

# McCabe United Methodist Church

Prayer 101 (Part 5): The Lord's Prayer  
Matthew 6:5-15: February 15 & 16, 2014  
Pastor Rick Fossum

*Lord, listen to your children praying. Lord, send your Spirit on this place. Lord, listen to your children praying. Send us love. Send us power. Send us grace."*

Let's sing this chorus once again. Let's pray this chorus today. "*Lord, listen to us.*"

**Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place; Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us power, send us grace.**

"*Lord, listen to your children praying.*" That's us! We are God's children. God hears us when we pray.

Today, is the fifth and final message in a series we're calling *Prayer 101*. We started this series by talking about '*why*' we pray. Hopefully, we discovered that one of the main reasons we pray is to grow and maintain a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Three weeks ago, we looked at praying like a child. In the Bible, there's a special place in the Kingdom of God for children. In fact, there's something about children that Jesus wants us to know about. There's something about children that Jesus wants us to be like.

Two weeks ago, we looked at paying attention. Prayer. It's you and I paying attention when we pray. It's giving Jesus our full attention when we pray.

Last week, we asked the question, "**How are prayers answered?**" We talked about the five different ways we believe God answers our prayers.

Today, we focus on *the Lord's Prayer*. There's a worksheet in today's bulletin if you want to take some notes.

A commercial flight out of Denver was canceled because of a storm. One tired looking, overworked ticket agent was trying her best to re-book everyone.

Suddenly an angry passenger pushed his way to the front of the line and slapped his ticket on the counter and said, "**I demand to be on the next flight**

**and it has to be first class!"**

"I'm sorry, sir," the agent replied. **"I'll be happy to help you, but I have to take care of these folks first."** And she pointed to a long, line of passengers who were ahead of him.

The passenger pointed his finger at her and replied, **"Do you have any idea who I am?"**

Without hesitating, the ticket agent smiled, picked up her public-address microphone and broadcast through the entire Denver terminal, **"May I have your attention, please? We have a passenger here at the gate who doesn't know who he is. If anyone can help him, please come to the gate."**

We are Christians. This is who we are. We're young Christians, we're old. We're male Christians, we're female. We're black Christians, we're white. But, we are all Christians and the *Lord's Prayer* is the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray.

According to a poll I've forgotten the name of, it said that 50% of Americans say the *Lord's Prayer* daily. I'm guessing that most of us know it by heart.

Yet, do you know what it says? Do you know what it really says? It's been called the most dangerous prayer on earth. Within this prayer, we're asking God to be God. We're asking God to do things that only God can do. We're asking for God's will to be done on earth and not your will and not mine. Can you sense the danger?

Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, was asked by his barber to teach him about prayer. Luther wrote to him a long letter in response. In the letter, Luther wrote, **"I regard the Lord's Prayer as the best of prayers. It's superior even to the Psalter, which I am very fond of. Indeed, it turns out that it was composed and taught by the real Master. What a pity it is, that such a prayer, by such a Master, should be babbled and gabbled so thoughtlessly throughout the world."**

Babbled and gabbled! I'm not even sure what gabbled means, but I have a feeling that it's not good.

Today, we're going to take a look at the *Lord's Prayer* in ways that might surprise us, alarm us, scare us, but hopefully in ways that will also strengthen us.

It all started when the first disciples asked Jesus, **"Lord, teach us to pray."**

And Jesus did. He began this way:

**Our Father, who art in heaven . . .** Jesus begins by saying, “*Our Father.*” It’s not “*My Father*” or “*Your Father,*” but it’s “*Our Father.*” As Christians, we are part of a family. The family of God and it includes all of us in every corner of this world. Together, we have “*Our Father.*”

Our Father, Who art in heaven. This Father, this God of ours, is in heaven, but God’s Spirit rests with us. There isn’t a person in this room who doesn’t have God’s Spirit with them. God’s Spirit guides us, coaches us, teaches us, forgives us and loves us.

God may be in heaven, but God’s Spirit is alive and well right here, with us.

**Hallowed be thy name . . .** God’s name is Holy and it’s meant to stay that way. Do you remember the hymn *Holy, Holy, Holy*? The first verse goes like this: *Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity!*

God’s name is Holy and it up to us to keep it that way.

A few years ago, several star football players at Georgia Tech were arrested for grand theft. The newspapers said, “*This will damage the recruiting program for years. These players have given Georgia Tech a bad name.*”

It’s up to us, as part of God’s family, to make sure we don’t give God a bad name. How we live our lives. How we act around others. How we treat our neighbors all have the potential to either keep God’s name holy or not.

**Thy Kingdom come . . .** Now, we come to the scary parts of the prayer. What if God’s Kingdom were to suddenly come? What then? What part of our kingdom, the one we’ve created in the past 2,000 years, would stay and what part would get thrown out like a cheap suit? What are some of our rules and laws traditions that God would want us to keep and follow and which ones would get disregarded?

I forget who said this, but someone said, “**Before we can pray, ‘Lord, Thy Kingdom come’, we must first be willing to pray, ‘my Kingdom go’.**”

I remember an old story about a college student who lived in an apartment. His mother said to him, **“Son, if Jesus were to come to your apartment today, what would you have to do to clean it up?”**

If Jesus were to come into our homes today, or into our schools, or into our churches, or into our work places, what would we have to do to clean up and change?

**Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven . . .** Oh, oh, this is the part where we roll our eyes and say, **“Are you serious?”** God’s will? I mean, God’s will? Isn’t God’s will about loving our enemies, giving to the needy, not judging others, helping the lame, the lost and the forgotten? Isn’t this God’s will? Do we really want God’s will to be done around here and not our wills?

And you can almost see God smile and say, **“Yes, my will.”**

Are you beginning to see the danger in this prayer?

Now, we come to the parrs of the prayer where we say to God, **God give us. God forgive us. God lead us. And God deliver us.**

**Give us this day our daily bread . . . Give us.** Give us not only the kind of bread we need for healthy bodies. But also, the Spiritual kind of bread. Give us the kind of bread that will nourish us and encourage us to be the kind of people God wants us to be.

There’s bread and then, there’s Spiritual bread. God can give us both.

**And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us . . . Forgive us,** but first we need to forgive those who have hurt us, left us, excluded us, and stolen from us.

This is where you and I make it personal. This is where we forgive the people we don’t like and the people who don’t like us. Where we forgive the people who make our lives miserable and the people who make us mad. Forgive them!

In New York City, there’s an old cemetery. In this cemetery, there’s one grave with a headstone with the word *‘Forgiven’* inscribed on it. That’s it. The grave has no name, no date of birth and no date of death. Simply the word *‘Forgiven’*. When you think about it, is there a better word to put on our headstones? *“Forgiven.”*

**“Forgive,”** Jesus tells us, **“And you will be forgiven.”**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil . . . Lead us. Deliver us.** First, we have to be willing to be led. There’s another hymn called *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, one of the lines goes like this: *“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.”*

It’s in our nature to wander away from God. We are prone to do the very things we shouldn’t do. **“Lord,”** we’re praying, **“We are weak. We are sinful. We need your help. Lead us and deliver us from evil and temptations.”**

Finally, **For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever. Amen . . .** This is the part that brings us back to God. God is our, power and glory, our Creator and Savior yesterday, today and forever.

This is our prayer. As we say the words every day, let us also do our best to live by them. Do I hear an amen?