

Matthew 6:11  
Our Daily Bread  
Lord's Prayer Lenten Sermon Series  
Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Today we are going to touch on intercessory prayer again and prayers of petition in the context of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phrase in the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread."

Prayers of "petition" concern our own immediate interests.

"Intercessory" prayer is asking God to intervene in events or situations in the world beyond our immediate interests. It is to ask that God incline his attention to a situation or event where we want to see God's Kingdom become present.

We see or hear of the war in Ukraine and so we pray concerning that war, "God, in terms of that war, your kingdom come your will be done. Bring peace to that situation." And as we pray that prayer, we invite ourselves to become part of the answer to that prayer. This is how that works. We as Vista Church have been praying for Ukraine so our Church Council voted to explore sponsoring a Ukrainian family.

In terms of prayers of petition (concerning our own immediate interest) we've all prayed them. Some are long, but in Tucson traffic some are really, really short, "Please God!" "Oh, Jesus let me stop!!" And sometimes all I can get out is "JESUS!"

Now some of the best and most innocent prayers of petition we get are from children. And remember petition prayers are concerned with our immediate interests.



*A story is told of a little girl, who dressed in her Sunday best, was running to church as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Sunday School.*

*As she ran, she prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!" (Which is a great petition prayer.)*

*While she was running and praying, she tripped and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and began running again.*

*And as she ran she again prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!... And added, "But please don't push me again either!"*

(That last prayer is a combination of "Give us this day our daily bread" and "do not bring us to a time of trial.")

Remember in my first message on the Lord's Prayer I spoke of it as being a framework or outline on which we hang our prayers. The image that comes to my mind is of a shelving unit. Different prayers go on different shelves.

It is through the Lord's Prayer our minds and hearts are directed at the things to remember and pray for when we pray. It is a guide to the 4 types of prayer I spoke of (**Contemplation, petition, intercession and spiritual warfare, imprecatory prayer**) of which today we look at intercession and more specifically petition. The first Sunday we looked at contemplative or meditative prayer. Later we will go to war with the forces of evil.

Matthew 6:25 says, "**Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.**

**Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?**

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”



We are told not to worry, but we do, so Jesus’ words here encourage us. They encourage us to remember God loves us like a good father. They encourage us that when we pursue the Kingdom of God, God will provide.



Verses 31 & 32 say, “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

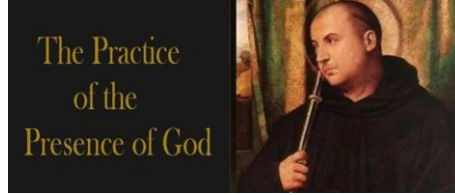
for the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

There is a deep consistency in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount that we see here and in the Lord’s Prayer. Jesus continues to refer to God as “Father” to remind us that God, though in heaven, God cares for us more deeply than an earthly father.

Jesus also calls us to Kingdom living. Remember the 2<sup>nd</sup> phrase “Your Kingdom come your will be done.” We pray to be a part of the present and future Kingdom of God and we do this by righteous living in the present.

There was a man named Brother Lawrence. He wrote a short 39-page book called "The Practice of the Presence of God."



It has had a profound impact on the Christian faith since it was written in the 1600s. It is from a man who found times of quiet contemplation no more helpful than the times of active service for God. He spent most of his time as a cook and dishwasher in the monastery where he lived.

His most famous poem captured the essence of his active spirituality of making his life a living prayer. He practiced the presence of God.

*Lord of all pots and pans and things,  
Since I've no time to be a great saint  
By doing lovely things,*

*Or watching late with Thee,  
Or dreaming in the dawnlight,  
Or storming heaven's gates,*

*Make me a saint by getting meals,  
And washing up the plates.*

*Warm all the kitchen with Thy Love,  
And light it with Thy peace;  
Forgive me all my worrying,*

*And make my grumbling cease.  
Thou who didst love to give men food,  
In room, or by the sea,*

*Accept the service that I do,  
I do it unto Thee.*

Here, following, is a video clip of a woman doing just that.

She is bringing her cares and worries to God in a whole series of petitions as she goes about her daily tasks.

Part of being faithful and not worrying is to bring those things that do worry you before the throne of God in prayer. In fact, Rev. Rick Warren wrote that if you can worry you can do contemplative or meditative prayer.

You go over and over again with God the things that worry you until you find direction, or peace. And to remember, like this woman does, to be thankful for what God has given you more than worrying over what may be missing.

### **ROLL CLIP "HARD TO LIVE BY FAITH"**

These were big issues that this woman brought before God in prayer, but God also wants to hear the little things. Often in lifting up the little things all through the day we begin to truly practice and experience the presence of God.

Now through the years I have met people who will not petition God with their needs. Some believe they are not worthy of God's attention. Some have said, "God has bigger things to deal with than my little problems." But God wants to hear from us. God wants to provide and for us to realize that it is God who provides and this we find through praying and having our prayers answered!

In Matthew 7:7-11 Jesus says, **"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.**

For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.



Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!!”

We are to ask! We are to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Which covers the simple things from “let me get to church on time”; to “please God, don’t let the cancer come back”. God wants to hear our prayers and answer.

In fact, James 4:2b-3 says, “You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

The Lord’s Prayer keeps us on track when we petition God. The second phrase, “Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” reminds us to pray for things in our lives that help us advance the Kingdom of God here on earth. We pray for things that would be according to God’s will. As we do this, we ask to be part of the answer.

When the sole purpose of our prayers is led by jealousy of others, coveting, and envy; God is not going to say yes to our desires. But if it is to meet our basic needs God will say yes and lead us to what we need.

Rev. Mike Breen who is my inspiration for huddles and in fact this whole prayer series, he told the story of when he was starting out in ministry his income was so low that buying coats for his children for winter was quite a challenge.

So, he prayed to his Father in heaven to provide. He then found the Good Will store. There he found all they needed for winter: coats, hats, gloves, and boots.



And if anyone asked, “Hey, where’d you get the great coats?” He would simply reply, **“My Father gave them to me.”** That is the attitude we need to have for all that we receive in life. The attitude of thanksgiving that the young woman in the video clip had for the things she did have in life. The attitude of the hymn, “All I have needed thy hand hath provided”.

If we are honest when we think about it, God says ‘yes’ to most of our needs and many of our wants. God sometimes gives an emphatic ‘no’ as he did to Jesus and his petitions to escape the tortures of Holy Week. And God also sometimes says wait. But we need to keep praying and giving thanks in all circumstances.

Now as to intercessory prayer, and the Lord’s Prayer, pray that God’s kingdom comes in the situations of the world. In the wars, and famines, in the divorces and sicknesses of others, pray that God’s will, God’s kingdom, the perfections of heaven become present in those circumstances.

In places of the oppression of people and Christians pray that God’s Spirit becomes present for the Bible says, **“Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.” 2 Cor. 4:17**

In terms of intercession and making your life a living prayer, have situations become inspirations to pray. I pray when I see ambulances with lights and sirens on. I pray for the safety of police as they drive by in their cars.



Bicycle riders are also cause for me to pray. When I see one, I pray they get home or to wherever they are going safely. I was involved in 3 bad bike wrecks as a youth, one of which put me in the hospital; so, I pray when I see bicyclists.



Now some ask, "Is there a right posture to take when we pray"?

Many Jews constantly move their body as they pray because of this verse Psalm 35:10 "All my bones (limbs) shall say, "Who is like you".

In the early Christian Church, they often prayed standing with their arms lifted up to God like a small child lifting his/her arms up to a loving Father to pick them up.



Like in many contemporary services, the old becomes new.



Many Christians prayed with their arms outstretched like they were being crucified as they faced towards Jerusalem.

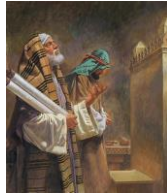




Praying with your arms outstretched makes for shorter prayers.

We today mostly pray with our eyes closed and heads bowed, because of the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. In that parable the Pharisee strode into worship proudly with head and eyes lifted up to God.

The Tax Collector would not even look up to God. So, we today often pray in the same posture.



Most pray with hands folded together. Some pray with arms crossed and some with hands lifted up. Some stand, some kneel, some sit. Some lie on the floor. Some dance. I pray mostly when I walk. All these ways bring glory and honor to God as we pray.

We are going to move into a time of intercession and prayers of petition and experience another type of prayer and that is praying out loud together. Not in unison, but all at once out loud.

Remember, James 5:16 says, **“The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”** We are going to practice that now together. And our righteous comes only in that God through His Son Jesus has made us righteous.

So, think of a person or persons you know in need of prayer. When I say “pray” say that person’s or persons’ name. When all are done, I will say “amen”. PRAY.

Think of a place or places in the world that need the Kingdom of God to come in their midst. When I say “pray” say the name or names of those places out loud. When all are done, I will say amen. PRAY.

Now think of a personal need that you would like God to fill. We won't say that out loud but when I say “pray” ask God to answer that as a part of your daily bread that you need. PRAY

God has heard your prayers. Remember God wants to hear more from you and remember during this Lenten season to pray the Lord's prayer every day.

In Jesus' name amen!