

The Lord's Prayer – Line by Line



- Rev LTC Hap Arnold

We say the Lord's Prayer often, probably more often than we say any other single prayer. Rightly so, for when His disciples asked him how to pray, our Lord said, "After this manner therefore pray ye:"

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father

The original word used, *Abba*, is not the most precise word for father in Hebrew. It is the talk of a child, containing all the nearness, affection and love with which a child addresses their father. Jesus taught us to address God in such familiar terms. We should approach God in the familiar confident way a child approaches a loving parent.

who art in heaven

"Who art in heaven" does not signify a remoteness for God. It signifies where God is, there is heaven.

Hallowed be thy Name

Before we get to anything else, we need to acknowledge the singular position of God in His universe. Only after that we should think about our daily needs, our problems and our feelings. This is a clear God is not only our Father, but also holy and one who is to be honored for all He has done in us and the world around us that still leaves us speechless and not understanding its complexity.

Thy kingdom come

We pray that His kingdom, already existent, will come here. Jesus already in us will be manifest here on earth. When God's kingdom comes, it will come on his terms and not ours. It will come when He decides and not when we THINK it should come based on some baboonish idea of what we think God is thinking – how self-righteous is that?

Ultimately, God's will is going to be done. This portion of the prayer should make us realize we need to put our eyes on the proper point in the horizon and pull away from all of the inconsequential stuff that humans believe is so important to make a "kingdom" on earth.

Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

When His kingdom has come here, His will shall be done on earth as it is already in heaven. In the meantime, we need to do His will here, regardless of the state of affairs or the cost to us. When we pray God's will be done, we are praying our opposition to God be broken and that we be united with the Supreme - God's name, kingdom and will.

Give us this day our daily bread.

We are praying to God to take care of us; and that we will not be condemned to depend only on our meager resources.

God wants us to have our eyes on heaven, he also wants us to ask and know that God will not forget our day to day struggles, those that need both food for the body and food for the soul. This life sucks a lot out of us and God can replenish that as well, if we just ask.

Bread does not just mean the most commonplace and matter-of-fact things, we are also praying for those physical, human and spiritual gifts that sustain us.

And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us.

We ask God to forgive us as we forgive the errors of other humans. This is a powerful reminder to be forgiving of others.

And lead us not into temptation

While God does not tempt us nor try us, He does watch how we do under adverse conditions. This particular line is a prayer that He will protect us from our own follies. There is another translation that uses the phrase, "Save us from the time of trial." Temptations are a form of a trial; just as Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and nights going through trials and temptations. As always, God was in control, but the 'evil one' was doing the tempting. God knew Jesus would pass. The same goes for us, His children. There is no trial beyond our ability to handle, with God's help. Without it there is little adversity we can , we will fail.

But deliver us from evil.

We pray for ourselves, others and the world. The prince of this world has caused unbelievable suffering through his followers, concentration camps, mass murder, individual evils beyond description. We do not exclude any of these when we beseech God to deliver us and other human beings from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.

The prayer closes with an acknowledgement of God primacy over all for all time. All is His, what is "ours" is only temporary.

Amen.

So be it.