

## The Lord's Prayer -- Week Two

*"Our Father in heaven ..."*

### Reflections

"The roots of the Christian's life are fed from those rich and perennial springs that lie deep in the recesses of converse with God, where prayers ascend and divine graces descend, so that after each season of tryst he issues, a new man, from the secrecy of his tent." Geerhardus Vos<sup>1</sup>

"A saint, so far as he is renewed, is always best when he sees most of God, when he tastes most of God, when he is highest in his enjoyments of God, and most warm and lively in the service of God." Thomas Brooks<sup>2</sup>

### Review: Design and Structure of the Lord's Prayer

1. The Lord's Prayer provides, in one sense, the form and pattern the heavenly Father gave us through the Son.
2. The Lord's Prayer reveals to us: (1) what we may lawfully desire from God; (2) all that may be of benefit to us; and (3) all that we need to ask from him.
3. The Lord's Prayer directs us wholly God-ward in our "converse with God."
4. The God-ward trajectory of the prayer appears in the structure of the prayer:
  - Preface (*"Our Father In heaven ..."*)
  - Three petitions specifically intended to seek God's glory
  - Three petitions addressed to our needs that direct us regarding those needs
  - Conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> Geerhardus Vos, Grace and Glory (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1994), 115.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Brooks, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 2008), 120.

"Our Father in heaven" -- The Biblical Theology of the Lord's Prayer

1. The origin and use of the name "Father" is found in the **special covenant relationship** between God and his people. (Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:1; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 31:20\*)
2. Rooted in the patriarchal blessings (part-prayer/part-prophecy)
  - Genesis 27:28-29 (Isaac's blessing on Jacob)
  - Genesis 48:15-16 (Jacob's blessing on Joseph)
3. "*Our Father*" must turn our minds and eyes away from ourselves to long for the advance of God's glory and his Kingdom! (We forget ourselves and look only to God.)
  - Moses -- Exodus 32:32
  - Paul -- Romans 9:3
4. "*Our Father*" places emphasis on the realization (fulfillment) of this special covenant bond between God and his people in Christ--not principally individualistic, but corporate and covenantal.

**Main Point:** *Jesus as the Christ* (the Promised Messiah) teaches us to pray this way because in Him we are restored to communion with God as the church, the redeemed *people of the Messiah*. God is actually and really our Father through Christ. ("Abba, Father" Romans 8:15' Galatians 4:4-7)

**Implications:**

- That God is "Our Father" should encourage, comfort, assure and sustain us.

"For he is not only a father but by far the best and kindest of all fathers, provided we still cast ourselves upon his mercy, although we are ungrateful, rebellious, and froward children. And to strengthen our assurance that he is this sort of father to us if we are Christians, he willed that we call him not only "Father" but explicitly "our Father" ... Therefore, whenever any hesitation shall hinder us, let us remember to ask him to correct of fearfulness, and to set before us that Spirit that he may guide us to pray boldly."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Calvin, Institutes III.XX.37

- That God is “Our Father” should promote fellowship and love with our brothers and sisters in Christ -- If we embrace the father, we must embrace his household--the church--and order our prayers accordingly. (I Timothy 3:15)

5. We pray to “*Our Father*” who is “*in heaven*” and thus the intimacy of the covenant bond in Christ is joined inextricably with the transcendent glories, almighty power and infinite majesty of his divine perfections.

- Psalm 123:1-2 (*To you I lift up my eyes ... who are enthroned in the heavens ...*)
- Lamentations 3:41 (*Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven ...*)
- Isaiah 63:15 (*Look down from heaven and see ...*)

**Main Point:** *For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”* (Isaiah 57:15 ESV)

**Implications:**

- We find great comfort that Almighty God (*in heaven*) who is able to do all things for our good and his glory; is also “our Father” who is willing in love to do all things for our good and his glory.
- “... because his throne is established in heaven, from his governing of the universe we are forcibly reminded that we do not come to him in vain, for he willingly meets us with present help.”<sup>4</sup>
- “Our Father in heaven” must free us from all anxiety and must freely open the way to converse with the Father in prayers marked by thanksgiving as we *let [our] requests be made known to God.* (Philippians 4:6)

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<sup>4</sup> Calvin, Institutes III.XX.40.