

# The Lord's Prayer

## *Amen*

Part 13 – February 8, 2009

Well, today is the final word on the final word on prayer: “**Amen.**” (*Mat. 6:13*)

Do you know what the word “Amen” means? I’ll tell you what it *doesn’t* mean. It doesn’t mean, “The end.” But, we kind of use it this way, like a signal to let God know that we’re done praying: “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever ... the end!”

When my daughter was young, and my father was pastor, dad had a couple of friends who would yell out, “Amen!” when he preached. One Sunday Shaz was with me in church, and about halfway into dad’s message she whispers, “Do they like this?” I nodded. Then she says, “Why do they keep saying, ‘Amen’?” I told her that they were agreeing with what grandpa was saying. She said, “Oh. I thought they just wanted him to stop talking.”

“Amen” is a Hebrew word meaning “Right on!” or “So be it!” It’s the biblical way of emphasizing the truth of something. Would it feel weird to *begin* a prayer with “Amen”? More than *fifty times* when Jesus had something vital to say, He *began* with the word, “Amen”.

**The NAB retains this translation:** “And while they were eating, he said, “**Amen**, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” - *Matthew 26:21 NAB*

**The King James Version says:** “... **Verily** I say unto you ...” - *Matthew 26:21 KJV*

**The New King James says:** “... **Assuredly**, I say to you ...” - *Matthew 26:21 NKJ*

**The New American Standard says:** “... **Truly** I say to you ...” - *Matthew 26:21 NAS*



“Amen” is an affirmation of truth. And when used to conclude a prayer, it becomes a seal of our commitment to that truth. It’s like saying “I do” at a wedding. Although it comes at the conclusion of the ceremony, it’s far more about the *beginning* of something than the end. Saying “Amen” is a pledge to do what I’ve prayed.

It’s a vow to live out what I’ve just talked to God about. So, be careful with that little word! When you say it, you’ve just said, “I do” to God.

I’ve been asked on occasion, why we don’t pray the Lord’s Prayer every Sunday here, as part of our weekly liturgy. I have a couple strong beliefs on this.

- A. First, the disciples asked Jesus to: “... teach us **to pray** ...” (*Lk. 11:1*)

They did not ask Him to: “Teach us *a prayer*”. So, He gave them *this* prayer, not as something to recite mechanically, but as a *pattern* to help them learn to pray *relationally*. At least *eight* different relationships with God are covered in this *one* example of prayer that Jesus taught with:

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. “Our Father”                  | <i>Parent and child</i>       |
| 2. “Hallowed be thy name”        | <i>Deity and worshipper</i>   |
| 3. “Thy kingdom come”            | <i>King and subject</i>       |
| 4. “Thy will be done”            | <i>Master and servant</i>     |
| 5. “Give us this day”            | <i>Provider and recipient</i> |
| 6. “Forgive us our debts”        | <i>Savior and sinner</i>      |
| 7. “Lead us not into temptation” | <i>Guide and follower</i>     |
| 8. “Deliver us from evil”        | <i>Rescuer and injured</i>    |

That’s a lot of relational “homework” the Lord gives us to think through in our prayers to the Father.

**B.** Jesus prayed it differently; in Luke He says:

When you pray, say: “Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.” - *Luke 11:2b-4 NIV*

Jesus, it’s “*OUR* Father”. And you left out, “Who art in heaven”! And after you say, “Your kingdom come,” you’re supposed to say, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”. And after you say “lead us not into temptation,” you add on, “But deliver us from evil”. If this was a prayer to be memorized and repeated Jesus would have used the same words each time He offered it.

**C.** And this prayer comes with two warnings:

... do not be like the **hypocrites** ... - *Matthew 6:5 NIV*

... do not keep on **babbling like pagans** ... - *Matthew 6:7 NIV*



Jesus said this just before sharing His prayer. Jesus demands sincerity *and* thoughtfulness. This is probably why there’s no record of this prayer being repeated by the disciples; and no (Epistle) instructions given to recite it. Now, this doesn’t mean we should never pray it together as a congregation; it simply means we must be mindful not to do it so often that it becomes perfunctory and automatic.

Also, this certainly doesn’t mean that the Lord’s Prayer can’t be prayed with genuine sincerity, *just* the way Jesus spoke it. In fact, the *goal* is to wrap our minds around each phrase and adopt each line as an honest expression from our *own* heart.



If we're able to authentically pray the words that Jesus gave us as an example, then we can have the best of both worlds: The words of our Savior as the expression of our heart. So I think, as a congregation, we *should* pray this prayer together a few times a year. And we should use it as a reminder of *all* the elements that our prayers should encompass.

Now, let's put all of the elements together that we've learned these past four months:

1. The **person** of God: "Our Father"



He's not a distant, detached, impersonal power; He's a *person*. And He's *asking* to be approached on an intimate basis; the same exact way a small child would jump onto her father's lap to say, "I love you!" Prayer isn't just for us ... it's also for Dad. Do you spend time focusing on the intimacy between you and God?

2. The **position** of God: "Who art in heaven"



Jesus isn't referring to location, but authority. He isn't far *from* us in distance, but far *above* us in majesty! Our Father is personal but majestic. On one hand is Fatherly love that demands relationship; and on the other, transcendent greatness that demands reverence. Do you spend time bowing your knees before His majesty?

3. The **praise** of God: "Hallowed be thy name"



Something happens when we praise in private. Suddenly we're not the center of the universe; God is! Hallowed things are cherished and treasured. Jesus isn't telling us to settle for stating the *fact* of God's holiness, but to cherish and adore it as our highest created purpose. How often do you open your prayers with a moment of praise?

4. The **purpose** of God: "Thy kingdom come"



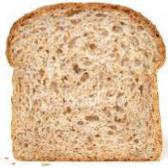
This is to ask for all that Jesus represents to advance and conquer and find its completion. Jesus was the Kingdom in person. To pray for His kingdom to come is to pray for His gospel to advance and to spread to those who are not yet *in* His kingdom. Do you pray with concern for the salvation of others?

5. The **plan** of God: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"



It's only as *my* will conforms to *Thy* will that I find rest for my soul, joy for my heart, and purpose for my life. That's why my prayers must realign *my* will with *His*. I pray for help to get my spiritual ducks in a row, on earth as it is in Heaven: immediately, completely, and enthusiastically. Do you focus more on *your* will or *His*?

6. The **provision** of God: "Give us this day our daily bread"



Bread symbolizes our daily necessities: food, clothing, shelter, employment, and health. If the breadbox is *full* we should pray: "Give us this day our daily *gratitude*." And if the breadbox is *low* we should pray: "Give us this day our daily *trust*."

A prayer of trust is when we give our needs to God, and then trust that He's watching over the outcome *whatever* it is. Do you spend time expressing your gratitude *and* trust?

7. The **pardon** of God: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"



The biggest barriers to peace and joy are guilt and resentment. Our guilt comes from what we do to others; and our resentment comes from what others do to us! The only antidote to guilt is to receive forgiveness. And the only antidote to resentment is to offer it. Do you *regularly* confess your sins and confer your forgiveness?

8. The **precaution** of God: "And lead us not into temptation"



This is *not* a request for God to keep temptation from touching us (which denies the world we live in), but for his leadership in dealing with it. We pray not to be spared but to be strengthened. Do you talk to the Lord about your patterns and weaknesses?

9. The **protection** of God: "But deliver us from evil"



When evil comes as a result of giving in to temptation we must be quick to recognize it, regret it, and repent from it. When it comes from the sin of others, we must ask God to walk us through it, teach us from it, and deepen our faith within it. He not only rescues, He redeems. He works *all* things to our greater good and His greater glory!

Do you ask Him to deepen your faith and wisdom during trials?

10. The **power** of God: "For thine is the kingdom, power, and glory"

Jesus redefined forever what these three words mean! A good father stands tall to instill respect and stoops low to impart tenderness. In the O.T. God stood tall, but in the New He willingly stooped down low to impart a Father's affection.

Let's adopt each line of the Lord's Prayer as an honest expression from our *own* heart.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. AMEN! - *Matthew 6:9-13 KJV para.*