

## Sermon by Luther House of Study Student Jeremy Haugen

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Last week, we had a story about Martha... and the one thing that she needed. Martha needed to listen and trust in God's promises. That listening to God's promises will create that faith, that trust inside us. Today, we learn about the other part of our relationship to God... prayer.

The prayer that Christ tells us to pray is so familiar to us. It is so ingrained in us that we say it every Sunday, en masse, with the same pauses for inflection. This prayer is so much a part of us that transitions from using one word to another takes generations. It is so deeply set, that those who have lost their voice for their own speech join in when the prayer is said over them.

The question is sometimes asked if a prayer is so automatic does it still have meaning? I believe, yes. It doesn't hurt to remind ourselves of that meaning from time to time, but it still has all the power that Christ's words gave it two thousand years ago.

One of the lessons my mother taught me was to start proofreading from the back and working my way to the front. That way, you can focus on what is there and not on what you think is there! So, I'm going to start at the end.

Temptation... Christ tells us to pray that God does not bring us to the time of trial. God, of course, doesn't tempt us. Satan, the world, and our own sinful self-tempt us. So, what is God's role? What are we asking God to do?

We are asking that the Holy Spirit stays with us... the gift each one of us gets in baptism to create faith in God within us.

It is that faith that will do battle with temptation.

That faith is our ultimate salvation and banishes disbelief.

Sin and debt. Christ tells us to pray that God will forgive us our sins as we forgive those who are indebted to us. Starting with the end, what debts do we hold over people?

Are you still waiting for an apology from someone? Are you waiting for someone to admit that they are wrong? Who are you really hurting, when you withhold forgiveness? Who bears that weight of unforgiven sin? You bear that weight... and only you.

Christ doesn't say "as we forgive those who have paid us off." NO! Forgive those who still owe us, so that we aren't owned. Free others so that we ourselves are free.

We are asking that our sins be forgiven too. We do not deserve anything that we are asking God for, but we are to be bold enough to ask for it anyway.

Boldly and unashamedly ask God for forgiveness.

Daily bread. I'm going to read from Luther's Small Catechism here.

*What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.*

When I was little, these were the things that I felt foolish praying about. Luther goes on to say that God does give them to the good and the evil alike, with or without our prayer. But we are asking that we realize the source of our daily bread... God. And that we respond to his gift with thankfulness and praise.

How often do we recognize that everything comes from God?

“Your kingdom comes.” God’s kingdom comes whether we pray for it or not... we are really asking to be a part of God’s kingdom here and now. We are praying to be citizens of God’s kingdom. We are praying to be peacemakers in the world, and not for our own recognition, but for the glory of God. God is the king of that kingdom, and not us. We are asking that we can accept that God is in control... and not us.

And “hallowed be your name”. Holy, means that it is being used in the way that God intended it to be used. Using a flathead screwdriver to open a paint can is not holy. You can do it, but that is not the screwdriver's intended purpose. A treadmill being used to store clothes is not holy, whereas keeping old limbs limber is. God’s name is holy... when it is being used as God intended. So, what is the intended purpose of God’s name... at least in this prayer? We’ll get to that.

Now, we get to the great gift that Jesus gives us in this text. It may be the second greatest gift that Jesus gives us in the whole bible. That gift is his father as our father. Whenever we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are acknowledging that Jesus’s Father is our father too. God has claimed us as His children. And Jesus just gave us the key to talk with the creator.

Christ knows us. He knows that we would rather get by on our own than confront the deep meaning of this prayer... and our relationship with God, our Father. Christ knows us and knows what drives us. He knows that we need to be ordered to pray... ordered to talk with God. Not only does Christ give us that order... he even gives us the words to pray.

And holy? We are keeping God’s name holy when we use it the way that God intended... when we use it to pray to Him. For us to pray that His kingdom lives in our hearts and our actions. That we recognize all the gifts that come from Him. That He forgives our sin, even though we don’t deserve it, and that we find the peace He promises in forgiving others. That his Son, Jesus Christ suffered, died, and was raised to defeat the powers that tempt us... Sin and the Devil. And that Jesus was resurrected to give us new life in Heaven with the Father.

That... is one blessed gift.

Amen