



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### January 29, 2023

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

## Sermon on the Mount: Prayer

Sermon from January 29, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 6:7-21

The Lord's prayer is at the heart of the Christian faith. It is said every Sunday by millions of Christians, memorized by young and old. I hear it every Sunday coming from children's voices from our PRAYground kids' corner, and I have heard it from the mouths of elderly in memory care. It is a central part of Christian faith – and the structure of the prayer itself reveals a centrality that can shape our faith.

There are eight phrases in the prayer. The first is an introduction that is more radical than most realize. "Our Father in heaven" tells us three incredible things. This is "our" prayer. When we pray, we pray in community. Even when we follow Jesus' instruction to pray by ourselves, we are still in community. Christianity is a team sport. This is a prayer to "father." This is a relational God. This is a God who, in God's very nature, is in relationship. We are praying to a God of love and intimacy and connection, not only a God of transcendent power and mystical spirituality. This divine Father knows us, and lives "In heaven" and not in Rome. We are praying to God who is communal, relational, and NOT the Emperor (who also claimed fatherhood over all people).

The introduction out of the way, we are left with seven statements. These can be grouped in threes and fours, but the center statement overlaps them all:

- Make your name holy
- Your will kingdom come
- Your will be done
- Give us our bread for today.
- Forgive our wrongdoing
- Lead us not into temptation
- Deliver us from evil.

The first four all positive, NAME, KINGDOM, WILL, BREAD. The next three are all negative things to avoid WRONGDOING, TEMPTATION, EVIL. The middle one is BREAD.

The first three are all YOUR: *your* name, *your* kingdom, *your* will. The last four are all OUR: *Our* bread, *our* wrongdoing, *lead us*, *deliver us*. The middle one is OUR bread.

This prayer, which I may add comes at the center of the Sermon on

the Mount, reveals to us the center of our faith. The structure suggests that "Give us our bread for today" is the fulcrum. And just like the address reminds us that this prayer is communal, relational, and not to Rome, our daily bread is also communal, relational, and not from Rome.

"Give us our bread for today," is the center

of our faith and Jesus ministry. It is a reminder of God's provision in the wilderness of exile. It is a reminder of the admonish to not horde. Bread is an integral part of community. It brings people together. The etymology of our word "Companion," means literally "With Bread." Bread and community go hand in hand.

Bread is relational. Breaking bread is a means to deeper intimacy and relationship. Breaking bread is a chance to grow, share, and experience nourishment. Is it any wonder that one of Jesus' last acts with his disciples (or should I say companions) was to break bread? When he wanted them to remember him, he broke bread. When the disciples encountered on the road to Emmaus, they didn't recognize him until he broke bread.

This bread is not from Rome. While the Emperor famously used bread and circus to keep people trapped in poverty appeased, Jesus is reminding us that we do not seek the bread of – or from – the Emperor. We seek the bread of God, the bread of heaven, the bread of life. Our bread nourishes body and our bread nourishes the spirit.

The Lord's Prayer communicates the heart of Christianity. It communicates the desire for the Kingdom of Heaven to be made known, and at the center of that Kingdom is Our Father who gives us today the bread we need. May we be purveyors of this bread as we build community and work for just relationship with others.



*Sermon on the Mount, Carl Bloch, 1877*  
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