

Up to this point in their time with Jesus, the disciples had seen him go off many times to pray. As I thought about that, I wondered what Jesus was like when he came back from praying. Did his face look like it was at peace? Was his attitude different? Did he seem happier? Was he no longer worried? I wondered what had changed in Jesus that caused the disciples to ask him to teach them to pray because they had to have seen or noticed something that was different. Whatever it was doesn't really matter because the important part of this whole passage is that Jesus did teach them to pray as well as each one of us.

The prayer that Jesus taught the disciples has been tweaked a bit over the years, but it is still the foundation for our Lord's Prayer. We begin with a statement by addressing God as Father. Now I want to be clear that when we are using "Father" in reference to God, we are not saying that God is a male. God is God and each one of us, both male and female, is made in God's image. In fact, I don't care if you say Mother in reference to God because there are also illustrations of God being like a mother in the Bible. What I do care about is that the terminology that you use is respectful to God.

We begin by addressing God as Father. This image is intended as a perfect image where we see a loving father who will do anything for his children. In our own personal experiences, that image is tainted or broken, but when we look at God as our parent, we do have the perfect example of a loving parent.

Jesus knew that God's love was greater than everything else and that it would be that unconditional love that would see him all the way through the cross. That is why Jesus addressed God as Father.

Jesus instantly reminds us in the prayer that God's name is hallowed: it is holy. Sometimes we need a lot of reminding of this one. God addressed it in the 10 Commandments when HE said you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. And now in teaching us the Lord's Prayer, we are reminded once again that God's name is holy. Every time we pray, we are reminded to keep HIS name holy and yet many people still struggle with this.

Jesus teaches us to pray for God's kingdom to come. We all are looking forward to God's kingdom, to living forever in heaven once we leave this world. It will be a place where we will be in God's presence and also a place where we will be reunited with all who have gone before us. But heaven is not the only place where God's kingdom comes.

God's kingdom is also here and now. God's kingdom breaks into this world through each one of us because the Holy Spirit is a part of us. This body that we have is also God's temple because the Spirit lives in us. So as we live and work in the world, we bring a small glimpse of God's kingdom with us because we are already a part of that kingdom.

Next, Jesus teaches us to ask for our daily bread. Now I love bread, especially fresh, homemade bread. I love the smell and the taste of melted butter on a warm piece of bread. So I can really get into this petition, but it isn't just about bread.

When we ask for our daily bread, we are asking for God to give us everything we need for survival. It isn't just bread, but is also water, shelter, clothing, family and friends. It is everything we need for this life. That is our bread, the substance that is needed for our survival and we humbly ask God to provide what we need.

In the next petition, Jesus reminds us to ask for our forgiveness which is a good thing. We are constantly sinning against God and once we receive HIS forgiveness, our sins are forgotten. They are washed away. The only problem is that we continue to sin so we need to continue to ask for that forgiveness which is probably why Jesus taught the disciples to pray this way.

But the next petition is kind of scary. Actually, it is not kind of, it is scary. I want to share this next petition as we pray it. Forgive us our trespasses AS we forgive those who trespass against us. We have already asked God to forgive us in the beginning of this petition, but we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others.

I am not too sure that I want that kind of forgiveness because I often remember who hurts me and don't really trust them as much as before they hurt me. We tend to hang on to the pains that are inflicted on us and so we might not be as willing to forgive. But we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others. We really need to remember and realize what we are praying here.

I mean we know that God is going to forgive us and forget our sins, but we need to follow God's example when it comes to forgetting. Instead of hanging on for revenge, God wants us to let it go.

And finally the last petition that Jesus taught, do not bring us to the time of trial or as we pray, deliver us from evil. We are asking God to protect us so that we are not accused of turning away from God. We are asking to be protected from the devil as we continue our life here and now. But this petition asking for God to deliver us is not just for our earthly life because we are also asking for God to bring us to his heavenly home.

The Lord's Prayer takes care of everything we need in our current life but it also asks God to bring us to our eternal life. As you pray this prayer, think about what you are asking in the petitions. Do not take this prayer for granted.