealed here and now.

¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Let come / your kingdom.

ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· (Matt. 6:10 BGT)

Let be done / your will – as in heaven even so upon the earth.

γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς· (Matt. 6:10 BGT)

(It) | let come / Kingdom
Your

(It) | let be done / will
Your

as in heaven

so also on earth

Again, as in the first part, we have two aorist imperative third person verbs. These again form a permissive imperative – a request for an action to be released. In this part of the prayer the focus is on God’s will being done on earth to the same degree it is done in heaven. The request seeks the invasion of God’s will upon the earth.

In heaven, God's will is kept perfectly. No one rebels against God. No one does his own thing. Heaven is heaven because God is there, but also because everyone there perfectly do everything God desires. There are no exceptions. Everything in heaven exists in the perfect order of God's creative purpose. There is no rationalism there. No progressivism, no gay pride. Everything operates in the will of the mind which designed all things.

One professor said, "If everyone on earth today decided to do the will of God absolutely, we would have heaven on earth today." "As in heaven – so also on earth," is the cry of this prayer. It is a cry for a radical realignment every heart on earth to conform to the will of God in heaven.

This is such a radical prayer. It is asking for the invasion of heaven to earth now! In heaven there is no deceiver. In heaven there are no lies. In heaven there is no sin. In heaven there is no disease. In heaven there are no cripples. There is no cancer in heaven. No heart disease. All these things of earth are the consequence of the loss of living in God's will. When people do God's will, heaven invades earth.

This is a radical prayer. It is radical because it does not say, "Let it be done at the end of the age." We often think this way because we believe such a radical transformation is not possible until the end of the age. Yet, this is a prayer for here and now. "Come God, rule in the hearts of men and women everywhere." In the history of Christianity, there have been many times when revivals and awakenings have come. In those moments, lasting for sometimes days, months or even years, God invaded the hearts of people and brought tremendous radical change to civilization. It can happen again if we pray with faith.

3. God, be my provider this day.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

BGT **Matthew 6:11** τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον. (Matt. 6:11 BGT)

Our daily bread give us today.

A handwritten diagram of the prayer "Give us today our daily bread". The words are written in a cursive style. "Give" is underlined, and "bread" is underlined. "to us" is written above "bread". "our" is written below "bread" with an arrow pointing to "bread". "daily" is written below "our" with an arrow pointing to "our". "today" is written below "daily" with an arrow pointing to "today". The word "(you)" is written to the left of "Give" with a bracket connecting it to "Give".

This is a shift in the prayer from the third person to the second person. The first two prayers are indirect, whereas this one is direct toward God. The request for daily bread that is given today indicates a daily walk with God. Food needs in the first century were more basic than they are today. People had limited access to food and very little food storage. They often went to the market daily to get basic food needs. They made bread for each day's needs. Meat was not able to be stored, so it was not eaten regularly. With most of the population living in relative poverty, people depended on God for every day existence. Daily bread, daily wine, daily meat – these were real needs. It was not daily fast food, "would like fries with that? – medium or large fries – super fries."

To live in daily dependence on God is to understand a genuine life of faith. Every meal we have is God's provision. We should genuinely give thanks for our meals. We should thank God we have a place to live. A bed to sleep in. A roof over us. Everything could be cast into a different scene and a different result in a short few years of trouble. Learning to live in the daily present with God is a real spiritual journey. Most who live there do so because they have been through some dark valleys. Yet, God has kept them through the tempests and storms.

This pray is radical in that it forces us to stop and be present with God here and now. This is a prayer for God's continued guidance and provision for our real needs, not a cart blanche for winning the lottery or getting a windfall blessing that meets all our needs forever.

get out of the mire of sin's bondage. We are more often to get into the fix of the later than to seek God's guidance at the first, the avoiding of the temptation to start. If we are willing to pray daily for God to help us overcome our sinful desires, then we will have God guiding us down paths that are free of the devil's traps and trip wires. Yet, how often do we ask God to cleanse us of our sinful flesh nature? How often do we seek God so we do not entertain thoughts that lead to temptation. We have the potential to consider sinful thoughts. It is better for us if we take God seriously and avoid evil all together by asking that God guide us in ways that lead away from temptation.

So here we have it. A very short prayer. Just a few lines. Yet this prayer is a guide to being real with God. Jesus did not give to us to memorize it and say it without any thought of its meaning. Rather, He gave us a simple, yet radical prayer that changes the world around us, and changes us as well, if we take it to heart.

Here is a final thought. **When you pray, will you seek heaven to come to earth, here and now?** How much do you want God?