

The Lord's (Model) Prayer, Matthew 6.7–15

Luke 3.21; 5.15–16; Mark 1.35; 6.46, what do you think Jesus prayed for? How cool would it be if we could look into the heart of Jesus and know his prayers?! The Lord's Prayer of Matthew 6.9b–13 may provide clues into the things Jesus often prayed for. How so?

The Central Focus of the Sermon

Matthew places the Lord's Prayer as the very center of the Sermon, giving emphasis to its importance.

Matthew 5.1–16, introduction
 5.17–48, your heart and the law
 6.1–4, your heart and almsgiving
 6.7–8, gentile prayer
 6.9–13, the Lord's Prayer
 6.14–15, forgiving others
 6.16–18, your heart and fasting
 6.19–7.12, your heart and life
Matthew 7.13–8.1, invitation

Matthew 6.7–8, Gentile Prayer

Empty phrases and many words. God knows what we need.

Matthew 6.9–13, The Lord's (Model) Prayer

“Pray, then, in this way”—should we not, then, pray in this way?

Our Father in heaven,
 may your name be revered as holy,
 may your kingdom come,
 may your will be done
 on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but rescue us from the evil one.

Short and sweet (as opposed to gentiles, vv7–8).

Symmetrical design: 2 parts, 3 points in each part, pattern of great command (love God, love others).

Notice the use of “our/us”—this is not a prayer about me as an individual, but a prayer about our community, of brethren as well as humanity (on earth! as in heaven); cp. shift in 5.3–10 to 5.11 and 7.1–6.

The Lord's Prayer outlines the agenda of Jesus, and it should be our agenda.

- Our Father.

- May your name be revered as holy (on earth as it is in heaven), in the hearts of more and more people in all the nations (Isa 29.22–24; Ezek 36.22–27; 1 Pet 3.15).
- May your kingdom come (on earth as it is in heaven), in the hearts of more and more people in all the nations (cp. Col 1.13–14; Rev 1.9; Mt 6.33).
- May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt 7.21–27; 12.50).
- Give us today our daily bread; cp. manna of the Israelites; feeding of 4,000/5,000; COMPLETE dependence on God; if praying “give US today OUR daily bread,” we should be moved to provide for others; Mt 25.31ff; Gal 6.10.
- And forgive us our debts (what we are owed for our sins! cp. Lk 11.4).
- As we also HAVE FORGIVEN our debtors (before seeking to be forgiven, we must forgive; Mt 18.23–35, esp 35; and, of course, 6.14–15).
- And lead us not into temptation (we don’t want to be tempted, but if so take us safely through it).
- But rescue us from the evil one (cp. Mt 27.43).

Again, this was / is the agenda of Jesus and should be our agenda; maybe not these exact words (those there’s nothing wrong with them), but this content, these ideas, these goals, this work is what being a disciple of Jesus is all about; loving God, loving others, and helping as many people as we can do the same.

What about the doxology: “For yours is the kingdom and the glory and the power, forever. Amen.”? This was probably added later for at least two reasons. One, it was a common practice of both Jews and early Christians to end all prayers with a doxology (cp. 1 Chronicles 29.11–13; Didache 8.2). Two, some early scribes / Christians may have been uncomfortable with the last word of the prayer being a reference to the evil one.

Matthew 6.14–15, Forgiving Others

Receiving forgiveness from God is dependent on the kind of heart we have toward others. If we forgive others from the heart, God will forgive us. If we do not forgive others from the heart, God will not forgive us because our hearts would not belong to him.

Conclusion

The Lord’s Prayer provides insight into the prayer life of Jesus. More than that, the Lord’s prayer provides insight into the Lord’s agenda for his life and his mission. He is calling us to give our hearts completely to him and to take up the very agenda he outlines in the prayer. We should be praying the Lord’s Prayer. More than that, the Lord’s Prayer should guide our lives in the body of Christ.

Does your heart belong to Jesus?