

# Master Class in Powerful Prayer

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 September 2024

Preacher: Nick Louw

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Okay, so that story of Elijah on Mount Carmel, how cool was that? It's probably one of my favorite stories in the Bible.
- I don't know about you, but if you haven't read it before, man, you've got to read it again. If you're listening on the tape and you missed it, on the tape, that's old-fashioned, on the internet and you missed it, go read 1 Kings 18.
- It's one of the coolest stories in the Bible. Elijah is this lone prophet and pretty much Israel had fallen away from the true God. But he knows he's got to stand for God, even though he's vastly outnumbered.
- And he sets up this contest up on a mountaintop where he says to the prophets of Baal, 450 of them, Hey, you burn your sacrifice. You set up a sacrifice. Let's see what God does with it.
- I'll set up a sacrifice. I'll douse it three times in water. Let's see what happens. And he prayed and then fire came from heaven. Just imagine it, that picture.
- [ 1 : 0 2 ]     And everybody was petrified and they all realized who the true God was. It's like what you'd expect in the ending of an Indiana Jones movie. But it really happened. Just think about that for a second.
- This stuff we're reading, this stuff in the Bible, it really happened. It's not fairy tales. For a moment in history, for this moment, heaven's power was shown on earth through this man, Elijah.
- An amazing moment in history. Did you know, though, that if you're a Christian, that's what God wants to do through you, too.
- That's what God wants to do with you. He wants to use you to bring heaven's power to bear on the world around you. And that is the type of human that Jesus has come to make.
- And he came to make you. The one we've been learning about in the Sermon on the Mount, these last few weeks, we've been learning that Jesus has come to make us into particular types of people, different people to who we are.
- [ 2 : 1 2 ]     And one of the things he's come to make us is an effective conduit between heaven and earth. A go-between between heaven and the power of heaven and earth and its needs.
- And that's actually what we were always meant to be as humans, by the way. If you go back right to the beginning in Genesis, humans are uniquely made both as spiritual beings and physical beings.
- Did you know that? We're unique. Among all the creatures of heaven and earth, we're unique in that we inhabit that space in between those two realms. We have a spiritual connection, understanding, even though it's vastly flawed around the world because of the fall.
- And we also have, obviously, a physical existence. And we exist in that overlap between heaven and earth. But that was lost in the fall. We were meant to be there. We were meant to be conduits between heaven and earth.

But that was lost when we rebelled against God's rule and we decided to do things our own way. And we lost that. We were banished from Eden. This is all in Genesis. Well, Jesus has come to restore us to that.

[ 3 : 19 ] That's one of the ways of understanding the gospel. Jesus has come to restore us to be people who, once again, inhabit that overlap between heaven and earth and are able to be conduits of heaven's power to this world that we live in.

And that's amazing. That's what Jesus has come to do. But it's here in the epicenter of the Sermon on the Mount, here in Matthew 6 from kind of verse 9, where we read this prayer Jesus gives us, here, which is the center of the center of the Sermon on the Mount.

And it's right in the middle, structurally. Jesus is doing something very important. He is teaching us how to be that conduit between heaven and earth that he's come to make us.

And that's what the Lord's Prayer is. It's not just a pretty prayer you pray when you don't know what else to pray. It is a masterclass in how to pray the kinds of prayers that bring heaven's fire down to earth, into your life, and into the world around you.

And so that's what we're going to unpack today, so that we can be those types of people that Jesus came to make us. Just a bit of orientation to understand the structure of the prayer.

[ 4 : 37 ] I mean, this prayer is amazing. In just a few verses, in pretty much seven lines, there is so much packed into it. There's so much.

I could preach seven sermons easily on this prayer, and I've only got time for one. So we're going to put in your thinking caps. Let's get into this. The way it's structured is that it starts with an address, our Father in heaven, and then there's six requests, which are divided into two groups of three each.

And that's how we're going to look at it this morning. So the first half, the first three requests, are all about bringing heaven's concerns down to earth.

Bringing heaven's concerns down to earth. And that's where we've got to start, as we pray, as we look at this prayer. Because the only prayers, think about this, the only prayers that actually work, that we actually get what we're asking for, are when we pray for the things God wants.

Makes sense, doesn't it? God's not going to give us something He doesn't want. So the only prayers that actually work, are when we pray for what God wants. And that's not how the pagans prayed.

[ 5 : 51 ] Jesus actually mentions them in verse 7. He says, When you pray, don't babble like the pagans, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. In other words, the way they pray, and the way that most religions pray, is they assume that they'll be heard, and their prayers will be successful, because of how they pray, the particular form they use, or the particular words they use.

They think that the success of prayer is in the way, not the what, of what they're praying. How earnestly they pray, or how elaborately they pray.

But Jesus is saying it's not. You see, prayer, we've got to understand this, is not a way to get what we want from God. That's how the pagans treated it.

That they could manipulate God, or the gods, by the ways they prayed, or the sacrifices they made. They could manipulate and change the will of God, to suit what they wanted.

But that's not what prayer is, Jesus is teaching us here. Prayer is not a way to get what we want from God. Rather, prayer is how God gets what He wants through us.

[ 7 : 05 ] And so, the only way our prayers will ever be successful, is if they line up with what God wants. And that is why the Lord's Prayer that we have in front of us is so powerful.

Because what it does first, is it trains us to pray for the right things. It trains us to pray for the things God wants. And the things that He is pleased to grant when we pray for them.

In other words, it trains us as our collect, as we prayed earlier in our collect, to love what God commands. The Lord's Prayer aligns our concerns with Heaven's concerns, when we pray it.

And the first of Heaven's concerns, is the first request in the prayer in verse 9, and it's God's name. Look at verse 9. Jesus says, Therefore you should pray like this, Our Father in Heaven, Your name be honored as holy.

That's the first priority Jesus is wanting us to pray for. God's name. What does that mean? That God's name is honored as holy? Well, it means that God is known in His creation as God.

[ 8 : 26 ] That God is known for who He truly is, in all of His glory, and all of His attributes. Heaven knows, who God is.

All the creatures in Heaven, in the spiritual realm, know who God is. But Earth, sadly, we know all too well, is in denial about who God is.

Right? We as humans have gone to great lengths to convince ourselves either that God does not exist, or that He's not who He says He is.

But God's people, who He has opened our eyes to see who the true God is, and who God uses in this world, God's people, whose prayers are effective in this world, are those who desire, before anything else, the world to know the one true God.

That's what the deepest desire of a person whose prayers are effective is. That they want the world around them to know who this God is.

[ 9 : 37 ] They want the people around them to know who the true God is. Just like Elijah. You could see that that was Elijah's passion, wasn't it? As we read that story. He wanted this lost nation to know who the true God was, and he put his life on the line.

And he prayed. That's what he prayed. Let me read to you again Elijah's prayer. 1 Kings 18. Listen to what he prayed. Just before that fire fell from heaven, he prayed this.

The prophet Elijah approached the altar and said, Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel. And that I am Your servant. And that at Your word I have done all these things.

Answer me, Lord. Answer me, so that these people will know that You, the Lord, are God. And that You have turned their hearts back. You see what his passion is? You see what Elijah's passion was?

That the people would know who God really is? And wow, was that prayer answered? Because that was his passion. And he poured that passion into his prayer and God answered that prayer in fire from heaven.

[ 10 : 45 ] And that is the first, most important priority of prayers whose prayers are effective is God's name. The first request in the Lord's prayer.

The second of heaven's concerns that we're taught to pray is God's kingdom. In verse 10, have a look. The first part of verse 10.

Your kingdom come. Your kingdom come. Kingdom, when we hear the phrase the kingdom of God, especially in Matthew, it means God's rule, God's governing over people in this world.

Now, heaven operates under God's perfect rule. rule. And that is why it is amazing. Heaven is amazing because it is perfectly ruled under God's governing.

Earth is not. As we know all too well. Because it is possible for humans to reject God's rule. And that's why we have all the problems we have in this world.

[ 11 : 56 ] By the way, if you want to know where crime comes from, if you want to know where economic stagnation comes from, if you want to know where broken marriages come from, all the problems we have in this world, all of them, without exception, are because we have rejected God's rule over us as humans.

And so, to pray this prayer, to pray your kingdom come, is actually to love our world enough that we want it to be fixed more than anything.

We want this world to be fixed. And we know the only way it can be is when it is under God's rule. And so we don't, when we pray this prayer, your kingdom come, it means we're not pinning our hopes on ourselves to fix this world.

We're not pinning our hopes on any human government or human political system to fix this world. When we pray this prayer, we know that the only way this world will be fixed is when God's kingdom comes.

We don't think that we can fix it. We don't expect that it will be fixed until that time. And yet, many people do, don't they? They think, we just need the right government, we just need the right setup, and then we'll be fixed, but we won't.

[ 13 : 19 ] You know, that's like thinking that kids will keep order in the classroom once the teacher is gone. Now, that might actually happen at the Vine School, but where I come from, the school that I went to, when the teacher left, maybe they had some business at the office or something, you know what happened, right?

Once the teacher left, the volume started slowly but surely rising, and then kids started getting out of their desks and then a cricket game started and then the windows started to open and kids started to hang out a window.

Seriously, you know, it only gets worse and worse and worse and worse and worse. The kids aren't all going to go, you know what, we should really calm down. No, that doesn't happen, ever. The only way it happens is when the teacher comes back, right?

And then there's silence and there's big eyes and there's fear. Well, this world will only be fixed when Jesus comes back. It's only getting worse and God has said today when that will happen, He will return and His kingdom will rule over all and He's promised us that.

It's a promise we can cling to, it's a promise we can know for sure. Jesus is coming back and all the chaos and the brokenness of this world will be fixed, all wrongs will be put to right. and so He will ultimately answer this prayer, we can know that.

[ 14 : 52 ] When we pray it, Your kingdom come, we know God is going to answer it one day. His kingdom will come down and rule over this world and it will be the world it was always meant to be and everything will be fixed and everything that causes the brokenness will be eradicated from this world.

Won't that be an amazing day for those who are on God's side, of course. And so when we pray Your kingdom come, we can look forward to that day.

We can set our hopes on that day. But you know, God also answers that prayer in the meantime. When we pray Your kingdom come, we're not just praying for His rule to come one day in the future.

We're also praying that His rule will come into people's lives in the present. that as His appointed means of His rule coming into the world, which is the preaching of His word, as that happens, that our hearts will change.

That those areas of our lives that are still in rebellion to Him will submit to His kingship and that people who have not yet submitted to Him will come and hear the gospel and be saved.

[ 16 : 09 ] and they will submit to Jesus as their king. You see, so when we pray Your kingdom come, we're not just praying for something in the future, we're praying now that His kingdom will start to come in people's hearts, in our hearts, to make us ready for when His kingdom comes ultimately one day.

And so we're to pray this line, Your kingdom come, not just wanting the world to change, but we're to pray it wanting our own hearts to change as well.

So when you pray Your kingdom come, you're actually praying, may Your rule come in my heart more and more every day. And then, the third priority of heaven that we're taught to pray, before we even get to our own needs, is God's will.

Look at verse 10 again, the second half of it. Your will be done. Now this is different to Your kingdom come.

Often we say them together and we think they're saying the same thing, but they're not. This is different. Because here, when we pray Your will be done, we're not just praying for what God wants to happen in this world, but we're also praying that the way that God wants it to happen will override the way that we think it should.

[ 17 : 38 ] So even if we want the same thing as God, sometimes we don't want it done the same way as He wants it. You understand? That's what we're praying for here, when we pray Your will be done.

Even if we want the same things, there might be different ways to get it. So if we want to go to the waterfront, right? We want to drive to the waterfront and have lunch. But I say the best way is to go on the M5.

You say, no, no, no, the best way is to go on the M3. Right? We both want to get to the same place, but we think the best way is different. Well, to pray this prayer is to pray that we go God's way, not our way, to the destination.

That His way is better than ours. We're confessing, we're admitting, we're reminding ourselves, when we pray, Your will be done, we're reminding ourselves, God's way is better than my way.

Even if I don't feel it, even if I think that my way is better, His way is better. It's a prayer that requires that kind of faith. What I like to do when I pray this line of the prayer is to stress the your.

[ 18 : 49 ] To just remind me of what I'm praying here. So don't just pray, Your kingdom come, Your will be done. I pray, Your kingdom come, Your will be done. Not mine, Your will be done.

Now that makes it a particularly hard prayer to pray when we're going through trials, doesn't it? When we're suffering. When God has decided to put us through things that we don't want to go through.

you might be going through something right now that you don't want to go through. But God has appointed you to. That's when we need to learn how to pray this prayer.

Your will be done, not mine. You know, this is, this is the one part of the Lord's Prayer that Jesus Himself was recorded as praying.

Do you know when? Anyone? Sorry? In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before He died. Right?

[ 19 : 57 ] Do you know what He prayed? He prayed this, this prayer. Let me read it to you again from Matthew 26. He fell face down and prayed, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.

Talking about His suffering that He knew was waiting for in the next day. And yet, not as I will, but as you will.

You know what's amazing about that? Jesus praying that? In that moment, He wanted something different to His Father. Jesus the Son wanted something different to His Father.

Not my will, but yours. In other words, my will is different to you as I recognize that. But yours will be done. In other words, what He's doing is He's recognizing in that moment that what His Father wanted was ultimately better.

And part of living the Christian life is learning to pray that prayer. And really believing that God's will, God's way, is better than ours.

[ 21 : 08 ] God's way, God's way, God's way, and that is why we need to pray to God as Father, not just as God. You see how Jesus starts this prayer, the address?

It's vital. It's actually the vital foundation of this entire prayer is back in verse 9. He says, therefore, you should pray like this, our Father in heaven.

Because it's only when we pray that and we realize that about God that we believe that what He allows us to go through is as a father who loves a child and knows that it's for their ultimate good.

We can only pray this prayer if we believe that. And remember, you know, it's so important that it starts this way as addressing God as Father.

Because it reminds us as well that prayer is not just some religious exercise we go through. It's not just some cold religious duty. It is a relationship with a being who loves us.

[ 22 : 24 ] That's what we've got to remember as we approach in prayer. So we don't just go through it like going through the motions but we realize this is connecting with God in relationship.

And it is a huge privilege to pray this prayer. Our Father. It is a huge unexpressible privilege to be able to call God the God of the universe who controls all things who created the cosmos to call Him Father and to believe that that is the relationship we have with Him.

But it's only through Jesus that we can. We don't have a right to pray this prayer in our own name. Right?

Only Jesus. Only Jesus has a right to pray and know that He can be heard. Because, you know, we're sinners. We have no right to approach a holy, perfect God.

Only Jesus. Jesus is the only human in all the world who has a right to pray. And has a right to pray this prayer. You see, our sins have separated us from God.

[ 23 : 35 ] We are sinners. God is holy. The only thing we have a right to from Him is wrath and judgment for our sins. because we've rebelled against Him. We ignore His law in our lives.

And He is a holy God and sin cannot stand in His presence. And He has an obligation to His own holiness and justice to remove and destroy sin and sinners.

We have no right to come and pray these things to God. But that is why Jesus came. Jesus came so that He could die on the cross for the sins of His people, atone for their sins, to clear them off the record so that we can enter into this relationship with God.

His relationship. He came and He died so that we can have the relationship with His Father that He has. Jesus came and Jesus died so that we can pray this prayer.

And so when we pray it, we pray it in Him. When we pray it, we are in Jesus as we do because we can only come in His name and pray it which is also why we are praying His prayer.

[ 24 : 54 ] Not our own for the things that we want. Jesus has given us a prayer to pray because it's only His prayer that will be heard by His Father. But He gives us His prayer to pray just as He gives us His name to pray it in.

We pray His prayer that He has given us because He knows this is the prayer that His Father will answer. What a privilege. Jesus has given us His prayer to pray. And you know the most amazing thing is that in His prayer, Jesus also lets us insert our own.

He gives us permission to in the next three requests. He lets us pray for ourselves and pack our prayers into His. It's like when your friend may be going overseas and you need to get something to someone overseas but you can't afford the courier fees and so you ask your friend can I just pack it in your bag and you can deliver it to them?

Well that's what Jesus is allowing us to do. He's allowing us to pack our needs and our concerns and our prayers into His prayer that will be delivered to the throne room of heaven. And that's what the next half of the Lord's prayer is about.

Bringing earth's concerns up to heaven. So the first half of the prayer is bringing heaven's concerns to earth. The second half is bringing earth's concerns up to heaven through Jesus.

[ 26 : 23 ] It's about bringing our needs to God. It's bringing your needs up to the throne room, the control room of the universe. You have a lot of needs, right?

You are able through this prayer, through what Jesus has done, to bring your needs to the very throne room of heaven. Now we think we have a lot of needs.

This world and marketing agencies make it their mission to convince us of all the needs we have in this world. and we think we've got a lot.

We need a car. We need a phone. Especially if you're a teenager. I need a phone. Dad, I need it. My friends, I need a phone.

And then when we've got a phone, we need an upgrade. There's a new one. They phoned me the other day empty and said I need the upgrade. We need the internet. How are we going to watch Netflix without the internet?

[ 27 : 24 ] You know, and every day we're told the things we need. We need those little solar powered garden lights from Timu. They're so cool.

My garden will look so pretty if I have them. Okay, those things are nice. They help. But we don't actually need them. According to Jesus, there are only three things you need.

We only have three true needs. And these are the needs that God is happy to give us when we pray them. That we might obtain what God promises. And the first is daily bread.

Verse 11. Give us today our daily bread. Daily bread. That is actually a reference to the Exodus.

Do you remember what happened in the Exodus when the Israelites left Egypt and left all their comforts even though they were slaves. They still had more in Egypt than they had in the wilderness.

[ 28 : 32 ] They left all their security behind. They crossed the Red Sea and then they were in the wilderness. There was nothing there. And they had to be there for 40 years turns out. But every day God provided them with the food they needed.

Manna and quail supernaturally. But you know when we read that we realize God only provided them enough for the day. He didn't provide them for more than they needed.

He only provided them each day enough for what they needed. If they tried to gather more and store it it would go rotten. So they only were allowed to collect what they needed each day.

Their daily bread. And the reason God did that we saw it in Exodus was because for them for Israel to be his effective people to be effective in this world and not have to chase after what the world told them they needed to chase after.

For them to be effective and focus on what God had saved them for they needed to learn. The first lesson they needed to learn was not to rely on themselves but to rely on God.

[ 29 : 38 ] And so they went through this 40 years of getting daily bread from him and no more and no less to teach them that they can't rely on themselves if they're going to be God's effective people.

And so to pray this line give us today our daily bread is to learn to rely on God and not ourself.

It's to pray that we will stop relying on ourselves but we will more and more rely on God. And it's also the wisdom just as we pray that we won't have too little to pray that we won't have too much.

When last did you pray that? When last did you pray don't give me too much Lord? That's also what we're praying in this. Give me my daily bread. Not too little not too much.

It's to pray what we're taught in Proverbs 30 verse 8 Give me neither poverty nor wealth. Feed me with only the food I need.

[ 30 : 50 ] Otherwise I might have too much and deny you saying who is the Lord? Or I might have nothing and steal profaning the name of my God. Give me neither poverty nor wealth.

Feed me only with my daily bread. Because we don't know what too much is. We don't know what too little is. We don't know what just the right amount is. And so we must trust that God does when we pray this line.

And we must rest in that. When we pray give us today our daily bread we must rest in whatever God has decided to give you is enough. That is just right. That any more it wouldn't be good for you.

That's what we pray when we pray give us today our daily bread. need. And the second thing the second need we have that's our first need the second need we have according to Jesus is right relationships.

Right relationships. Look at verse 12. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. This is praying for both our relationship with God but also did you notice our relationship with other people?

[ 32 : 07 ] of course right relationship with God is our most important need in all the world and it's what Jesus came for. It's what Jesus came to die so that we can enter into.

If we trust in him and repent and come under his kingship then his death counts for our sins and we're brought into right relationship with God which is our most important need because it is the only way to eternal life.

It is the only way to true forgiveness of our sins. but that relationship Jesus teaches us here in the Lord's Prayer can't be separated from our relationships with other people much as you'd love just to concentrate on your relationship with God.

We can't because we can't get away with that. In the Bible we constantly are reminded that our relationship with God is connected with our relationship with other people and we're reminded of that here in the Lord's Prayer as well.

And Jesus actually elaborates at the end of the Lord's Prayer with these words verse 14 and 15. For if you forgive others their offenses your heavenly Father will forgive you as well.

[ 33 : 16 ] But if you don't forgive others your Father will not forgive your offenses. That's pretty heavy. But Jesus is trying to stress the point.

You can't ignore the relationships of the people around you and think that your relationship with God is fine if you're not actually forgiving them of their offenses as God has forgiven you of yours.



What is proof that you've really experienced God's forgiveness? I mean you can come here and you can say I trust in God, you can sing the songs, you can say the Christian things, but how do you really know that you have had a real experience of God's saving gospel and His forgiveness of your sins?

You know how you know? you are able to forgive others in that way. That's how you know ultimately that you've experienced God's forgiveness. I mean how can you not?

When you realize how much God has forgiven you, how much He's put aside the punishment you deserve and how much He's covered and Jesus died on the cross to cover all of your sins, how can you not then forgive the person who sinned against you much less than you've sinned against God?

[ 34 : 35 ] You see if you really understand what Jesus has done for you, then you will start being able to forgive others properly. Now it's not easy, I'm not saying it's going to be easy and that's why Jesus teaches us to pray this daily.

We've got to admit, yes I have sinned against you Lord and I need your forgiveness again but as we do that and as we receive that forgiveness with a reminder of the gospel knowing that He'll answer us because of Jesus and as we admit again that we're unworthy and that we're sinners, that makes it easier as we make that a daily habit, it makes us more able to forgive others.

That's the secret, that's the secret to being able to forgive others is to daily be reminded of the forgiveness God has given us in this prayer, which is something we need, not just forgiveness but we need to learn how to forgive, it's one of our needs, we need to learn the ability to let go, to not hold those grudges which fester in our souls and become toxic if we hold on to them but it's so hard to let them go, well the gospel and only the gospel is the way that you can, the way that you can truly forgive others and so to pray this, to pray this line is not only to pray that we are forgiven but it's to pray that we are forgivers and then finally our third and final need is protection from evil, verse 13, and do not bring us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

The great early church father Augustine said that this petition is split into two we're praying both for protection from inner evil, our susceptibility to temptation, and also then outer evil, the evil one who will attack us.

And both of these, both inner and outer are covered in this line in the Lord's prayer. But you know when we pray this, do not lead us into temptation, we need to understand the wording and the language, we're not praying that we'll never be tempted, because we know we're tempted daily, right?

[ 37 : 09 ] What we're praying here when we say lead us not into temptation is we're praying that we will not succumb to that temptation that we face. temptation. Because every day we're going to face temptation.

You know that. Every day we face tests, moral tests, ethical tests, temptation to do the wrong thing, to think the wrong thing, to say the wrong thing.

And the risk every day, multiple times a day, that you run the risk that you're going to choose the wrong way when faced with that temptation. temptation. And so we need to pray this prayer daily.

Every day, because every day we're going to face those tests, every day we need God's help to choose the right way. We need to pray this prayer every day. But also because every day God desires that heaven's power will come down to earth through you, into your life.

But that will only happen in so far as you learn to pray this way, that Jesus teaches us here in the middle of the middle of the Sermon on the Mount. And that is the Lord's Prayer.

[ 38 : 21 ] But before we end, I want us to just spend a few more minutes thinking about how do we do it, practically? How do we pray this prayer? What does that look like?

Do we just recite it like the early Christians did, three times a day? The early baptism more candidates were taught to pray this prayer three times a day, just to recite it.

And there's evidence that Jesus wanted His disciples to pray this prayer in place of the normal Jewish prayers they would pray three times a day.

So Jesus wanted His disciples to pray this, to recite this prayer regularly. not just when we feel like it, in other words. Because it's our duty to pray these things regularly and not just wait until we feel like praying them.

And so that's why regular recital of this prayer is important. But we've got to mean it. You know, it's so easy to pray this prayer and not mean it because it's so familiar.

[ 39 : 27 ] I could probably ask most of you to recite this prayer from memory and you could recite it off. But are you actually meaning it when you say those lines? Or are you just showing how good your memory is?

So what we need to do if we recite this prayer, if we use it as a recital, we've got to pray it slowly and think about each line we're praying and remember what each of them means.

And so that's what we're to do. Jesus wants us to use this prayer as a regular thing to pray, to repeat, but to mean it. But we've also got to pray it together.

Did you notice He wants us to pray together? Did you notice how He doesn't say, He doesn't tell us to pray, my Father in heaven, give me today my daily bread, forgive me my bread, no, He says our.

It's a key feature of the Lord's prayer. He deliberately wants us to pray as a community, not just by ourselves. This is primarily a communal prayer, our Father, forgive us, our debts, give us our daily bread.

[ 40 : 42 ] Because there's something special, isn't there, about praying together as Christian brothers and sisters. There's something special about praying together. That's why we have liturgy at our church, you know, those set prayers that we say together.

Because there's so many advantages to praying set prayers together. You might not think, you might think it's, oh, it's not genuine, it's not from my heart. Well, make it from your heart then.

Because it can. These are good prayers to pray, just mean them. And it'll be from your heart. You know, when you said your marriage vows, I hope they were from your heart, even though that was a set thing.

Just because it's set doesn't mean it can't be from your heart. Okay, liturgy is good. It has great benefits. Because it trains us to pray for things we wouldn't normally pray for, the things that God wants us to pray for.

And it unites us to want the same things. So we pray these things together. And also, we are to pray this communally in our families, at home.

[ 41 : 47 ] Fathers, lead your family in this prayer, so that your children will learn to want the right things when they hear this prayer and these requests daily.

Then you will shape their minds, slowly but surely, to want these things too. Fathers, lead your children, lead your family through this prayer. So Jesus wants us to pray it regularly.

He wants us to pray it communally. That doesn't mean we can't pray it individually. Of course, He wants that too. That we can use this prayer in our own devotions, in our own prayer lives.

But He also would have wanted His disciples to use this as a pattern for prayer, not just as a prayer to recite, but as a set of categories of what to pray for when we pray our own personal prayers.

And that's why He starts by saying, pray like this, not just pray this, but pray like this. In other words, let each of these six requests guide you as categories of what to pray in your own personal prayer time.

[ 42 : 55 ] So for example, when we pray, hallowed be your name, then we stop and we think about who are the individuals that I know who need to know who God is.

Let me pray for them by name. Let me pray for conversations at work or at the sports club that I might have an opportunity to let them know about who God is. So all of these prayers we can pray under this category, hallowed be your name.

Or the next one, your kingdom come. Your kingdom come. God. So let's pray for the preaching of God's Word through which His rule is going to come into people's lives.

Let's pray for your pastors at church. We need your prayers. We really do. Pray for your church. Pray for the missionary partners we have as they take the Word into unreached areas.

And pray for those areas in your own life that you know still need to come under God's rule. Lord, you know, my, when I'm with, when I'm with my sports buddies, I really am not acting like a Christian.

[ 43 : 55 ] May your kingdom come there in my heart. And help me to be a subject of Christ wherever I am. You know, all of those prayers can be under that category, your kingdom come.

When we pray for, give us today our daily bread. We're, we're including our physical needs, not just what we need to eat, but our shelter, our health. And we can even include things like praying for the economy.

And South Africa needs that. Because that is the means by which God gives us our daily bread. And so you see how you can pray a host of different prayers in the categories of each of the lines of the Lord's Prayer.

And in fact, all good prayers, all right prayers, will inevitably fall under one of these categories in the Lord's Prayer. If you're praying something and you, you can't find any way it fits into this prayer, well then you probably shouldn't be praying it.

It's in that way that the Lord's Prayer acts as a guide and a safety rail for our own prayers. And so in closing, we need this prayer.

[ 45 : 10 ] That's why Jesus has put it right here in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount. We need this prayer more than we think. Because God has given us an amazing responsibility as His people to come back to that overlap between heaven and earth and to be that conduit and to bring heaven's power down on earth.

That is what He has called us to as His people. What an amazing responsibility. And He's given us a vital tool to do that in prayer. But it's a tool we need to use well because it's a power tool.

You know, you buy a power tool, like a power saw or something, you're going to read the instructions. Because you don't want to misuse that. It's powerful.

Prayer is like that. Prayer is a powerful tool and we need to read these instructions. This is the instruction manual in how to use prayer. So study the Lord's Prayer. Memorize it.

Use it in all its different ways as a piece of liturgy or as a guide for your own prayers. As individuals or in family worship or together at church. Because each time we do, each time we pray through this prayer, it is another opportunity for heaven's fire to come down and touch our world.

[ 46 : 25 ] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much that you have given us this amazing privilege of prayer, connecting heaven to earth, that you've called us to this incredible responsibility and that you've given us the tools to do it here in the Lord's Prayer.

Help us to unpack this prayer, to remember what it means line by line and to use it as a way in our own lives that you will do your work and achieve what you want through us in Jesus' name.

Amen.