

Jesus' 38 words

Pastor Kent Priebe

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THE MAIN THING: The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2-4) is not a formula, but a pathway to an intimate, dynamic relationship with our loving, awesome heavenly Father who seeks to bring His Kingdom into our lives and the world around us. He wants to show Himself as a generous Father, rescuer and protector. Honestly surrendering and praying this prayer, aligns us with God's will and shapes us into His image.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Connect and pray as a group*

1. If you could ask Jesus a question in person, what would you ask Him to teach you?
2. As a child, did you memorize the Lord's Prayer?
How often did you (and do you now) pray this prayer?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

Observation and Reflection

(Idea: divide into smaller groups of three people to work through these questions. Take time to pray each section of the prayer, asking God to bring to mind specifics to pray about.)

1. How do we view God as being personal and yet holy and perfect? What does this mean when you pray to Him? Compare Luke 11:2 and Psalm 145:8-9.
2. What does praying for 'Your Kingdom come' mean? What are we asking of God/ourselves?
Discuss the importance of making God's Kingdom first before our own kingdom?
3. Review the story of God's provision for the Israelites as they journeyed through the desert to the Promised Land. (Exodus 16) How does Luke 11:3 speak to the understanding of the word 'daily'? How do our daily decisions affect our eternity? How does John 6:33-35 speak to the understanding of 'bread'?
4. Discuss the importance of asking God to forgive 'our sins' and 'forgiving those who sin against us? How does the process of forgiveness align our lives with God's will?

Application.

1. Do you need to pray differently this week knowing that God is your 'daily' provider?
About what situation are you concerned?
2. What part of the prayer do you need to personalize so that you can resist temptation and walk in God's will?

THE WORD (NIV)

Luke 11:1-4

1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.'

2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

3 Give us each day our daily bread.

4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation. '"

Psalm 145:8-9

8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

9 The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

James 1:13-14

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;
14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

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After returning from prayer one day, Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. Did they not know how to pray already, being good Jewish boys and having been around Jesus for a long time now? In the Gospels, Jesus was referred to by the authors to have prayed 17 times. This was the first time the disciples had asked Jesus to teach them anything – and they asked about prayer. Why? Perhaps they felt unsatisfied in their quality, knowledge and effectiveness of their prayer life and wanted what Jesus had: this passionate, dynamic and real relationship with God the Father. Perhaps they wanted what He had. And Jesus said yes.

The answer was 38 words in the Greek. That was it. 30 seconds to recite. Class dismissed. It was Luke's account of the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2-4). It was short, but powerful and declares our identity in God, who God is and the reality of His Kingdom, and that He is a generous giver, rescuer and protector. It is a prayer model that will shape us into His image. It teaches us to pray.

"Father, hallowed be your name" – Who are we praying to? In the Old Testament God as Father was referred to only 14 times and then contextually as a national Father. Jesus and other New Testament writers tell us 60 times to pray to God as our personal Father. This was revolutionary to the disciples: God as their personal Father and that they too could relate to Him as Jesus did. This was a Father who was holy and majestic and thus different from us and that we in this prayer are declaring it, but also connecting as a Father whom we should not fear to approach (Ps 145:8-9). Reflect on who God is and come to Him. This will change the way you approach Him and it will change you.

"Your kingdom come" – We have our little kingdoms in our lives, those places we have authority over. So often we gloss over these 3 words and move right into our own kingdom petitions. Stop and pray these words. Doing so honestly and wholeheartedly will cause us to surrender all of ourselves to our Father God. For we are declaring His will to supersede ours in our work, finances, relationships, future, school, etc because He is a good God with our best interests in mind and so we can confidently align our heart, mind and will to His Kingdom agenda. What keeps us from praying this way? It requires bold courage to do so. Do not pass this part until you can pray that His agenda be made evident in your life however He wants. Jesus prayed this way, doing only what His Father told Him to do. Not His will but His Father's.

"Give us each day our daily bread" – This we usually come to quickly. It is something Jesus says to pray for and here alludes to God providing food in the wilderness for 40 years. This was significant for the disciples: that they depended on Him for all that they needed. And the promise was there that God was generous and good and would provide.

"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us" – Don't hide your sins from the one true God who knows all the wrong that we think, speak, and do, or not do that He has said to do. We are sinners so acknowledge our sin before Him. Why? That we may remember daily that we need and have a Savior and forgiver of our sins. And then remember others whom we need to forgive and be gracious to. Never stop forgiving, for God is ever willing to forgive us. Claim His grace and forgiveness for us, and pass this on to others.

"And lead us not into temptation" – God does not lead us into temptation (James 1:13-14). The world is full of trouble, sin and an enemy who would seek to harm all those who are part of God's family. Ask Him to guide, protect and intervene on our behalf when we are in situations when we might be tempted. Here we are saying that we want to love and serve Him in all He desires, and not do what is contrary to His commands and heart. Do you really want to run from temptation? If not, go back to the beginning of the prayer and work again through it.

This kind of prayer will change us and lead us to an encounter with the supernatural God who reigns supreme in the universe. And this God we are told to call Father. As His children we can confidently surrender ourselves to anything God will want to do in our lives. Will you pray this way?