

Grace and peace to you from God, the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

This morning we are going to take a close look at the Lord's Prayer. Sometimes we pray this prayer without thinking what we are saying. And to help us understand how misunderstood this prayer is sometimes, I would like to share a dramatization of this prayer written by Clyde Lee Herring with some editing by me. Someone is praying the Lord's Prayer and God breaks in to answer.

Our Father who art in Heaven...

Yes?

Don't interrupt me. I'm praying...

But you called me.

Called you? I didn't call you. I'm praying. Our Father who art in Heaven.

There, you did it again.

Did what?

You called me. You said, "Our Father who art in Heaven..." Here I am. What's on your mind?

But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like getting my duty done.

All right. Go on.

Hallowed be Thy name.

Hold it. What do you mean by that?

By what?

By "hallowed be Thy name"

It means...it means... good grief, I don't know what it means. How should I know? It's just part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

It means "Honored", "Holy", "Wonderful".

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what "hallowed" meant before. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Do you really mean that?

Sure, why not?

What are you going to do about it?

Do? Nothing, I guess. I just think it would be neat if you got control of everything down here like you have up there.

Have I got control of you?

Well, I go to church.

That isn't what I asked you. What about those bad habits you have and the way you spend your money ...all on yourself. And what about the books you read?

Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as the rest of the members at church!

Excuse me...I thought you were praying for MY will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you, for example.

Oh, all right! I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

' So could I!

I haven't thought about it until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I'd like to, you know, be really free.

Good, now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together...you and I can have some victories that can truly be won. I'm proud of you.

Look Lord, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does.....Give us this day our daily bread.

You need to cut down on the bread too...You're overweight as it is.

Hey! Wait a minute! What is this, "Criticize Me Day?" Here I was doing my religious duty, and all of a sudden you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.

Praying is a dangerous thing. You could wind up changed, you know. That's what I'm trying to get across to you. You called me, and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep on praying I'm interested in the next part of your prayer.....Well, Go on.

I'm scared to.

Scared? Of what?

I know what you'll say.

Try me and see.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

What about Sally?

See, I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! Why she's told lies about me, cheated me out of money She never paid back that debt she owes me. I've sworn to get even.

But your prayer... What about your prayer?

I didn't mean it about her.

Well, at least you're honest. But it's not much fun carrying that load of bitterness around inside is it?

No, but I'll feel better as soon as I get even. Boy, have I made some plans for ol' Sally! She'll wish she never did me any harm.

You won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. Think of how unhappy you are already...But I can change all that.

You can? How?

Forgive Sally. Then I'll forgive you. Then the hate and sin will be Sally's problem and not yours. You may lose the money, but you will settle your heart.

Oh, you're right! You're always right! And more than I want revenge on Sally, I want to be right with You. OK—I forgive her. Help her to find the right road in life, Lord. She's bound to be awfully miserable, now that I think about it. Some way, somehow, show her right way.

There now! How do you feel?

Hmmm...not bad. Not bad at all, in fact I feel pretty great. You know, I don't think I'll have to go to bed uptight tonight for the first time since I can't remember. Maybe I won't be so tired from now on because I'm not getting enough rest.

.....You're not through with your prayer.....Go on.

Oh, all right...And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Good...good. I'll do that. But don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

What do you mean by that?

Quit hanging around the wrong places, watching inappropriate movies and television, listening to sinful conversations; getting into compromising situations. Change some of your friendships. Some of your so called friends are beginning to get to you. They'll have you completely involved in wrong things before long. Don't be fooled. And don't come running to me for an escape.

I don't understand.

Sure you do. You've done it lots of times. You get caught in a bad situation, you get into trouble and then you come running to me. "Lord, help me out of this mess, and I promise you I'll never do it again." You remember some of those bargains you tried to make with me?

Yes, and I'm ashamed, Lord. I really am.

Which bargains are you remembering!.....never mind...Go ahead. Finish your prayer.

Oh yes...For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Do you know what would bring me glory? What would make me really happy?

No, but I'd like to know. I want to please you; I can see what a mess I've made out of my life, and I can see how great it would be to really be one of your followers.

You just answered the question.

I did?

Yes, the one thing that would bring me glory is to have you truly love me. And I can see that happening between us. Now that some of these old sins are exposed and out of the way there's no telling what we can do together.

Lord, let's see what we can make of me, OK?

Yes, let's see.

WELL--Have you ever thought of praying the Lord's Prayer in that light? What would God say or is saying to you as you pray that prayer?

Have you forgiven others of their sins to you? Have you been staying out of places and things that are tempting?

Do you trust in God to provide for you as you pray, “give us this day our daily bread”? Do you believe that the kingdom of God is now on this earth and it is coming because of you? As you pray the Lord’s Prayer do you expect to be changed, forgiven, and blessed?

If we truly stop and think about what we are praying for in the Lord’s Prayer, it is truly a powerful prayer, a perfect prayer, a prayer that does handle all the aspects of our lives.

And notice that this prayer is not a selfish prayer, it does not pray for your needs alone, but prays for the needs of all people whenever we pray it.

You cannot say the Lord’s Prayer, and even once say “I”.

You cannot pray the Lord’s Prayer, and even once say “My”.

Nor can you pray the Lord’s prayer and not pray for another.

For when you ask for daily bread, you must include your brothers and sisters!

For others are included in each and every plea. From the beginning to the end; it does not once say “me”.

The Lord’s Prayer is an all-inclusive prayer as we pray it. For it does not just see my life in reference to God but your life and other lives as well.

Have you thought about how the Lord’s Prayer is used in our worship service on Sundays? Where does it come in? How is it used? The Lord’s Prayer is prayed just before we come to communion as a meal prayer. It is said before communion as we would pray a prayer of grace before we sit down to eat. It is the most perfect meal prayer, grace prayer, as it lets us pray for all of life before we eat and drink from the Lord’s table, the perfect table prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer is the perfect prayer for us to use to develop our lives with God, through Jesus Christ. Amen.