

## “LET US PRAY”

Lincoln Park Baptist Church, West Newton, Massachusetts  
November 29, 1964

Scripture – Matthew 6:9-13

### Introduction:

Chapter 6 of Matthew presents us what the Gospel writer conceived to be three of the basic practices of piety – almsgiving, fasting, prayer. As Protestants we have almost eliminated the practice of almsgiving to the poor. It is a practice in Roman Catholic countries. We give to the needy in other ways. Fasting has no place among us. Prayer is in danger of disappearing.

Today we are going to consider the first sentence of the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples.

(1) It is a brief prayer. \_\_\_\_\_ 18 benediction 10 times as long.

(2) Childlike in simplicity: statesman and man in the street,  
the philosopher and the rustic,  
the bishop and the humblest believer – are all one here:  
*Our Father* sets God’s sovereign love and man’s dependence.

(3) It sets first things first: the first three petitions are adoration.

They concern God’s nature: *Hallowed be thy name.*

God’s kingdom: *Thy kingdom come.*

God’s will: *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

The next four petitions concern man’s need: -- our daily temporal needs

-- our need for forgiveness

-- our defense against the onset of  
temptation

(4) It is a universal prayer: *Our Father* could be even said by Jews, also all branches of the Christian church.

(5) It is the prayer of Christ.

I. The prayer is addressed to God, our Father, who is in heaven.

A. In the O.T. the term “Father” as applied to God is not common. It appears only in the book of Psalms and the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and only a few times.

Psalm 68:5 calls God: “*Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.*”

Psalm 89:26 - David will cry to God saying: “*Thou art my Father, my God, the rock of*

*my salvation.”*

Isaiah 9:6 – The future Messiah is called: “*Wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*”

Isaiah 63:16 – The prophet speaking for the nation says: “*For thou art our Father, ... thou, O Lord, art our Father; our Redeemer from of old is thy name.”*

Isaiah 64:8 – “*Yet, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand.*”

God = the Father

- (1) God the maker
- (2) God the redeemer
- (3) God the protector of the widows and the fatherless.

- B. The term “Father” is constantly on the lips of Jesus. It is his favorite name for God. In this prayer he teaches us to address God as Father and in another place he says: (Mat.11:25-27) “*At that time Jesus declared: ‘I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things [his mighty deeds] from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yes, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom he chooses to reveal.”*

Jesus knows himself as in close relationship with the Father and as instrument in his hands for the bringing in of the Kingdom.

The Gospel of John plays up the Father-Son relationship between God and Jesus.

## II. What does it mean that God is our Father?

- A. To trust that He will supply our needs.

*“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

*And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

*But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?*

*Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or*

*'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.'*

To call God our Father means to acknowledge our dependence on him. His claims upon us have priority: seek first the kingdom of God. It also means not to be anxious for food, drink nor clothing. God has made a universe in which these things are available.

Notice the admonition not to be anxious about food, clothing and drink. And how we need to be careful in this area! Notice that he emphasizes the necessary things of life, not the luxuries. It is usually the luxuries that we worry about. How up-to-date is this advice!

When we say "our Father", let us not forget that he is the great provider. So many times we have to go by faith, for our feelings betray turmoil and instability. Let us, then, remember that underneath are his everlasting arms.

B. To call God our Father means that we can go to him in prayer –

(1) *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

*Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

(2) *"Again, be not like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

*Nor like the Gentiles who heap up empty phrases, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*"

(3) Our prayer life

How active is our prayer life? How often do we give thanks to God? How often do we just sit marveling at the wondrous salvation brought by God in Christ?

The Board of Deacons and prayer. I was surprised that more could not pray when asked to do so. I do not mean to be critical in a bad sense, only to point out one area where we need to grow. Ex. of doña Justa Castro. To call God our Father means that we confidently go to him in prayer.

C. To call God our Father means that we confidently put our lives in his hands:

(1) One of the most touching prayers in the N.T. is Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus said to his disciples: *"My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."* And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed: *'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'* And he came to his disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, *'So could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.'* Again for the second time, he went away and prayed, *'My Father, if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done.'*

Luke 23:44 – *"It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed ... and Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.'"*

(2) Stephen – *"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."*

(3) Those who have died in the Republic of Congo. Let us not forget that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Nathan Hale – *"I only regret that I have only one life to give for my country."*

Human life is precious, but we have put so much stock in staying alive that we have forgotten that life has a transcendental dimension. To call God our Father means to know that not even death can separate us from him.

III. We call God our Father who art in heaven.

A. God is over against us. He is the Lord and we are his creatures:

*"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts."*

B. Let us not confuse God with humanity; at the same time, let us not forget the humanity of God.

Conclusion:

To call God Father means –

- (1) that we trust in him to provide our needs;
- (2) that we pray to him;
- (3) that we can confidently commit our spirit to him;
- (4) Since he is in heaven, let us not forget the mystery of his being.

Let us all say again the Lord's Prayer.