

Praying the Lord's Prayer

Jesus gave us a 'model of prayer' in response to his disciples' request that he teach them to pray (Lu 11:1). The point being that prayer needs to be learned, because it is not just a duty that one must perform, but the expression of a developing intimate relationship!!! We will be working from Matthew 6:9-13:

Topic 1 – Our Father in Heaven

It is significant that Jesus begins his model prayer in a totally relational and inclusive manner to identify whom we are praying to – **Our Father in heaven!**

Firstly, as we touched on last week, Jesus' claim that God was his Father was a huge problem for the Jews – it was far too intimate and personal for their understanding – it sounded too much like an actual relationship to them, so it was blasphemy to their ears!

¹⁸ For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.
Jn 5:17

This 'was' his own Father he was referring to, which included both the eternal relationship with the Father that he had always had as the eternal Son, but also now, in his humanity, this is now **our heavenly Father** that **he has come to reunite us to with him** – **making us part of his family.**

Secondly, **God is our Father**, twice over, through both **the act of creation**, and **through his saving act of redemption** –

- in creation he gave us **human life and the natural environment** in which we could survive
- **through his redemption he teaches us how to thrive in the eternal life that becomes ours through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ.**

So, Jesus teaches us to begin with praise and thanksgiving for the relationship with God as our Father that Jesus has brought us into through faith in him as the eternal Son of the Father:

We are going to work briefly through six aspects of what it means for God to be our Father:

It's an image-reflecting relationship through creation – created for relationship with our Creator and with fellow humans.

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
(Gen 1:27)

We carry the thumbprint of God in us that now requires the Holy Spirit to breathe into us!!!

It is a 'heaven-joining-earth' relationship – our identity and destiny are redeemed.

⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus... (Eph 2:4-7)

Our Father in heaven, "...who alone is immortal and lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see" (1Tim 6:16); has made himself visible and knowable to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus has come from his eternal home with his Father into our world to reunite us with him, and ultimately, in the resurrection, to take us to meet our Father in heaven in a totally new and glorious mode of eternal existence.

It is a spiritual relationship – we are born into the Father's family through faith in Jesus

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (Jn 1:12-13)

The miracle of new birth plants the Holy Spirit within us, making our human spirit alive to God

It is a blood-covenant relationship – it cost Jesus his human life

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matt 26:27-28)

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world – the meaning of the Passover sacrifice!

It is a conversational relationship – God speaks in ways we can understand

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. (Heb 1:1-2)

As he did with Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, and Paul, God addresses us personally.

It is a personal love relationship – we walk and talk with God throughout life's journey

¹⁴ The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you. (2Cor 13:14)

God spoke to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah, saying:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness." (Jer 31:3)

And Paul sums it all up beautifully:

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in

*order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace,
expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

(Eph 2:4-7)

This is our Father in heaven to whom we are praying in Jesus' name!!!