

Praying in Colour: July 2010
Week Four: Praying the Lord's Prayer

Checking out Scripture

In this final week of "Praying in Colour" we are looking at the Lord's Prayer in the Bible. You can find this prayer in Matthew and Luke's gospels only, and not in Mark or John.

Read on . . .

Matthew 6: 1-15

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "When you are

praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

"Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 11: 1-13

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial." And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.'

And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"



Reflecting Further

Interested in exploring a little further? What do you notice that is different in the lead up to the prayers? Do you think that Jesus was giving his friends and followers a final version of a prayer? Or was he giving them an example of the kinds of things they could incorporate into a prayer of their own? How might you personalize the "Lord's Prayer" to make it your own? Check out a couple of versions:

From a young person in England:

God, you are our Dad in heaven
You are cool and really holy
We want Markham to be like heaven
Everything that happens in Markham to be like you want
We ask that you give us all that we need
Please forget the things that we've done wrong
Keep us away from bad stuff
Keep bad stuff away from us
Everything fantastic is yours and from you.
Amen.

Retranslation from the Aramaic

O Breathing Life, your Name shines everywhere!
Release a space to plant your Presence here.
Imagine your possibilities now.
Embody your desire in every light and form.
Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom.
Untie the knots of failure binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' faults.
Help us not forget our Source,
Yet free us from not being in the Present.
From you arises every Vision, Power and Song
from gathering to gathering.
Amen.

Praying in Colour

Sometimes we have guilt attached to our prayer life. Do we pray enough? Do we pray in the right way? Do we use the right words? Should we sit or stand or kneel?

Brother Lawrence, a 17th century monk suggested that prayer can never be contained in forms or rituals. Prayer is the practice of God's presence in all of life.

Perhaps you are a person who likes routine—try saying a prayer for the day when you open your eyes in the morning, and a prayer of thanks for the day when you close your eyes at night. Perhaps you are more spontaneous—tie a ribbon or piece of yarn to your watch and every time you see that ribbon/yarn, say a brief prayer of thanks or concern.

However we offer our prayers, God is listening.

Shalom,
Abigail

