

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

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Over the past few months, I've had several sermons dealing with current events and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. They've dealt with the problems we're having here in America and around the world, the nearness of Jesus' return, Satan's impersonation of Christ, and a thing called Project 2025 and a coming Sunday law and how history is being repeated. However, as important as the awareness of these things are, they really don't matter if our relationship with the Lord isn't what it ought to be, agree? Do we really know Jesus, or do we just know about Him? Is He our best friend and do we communicate with Him on a daily basis? Do we love Him and obey Him out of a heart of love and thanksgiving, and do we long to see Him come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory? These I believe are the most important questions to be answered, and current events simply help us to know how close we are to the second coming of Christ, so we don't procrastinate preparing for that great day.

This morning we're going to take a deep dive into the subject of prayer, specifically The Lord's Prayer. This model prayer is found in **Matthew 6:9-13** and also in an abbreviated form in **Luke 11**, but before we turn to any of these passages, I'd like to give you a little background as to why Jesus taught this prayer to His disciples.

The Lord's Prayer was given two times by Jesus, first to the multitude in the Sermon on the Mount, and again, sometime later to the disciples when He was all alone with them. The disciples hadn't been with Jesus for a little while that day, and when they returned, they found Him totally absorbed in communion with His Father. In fact, when they arrived it seemed like He was completely unaware of their presence, and just continued praying out loud. What do you suppose Jesus looked like when He was in prayer? Have you ever thought about it? I wonder if His face shown like Moses when he came down from the mount after communing with God and having received the ten commandments. I wonder. Whatever the case, there must have been a living power in His words as if He was in the immediate presence of His Father.

No doubt as the disciple listened, they must have been deeply moved, don't you think? They knew by experience that He spent long hours in prayer, in spite of the fact that He spent every day ministering to the crowds that pressed upon Him. What about us? It's easy to think that we have way too much to do to take more than just a few minutes in the morning to talk to God. Maybe taking 5 minutes in the morning with our hand on the doorknob, and most of the time we talk instead of listening, don't we? Friends, this has got to change if we expect to receive the power necessary to live without yielding to all the temptations the devil throws our way. And one of those temptations is to think that we don't need to spend quality time in Bible study and prayer. Don't fall for it! Just as we need physical food to remain healthy, so we need to commune with God to be spiritually healthy.

In spite of the fact that Jesus spent every day ministering to the crowds, He took time to pray, even though the incessant labor must have left Him totally wiped out at times, because let's not forget, He was more than God; He was human and had a nature like ours. He got physically tired, He got hungry, He desired companionship with His disciples, but too many times they were found sleeping at the wheel when He needed them the most, weren't they? But in spite of all that, He was given power from on high to toil on day after day after day, and no doubt the disciples recognized that and wanted that same kind of relationship with the Father for themselves. As they observed these kinds of things day after day, they came to connect His hours of prayer with the power of His words and works. And so, as they stood there quietly listening to His prayer, their hearts were touched. We don't know how long they stood and listened that day, but Jesus finally stopped praying, and you know what they asked Him, don't you? They said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Teach us to pray like You pray.

And here's the thing, Jesus didn't give them some new form of prayer when they asked. As I mentioned earlier, He had already given this model prayer to the multitude that followed Him, and they were witness to it. What the disciples needed was to better understand the elements of prayer in what He had already given them, because the Lord's prayer has a depth of meaning that they had not yet perceived. Now, does that mean we are supposed to pray these exact words every time we pray? No! If we did it would become vain repetition. It's all the various ingredients in The Lord's Prayer that should be included in the prayers we offer and not just the words themselves.

The words in this prayer are so simple that a little child can understand, and yet so comprehensive that their significance can never be fully embraced, no matter how intelligent we think we are.

In **Luke 11:2** Jesus said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." Kind of sounds like a command, doesn't it? Here, Jesus teaches us to call His Father our Father. And if you remember, in **Hebrews 2:11** it says He is not ashamed to call us His brethren. In other words, He says, pray to our Father, because we are all one in Him. When we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, we are adopted into the family of God. And so, Jesus is eager for us to understand that we are family. In **Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, page 103** it says, "So ready, so eager, is the Saviour's heart to welcome us as members of the family of God, that in the very first words we are to use in approaching God He places the assurance of our divine relationship, "Our Father."

Think about what's involved in this simple phrase! When Jesus says, "When you pray, say Our Father", and when He says He's not ashamed to call us brethren, this indicates that the Father loves us the same as He loves Him. That's what Jesus said in His last and longest recorded prayer for His disciples just before He ascended to heaven. In **John 17:23**, when praying to His Father He said, Thou "hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Is that really true? Are we loved by the Father as much as He loves His Son? That's what the testimony of Scripture says! Do you have faith to believe it? And in **John 17:20** Jesus said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word", that's us! And not only that, but everything that belongs to Jesus will one day belong to us. **Revelation 21:7** says, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." I tell you friends, we really have something to look forward to, don't we? But there's a key word here in this verse that many Christians overlook; we must be overcomers! What do we need to overcome? To overcome something means to stop doing it, doesn't it? What do we need to stop doing? We need to stop committing sin! And **1 John 3:4** says, "sin is the transgression of the (**ten commandment**) law." Can we do it? Can we keep the commandments of God? Not in our own strength for sure, but we can if we've been given a new heart, because with the new heart comes a change; a total transformation. **2 Corinthians 5:17** says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is (**what?**) a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." This is what it means to be born again, and if this has happened in your life, there's a part of you that will hate sin, and when you hate something, it then becomes more likely that you will stop doing it.

Friends, if we have surrendered all to Jesus, that means we're not orphans, but children of the King, so we need to start acting the part. There should be no doubt or uncertainty in our minds about who our spiritual relations are, and that it was in behalf of those who sinned that Jesus became like us in taking upon Him our fallen sinful nature. He wants us to have peace and assurance that we belong to Him 100%. That we have an Advocate in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, and whoever accepts Him as their personal Lord and Saviour is not left to bear the burden of his own sins. **1 John 3:2** says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." And **Romans 8:17** says, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if (**and this is an important little word**) if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

Do you know what it means to suffer with Christ? Let's go to **Hebrews 2:16-18**. This is a little off topic, but it's so important for us to understand that I don't want to pass it up.

Hebrews 2:16-18 "For verily (**or doubtless**) he (**Christ**) took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him (**what?**) the seed of Abraham. (**In other words, He didn't come to help the angels by taking on their nature, that wouldn't do us any good, but He took upon Him the fallen nature of Abraham's descendants**) Wherefore in all things (**not just some things**) it behoved him (**in other words He was**

under obligation to become like us in order to save us, that's the only way it could happen) it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation **(or to make friends out of enemies)** to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour **(or to come to the aid of or give relief to)** them that are tempted.”

Now let me ask you; how did Jesus suffer being tempted? First of all, it's clear from this passage that Jesus had a human nature like ours, correct? It's supremely important that we get this. He didn't have an unfallen human nature like the holy angels have, or like Adam had before he sinned, but a nature like the descendants of Abraham.

Here's how Jesus suffered His whole life through. When He was tempted, and **Hebrews 4:15** says He was, He always said no to His fallen human nature and submitted to the divine nature instead. You see, our fallen flesh wants to sin; it wants to be satisfied, and it's not happy unless it is, because that's all it knows, but when we choose to follow the divine nature that we partook of when we came to Christ, as it says we have the privilege of doing in **2 Peter 1:4**, rather than yielding to what the fallen flesh wants, we cause it to suffer by not giving in to it. And so, if we are not causing our fallen flesh to suffer, we are giving in to sin. It's just that simple. And when we make the choice not to give in, then, through the power of the Spirit, Jesus comes to our aid and we find relief and power to stop the sin cycle, and I hope we get that point.

So, in recognizing that God is our Father, we also must recognize that all His children are our brothers and sisters. We're all members of one family, and when we pray, we should pray for other human beings as well as ourselves. We should all have a prayer list that includes our immediate family, our friends, our work associates, our nation and its leaders, for spiritual leaders, and for the world in general. I've heard people say that they don't know what to pray for, and I find that a little odd, because if we follow the list I just mentioned, we'll have more than enough to pray about. And I would suggest you do most of your praying after you spend a thoughtful hour in God's word, and if you do, you'll have even more to pray about. And don't forget to say a short prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit before you open its sacred pages, because we want to be guided by the same Spirit that inspired the holy men of old that wrote it.

When we pray to “Our Father”, we should understand all that this implies. I don't know how He does it, but God is able to hear every prayer from every person that prays to Him, even if there are millions praying at the same time. He's better than a supercomputer. He hears every word that is spoken, listens to every prayer that is offered, tastes the sorrows and disappointments of every soul, and notices the treatment we give to other people. He knows and cares about all our cares and necessities, and through His love and mercy and grace He is able to satisfy all our needs. Praise the Lord! These are the attributes of every earthly father that loves his children, and how much more the attributes of a God that is all powerful, all knowing, and everywhere present? All of these things are included in the very first phrase of The Lord's Prayer when we say, “Our Father.” And what's the next part? “Which art in heaven.”

Friends, heaven is a perfect place, and our Father is a perfect Father that only has our best interest in view, and we can trust Him to be just and fair and loving at the same time, and if we are faithful, we will get to go there and be with Him someday soon.

“Hallowed be Thy name.” Do you know what “hallowed” means? It means to be holy, or to venerate. In other words, God's name is sacred. It means that when we speak to Him, or of Him, we should do so with reverence. **Psalm 111:9** says, “Holy and reverend is His name.” When in prayer, we enter the audience chamber of the Most High, and we should come before Him with holy awe. How do you think the holy angels conduct themselves in His presence? With solemn reverence, don't you think? If it's true that holy beings who have never done anything wrong come before Him that way, then how much more should those who have sinned come in a reverent manner when they approach His throne!

Does it bother you when God's name is used in everyday language or as a curse word? You know what? People are going to have to answer for that someday. When God's name is used that way, it's a sure

sign that that person doesn't know Him, isn't that right? And if they don't know Him, Jesus will one day say to them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." It's more serious than people think, but here's the good news, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) To hallow the name of the Lord means much more than people think.

Notice what it says in **Exodus 34:5-7**. This is when Moses went up on Mount Sinai with the two tables of stone so God could write on them the ten commandments with His own finger. When Moses was up there, God proclaimed "The name of the Lord" as being "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." "Iniquity" means evil, or wickedness; "transgression" means willful rebellion, and "sin" means to miss the mark, or to try to do the right thing, but fail. In other words, God will forgive all of these things if we but ask. It doesn't matter what we've done, but what we decide to do from this day forward, because the sacrifice of Jesus covers it all.

And notice this next verse in **Jeremiah 33:16**. Speaking of the followers of Christ, or the church, it says, "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." As Christians, I know we don't feel like it, but this name is put upon every believer; it's our heritage. You see, the family is always called after the name of the Father, and the Father is righteous, is He not? Also in Jeremiah 14:9 as Jeremiah prayed he said, "We are called by Thy name; leave us not." And He won't if that continues to be our attitude.

And so, when we pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," we are asking that it be hallowed in this world, and hallowed in us. In **James 2:7** it says, worthy is the name "by the which ye are called." And so, God sends us into the world as His representatives, and everything we do and say in this life we are to honor and glorify Him. And here's the thing, we cannot hallow His name and represent Him to the world correctly unless we have a character like His, and that kind of righteous character only comes as we are sanctified through the truth. Remember what Jesus said in His prayer to the Father in **John 17:17**? He said, "Sanctify them (**that would be us**) through thy truth, thy word is truth." Friends, we've got to spend time getting to know God through the Scriptures, and as we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit by following the divine nature, we will be sure to develop the right kind of character. It will happen! God will see to it, but we've got to do our part, as small as it is. Otherwise, the work of salvation in our hearts will not be successful.

As the Lord's Prayer continues in **Matthew 6:10**, Jesus said, "Thy kingdom come." You see, the interests of God's kingdom are to be our interests, and we are to work to build it up. At the very time Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray, they were looking for Christ's kingdom to be set up right away, weren't they? But in giving them this prayer Jesus taught them that the kingdom was not to be established right away. They were to pray for its coming as a future event, but I don't think they got it at this point, do you? Because they were still jockeying for position in His coming kingdom and for who was going to be the greatest. And so, in this prayer they were given the assurance that God's kingdom would come in His own time, but not right away as they thought.

You see, this is one of the reasons we're not given a certain date for the coming of the Lord. If we knew, we probably wouldn't get with the program until the week before it was going to happen, and of course that wouldn't be enough time to warn the world or develop a godly character. The truth is, the kingdom of God's grace is now being established as people come to Christ, but the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory is not going to take place until after the second coming of Christ.

In **Daniel 7:27** it says, "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is to be given to "the people of the saints of the Most High." And **Matthew 25:34** says we shall inherit the kingdom prepared for us "from the foundation of the world." And **Revelation 21:3** says, "The tabernacle of God" shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." Are you looking forward to it? And are you doing what you can to prepare yourself and others for that great day?

But before Jesus comes, **Matthew 24:14** says, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." And so, this part of the Lord's Prayer will not be answered until

the good news of salvation through faith in Christ alone has been carried to all parts of the earth. That means we have a work to do, and only those who devote themselves to His service, saying, “Here am I; send me”, can pray in sincerity, “Thy kingdom come.”

The next part of the Lord’s Prayer in **Matthew 6:10** says, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Do you know what the will of God is? It’s very simple; it’s everything between the two covers of this book. The Bible is God’s will for your life. And there’s something particular between the two covers of this book that makes things even simpler; the ten-commandment law! In **Psalm 40:8** David said, “I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.” Did you catch the key words here? “Within in my heart!” If the law of God is not in your heart, and only God can put it there, then you cannot keep the law; it’s impossible! And that’s the main reason why many Christians say it’s not necessary in order to have eternal life. It’s when it’s in the heart to obey that it becomes a possibility; and not only that, it becomes a delight! It’s something we want to do, and when you want to do something, no one has to twist your arm to do it. It’s not going to win us any brownie points with God to render obedience in a spirit of legality. That’s what the Pharisees tried to do, and guess what? It was that kind of attitude that was responsible for crucifying Jesus. Pretending to keep the law while they had murder in their hearts. If obedience is a drudgery to a professed Christian, then there’s something terribly wrong. When we have a true love for God, it makes our service to Him a joy, and I hope you have discovered that.

The petition, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” is a prayer that the reign of evil on this earth will come to an end, that sin will be forever destroyed, and the kingdom of righteousness established. And yes, this may be future, but at the same time it’s not far off. This world is ripe for destruction and will not be permitted to continue on much longer, and it’s our job to hasten the day of Christ’s return by being examples to those around us.

Matthew 6:11 says, “Give us this day our daily bread.”

In the first half of The Lord’s Prayer Jesus teaches us that God’s name is to be honored, His kingdom established, and His will perform; and when we are working toward this end, then, and only then, can we ask with confidence that our needs be supplied. As I mentioned earlier, what belongs to Jesus belongs to us, because as a family member we will inherit all things. In **1 Corinthians 3:21, 23** we are told that if we belong to Christ, then what belongs to Him belongs to us. However, we are not yet placed in control of our inheritance, why? Because we must be faithful to the end. It’s possible that we might backslide and give up our inheritance. And so, Christ holds it for us by keeping it out of our reach should we decide to rejoin our old family.

You see, before we came to Christ and joined the family of God, we were a member of the devil’s family. We all were! Remember what Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews at one point? In **John 8:44** He said, “ye are of your father the devil.” And so, Satan is the father of all who follow him, and we’re always free to go back. As a child of God’s family, we will receive day by day what is required for that day’s need, but our inheritance is kept safe until the Lord comes. Every day we are to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread”, and not worry about whether or not we have sufficient for tomorrow, and yes, that takes faith, but at the same time there are many promises in God’s word that give us the assurance that our needs will be supplied, but again, here’s where faith comes in.

In **James 1:7, 8** it says we are to “ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” Do you lack faith, friends? If you do, I’m going to tell it to you straight; it’s because you haven’t been spending adequate time with God, it’s just that simple. In **Romans 10:17** we’re told that “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” So, if faith is going to grow, it has to be exercised, otherwise our faith muscles will become weak and flabby and unable to grasp the promises.

Let’s look at a few of those faith building promises. Because of time I’m going to run through these very quickly so you might want to jot them down to look at later. In **Psalm 37:25**, David says, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” And then there’s the story of how God took care of Elijah by sending ravens to feed him when he was

camped out by the brook. Then there's the promise to the one who walks righteously before God. In **Isaiah 33:16** it says, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." Also, **Psalms 37:19**, "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." And **Romans 8:32**, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" And of course, there's **Matthew 6:33** where Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we are also to ask for others as well as ourselves, because remember, we are all one in Christ Jesus, and we should acknowledge that what God gives is not for ourselves alone. What we have is given to us in trust so that we can have a little extra to help others when they have need. In **Luke 14:12-14** it says, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors. . . But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be **(what?)** blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." And so, there's a reward coming for those who do this, and we don't just do it for the reward, but out of love for the human family. And this goes right along with what the apostle Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 9:6** where he says, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." That's a law that can't be changed and will be fulfilled one way or the other.

And of course, we don't want to forget that the prayer for daily bread includes not only physical food to sustain the body, but that spiritual bread which will nourish the soul. In **John 6:27** Jesus said, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." And in **verse 51** He says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live **(for how long)** forever." And so, we receive Christ through His word, and then the Holy Spirit opens that word to our understanding, bringing home its teachings to our hearts. That's how it works. All we have to do is follow these instructions and God will see to it that we are prepared to meet Jesus in peace when He comes.

In ***Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, page 113*** it says, "In teaching us to pray every day for what we need—both temporal and spiritual blessings—God has a purpose to accomplish for our good. He would have us realize our dependence upon His constant care, for He is seeking to draw us into communion with Himself. In this communion with Christ, through prayer and the study of the great and precious truths of His word, we shall as hungry souls be fed; as those that thirst, we shall be refreshed at the fountain of life." That's what I want, how about you?

In **Luke 11:4**, his version of The Lord's Prayer says, "Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us." But do we? What this means is that we can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. How do we know this is true? Because after completing the Lord's Prayer, Jesus added these words in **Matthew 6:14, 15**, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

You see, if we are unforgiving, we cut ourselves off from God's mercy to forgive us. Why would we do that? Pride perhaps? But let's not forget that pride was Satan's problem and look where it got him. So, we are not justified in withholding forgiveness from someone who we believe has injured us somehow, and if they're unwilling to make things right, we are to go to them, and hopefully their heart will be softened to acknowledge their error.

I've heard it said that God requires confession of sin before He will forgive us, so the one who has hurt us shouldn't receive our forgiveness unless they first confess to us. No! First of all, we can't cleanse anyone from sin like God can, and secondly, we don't know the other person's heart like God does, so there's really no comparison when it comes to confession and forgiveness. If someone has done us wrong, yes, it's their duty to humble their heart and come to us, but if they don't, that doesn't let us off the hook. We are to have a spirit of compassion toward them whether or not they confess their faults.

Again, in ***Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings, page 114*** it says, "However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries;

but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, we are to pardon all who have done evil to us.”

I know of a case where the wife did something terribly wrong to her husband, and as they talked it over, he said, “I forgive you”, but ever afterward when things didn’t go well in their relationship for whatever reason, he would always bring up the old sin, and friends, that’s not forgiveness. When God forgives us, **Psalm 103:12** says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” And in **Micah 7:19** God says, “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” That’s what true forgiveness looks like, and when we forgive, we have no right to go deep sea diving to bring up again that which was forgiven. **Ephesians 4:32** says, “be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as **(how?)** even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

Listen to what it says in **1 John 4:16**, “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” The one thing that is essential for us in order that we can receive and impart the forgiving love of God to others is to know and believe the love that He has to us. Does that make sense? You see, Satan, the father of lies, is hard at work every day in order that we won’t recognize the love of God. Do you believe that? Yes! If he can, he will cause us to think that our sins, and the sins of others for that matter, have been so terrible that the Lord will not even listen to our prayers and will not bless and save us. And this is where he gains a foothold, because when we look at ourselves, what do we see? We see nothing but weakness, right? Nothing at all that would recommend ourselves to God, and Satan takes that and tries to convince us that that’s true, that it no use; that we might just as well give up, because we can never develop a righteous character.

When we’ve done something wrong and try to come to God in confession, Satan is right there to tell us that it’s of no use for us to pray, doesn’t he? He whispers in our ear, “haven’t you sinned against God and violated your own conscience?” But friends, if we know the Scripture weapons when this happens, we can tell the enemy to go fly a kite, and quote what it says in **1 John 1:7**, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from **(how much sin?)** all sin”, no matter what it is! When we have sinned and feel like we can’t pray, it’s then that we need to pray most, because it’s the remedy for the way you’re feeling. It’s OK to be ashamed that we have blown it and be humbled by it, we should be, but we must pray, and we must believe that God hears and forgives, simply because He said so, because He can’t lie! **1 Timothy 1:15** says, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **(who?)** sinners; of whom I am chief”, Paul said. We need to understand that forgiveness and reconciliation with God comes to us, not as a reward for our good works or any merit on our part, but that it’s a gift to us. It’s a gift! Never forget it!

I think this would be a good time to read **Titus 3:5-7**, because we need to have the assurance of our acceptance with the God of love. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to **(what?)** his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us **(how?)** abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Isn’t that beautiful? And more importantly, do you believe it? We must believe friends, and we must have the Scripture weapons ready to quench all the fiery darts the devil throws at us, otherwise we’ll be overcome, no doubt about it.

And here’s another thing. When we sin, we shouldn’t try to lessen our guilt by making excuses. Just acknowledge it and realize that God’s estimate of sin is very heavy, yes, after all, Jesus was crucified because of it. And so, the consequences of sin are enormous, but the sinless One who has taken our place bore the penalty for us. **1 John 1:9** is well known to all of us, “If we confess our sins,” **(God)** “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” And that’s a glorious truth, is it not? **Micah 7:18** says, “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in **(what?)** mercy.” And in His mercy, He also gives us a way out of the revolving door of sin.

In **Matthew 6:13** Jesus said, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” It almost

sounds like we're supposed to ask that God would not lead us into temptation, doesn't it? But how could that be when the testimony of Scripture, in **James 1:13** says, "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." So, if God tempts no one, then where does it come from? And just what is temptation? Let's read **James 1:13-15**, because it gives us a clear answer. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted (**how?**), when he is drawn away of his own lust (**or his own evil desires**) and enticed. Then when lust (**or that evil desire**) hath conceived (**when the evil seed has been planted in the heart**), it bringeth forth sin (**it brings forth the evil act**): and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Temptation, according to James, is enticement to sin, isn't it? And this does not come from God, but from Satan and from the evil of our own hearts, because we have all cultivated it, and when you cultivate things they grows better, don't they?

And so, it's Satan who seeks to bring us into temptation, that the evil of our own characters might be revealed. Revealed to who? To holy angels and to God Himself, that's who. Then he says, "see God, they don't love and obey you at all, they belong to me." And you know what? When we sin, we do belong to the devil, that's what it says in **1 John 3:8**. Don't be fooled by the false theology that we are still God's children when we sin but thank God that we can be reclaimed and cleansed through confession and repentance.

In the symbolic prophecy of **Zechariah 3:1-4** we are given a picture of how this all works. Satan is pictured as standing at the right hand of the Angel of the Lord (**who represents Jesus**), accusing Joshua, the high priest, who is clothed in (**what?**) filthy garments (**or sinful garments**). This represents the attitude of Satan toward you and me as Jesus is seeking to draw us unto Himself.

And so, our great adversary leads us into sin, and then accuses us before the heavenly universe as being unworthy of God's love, and he's right, because we are not worthy. But even so, what did Jesus say? "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem (**put your own name in there**) the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" We all deserve to burn, don't we? But instead of sentencing us to the flames, the Lord says, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to (**what?**) pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." When our sins pass from us, Jesus puts upon us His own robe of righteousness around our nakedness and shows us that we are His. PTL!

In *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, page 117* it says, "God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building."

And so, God takes what the devil does to us to our hurt, and turns it around so it can be a blessing to us, and that has to frustrate the devil, don't you think? You would think that he would wisen up to what's going on here through his manifold temptations, but his hatred for Christ is so great that he just can't help himself.

The teaching of this model prayer that Christ has given, means that we are to surrender ourselves to His guidance, asking Him to lead us in safe paths, and we know He will. And you know what? We can't offer this prayer in sincerity, and still decide to walk according to our fallen flesh. We can't do it. Instead, we are to listen to that still small voice that says, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

The part of the prayer that says, "Lead us not into temptation," can also be interpreted as "Bring us not into temptation", which suggests to me that we should pray that God would not allow the devil to be bring us into temptation. But even if we are tempted, we have the promise in **1 Corinthians 10:13** that God "will not suffer (**or allow**) you to be tempted above that ye are able (**able to resist**); but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

We need to understand that Jesus is our only safeguard against evil, and when we continue to abide in

Him when temptation comes, we will not be overcome. It's when we give in to the selfishness that exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we understand, dear friends, the love and the sacrifice of Christ that was unselfishly given, temptation to sin will appear in its hideous and repulsive character, and at that point we will desire to have it expelled from the soul, and that's the moment temptation loses its power over us. And think about this; Christ will never abandon the one for whom He has died. We may leave Him if we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by temptation, but Christ will never turn from us, because He has paid the ransom with His own life.

In **Luke 22:31, 32** Jesus said something to Peter that also applies to us. He said, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Friends, we can be thankful this morning that we are not left alone to do battle with our great adversary. The prayers of Jesus are powerful, and Peter is not the only recipient of His prayers, we are also. And if we take hold of the strong for strength, we can be more than conquerors through Him who loved us. **(Romans 8:37)**

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory **(how long?)** forever. Amen."

The last sentence of the Lord's Prayer, like the first, points us to our Father as having all power and authority and a name that is above every name that is named.

God knows that we have a fearful foe to meet in his Satanic majesty, and with all the things going on in the world today, with all the manifold temptations we have to deal with, and all the immorality going on in our own country and around the world, even with all this, we don't have to be fearful about what's soon to break upon this world as an overwhelming surprise.

Notice what Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 24. He warned them that things were going to get bad, but even so, they were not to fear, because they could rely on the One who is soon to set up a righteous kingdom. All the power in heaven and earth has been given to our Saviour, and the glory of His character He will transfer to us if they would put Him first in their lives. In **Matthew 24:6-14** Jesus said, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled **(even with what's going on in Israel and Gaza and the Ukraine and Russia)**: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences **(like Covid 19)**, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are **(what?)** the beginning of sorrows. **(You mean things are going to get worse? I'm afraid so)** Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. **(It used to be that America was known as a Christian country, but not anymore)** And then shall many be offended **(hopefully that won't be us)**, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. **(Isn't it like that today? Pretty much)** And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then **(the good part)** and then shall the end come." That's what we're waiting for, amen? But in the meantime, as Christ's followers we are not to fear that our hope is lost or that God had forsaken the earth. It may seem like it at times, but He is still in control. The kingdom and the power and the glory belong to Him, and it always will, and we have a work to do until "it is finished" is pronounced in the sanctuary above.

When Jesus said these things to His disciples, He was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, but it was also symbolic of the final ruin that will overwhelm this world. These prophecies only received a partial fulfillment in the overthrow of Jerusalem, but have a more direct application to the last days. You can read that in ***Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, page 121.***

It's clear that a crisis is before us, a crisis such as this world has never witnessed, but because of this model prayer, we have the assurance that God's kingdom rules overall. The program of coming events is in the hands of our Maker friends, and He has the destiny of the nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge, and we must continue to exercise faith in His power to get the job done.

Have you ever thought that you weren't accomplishing much of anything for the Lord and for the

spreading of the gospel? I feel like that most all the time. No matter how much I do it seems that it's not enough, and I think that's not a bad thing, because no matter what we do, it's really not us that's doing it, but the Holy Spirit working through us. We are just a channel, or a conduit for Christ to work through, and He's trying to make us the best piece of conduit that we can be. The question is, will we allow Him to do it? I hope so.

I want to close with some encouraging words from that little book titled *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, and if you haven't read it, I encourage you to do so. On **page 121** it says, "In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there was the appearance of a hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach His servants that it is divine power which gives them success. Those whom God employs as His messengers are not to feel that His work is dependent upon them. Finite beings are not left to carry this burden of responsibility. He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands."

And then these last three verses of Scripture from **1 Chronicles 29:11-13**. This is part of the prayer the Holy Spirit inspired David to pray just before Solomon his son sat upon the throne. "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name."

And I say amen, how about you? May the Lord bless you as you think about these things.

