

Matthew 6:5-15

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[0 : 00] Okay, guys, well, you did a really good job singing this morning, and I wonder if you're also very good at imagining. Now, children are usually really good at imagining, so let's test that one out. I want you to imagine that you're one of the first disciples of Jesus in Galilee, right? So you can maybe choose one of the names. You could be John or Peter or James, or if you want a really cool name, you could be Bartholomew, or there were women who also were with Jesus, like Martha and Mary. You might want to choose one of those names. So you're imagining that you're one of those disciples or followers of Jesus. Now, what the disciples did is that they went with Jesus wherever he went. Now, you've read that in the Bible, how Jesus would go from village to village and town to town, and the disciples would go with him. So you're imagining you're going with Jesus, you're following Jesus. I want you to think, what would you have seen Jesus doing? Okay, you're following him, you're watching. What would you have seen Jesus doing? Yeah, look.

Healing, that's one of the things you'd have seen, that's right. He'd have been healing the sick. What other things? Yeah. What would you have seen Jesus doing if you were following him? Praying. Praying? Good. That was meant to be the last thing, but you jumped in right there. Well, that's okay. Well done. What else? Yeah, Sana? Performing miracles. Yeah. What else? Just regular stuff? What regular stuff would you have seen him doing? Yeah, what do you think Jesus would have been doing? What would he have been doing when he was hungry? Eating. Good one. Yeah, I don't know how you got there. That was good. Right. Anything else you'd have seen him doing, Ariel? What? Right. Wow. Yeah, that's right at the end, after all those three years. You know, the sad thing is that the disciples, they didn't see that because they all ran away. Well, most of them did. Just one of them saw that. But yeah, if you'd been following him all the time, you would have seen that as well. And one of the things that you'd have seen, and somebody's already got in there with and gave that answer, which is good, is you'd have seen him, probably not when there were lots of crowds there, but you'd have seen him praying because Jesus prayed a lot. He spoke to God, to his Father in heaven, and he prayed to him. And so you're seeing him praying a lot, and you're thinking, well, that is amazing, speaking to God. I'd like to do that. I'd like to speak to God like Jesus speaks to God, but I don't really know how to do that. What could you have done? So you're seeing Jesus praying, you're thinking, well, he prays to God, and he knows how to pray. I'd like to pray, but I don't really know how to. What might you have done? Yeah, you could have asked him. That's right. And actually, that's exactly what happened. Because the Bible tells us that one of the disciples, he'd seen Jesus pray maybe lots of times, and then he plucked up the courage, and he went to Jesus, and he said, Jesus, could you teach us to pray? And Jesus said, sure, I'd love to teach you to pray. So he gathered his disciples around, and he sat them down. Well, I imagine he did, because he had lots to say, and they'd have been very tired if they'd stood up the whole time. So they all sat down, maybe in a circle, I don't know, and he started teaching them to pray. And he said, when you pray, this is what you need to say. And so we're going to listen. You've been singing it already, and we're just going to be thinking a little bit about the things that he taught his disciples about how to pray, and the things that they should be saying. So, first things first, who do we pray to? Who do we pray to?

[3 : 52] We pray to God, that's right. And I know some of you are thinking, oh, David, that's so obvious. Like, give us a more difficult question. But actually, although it should be obvious, sometimes you hear people saying some silly things. Sometimes, you know, I can remember watching on TV, maybe some competition, some singing competition, and one of the contestants said, oh, I'm very nervous, but I've been speaking to Granny to help me. This is Granny who had maybe passed away, and they reckon she's in heaven, and they've been asking Granny to help them. Now, that's not really very sensible, because Granny can't hear, and she can't help, but God

can hear, and God can help. So you do hear people saying some funny things, or silly things, really. So it's really important for us to know that first thing, that when we pray, we pray to God, and God hears us, and God is able to answer us. But there's something that Jesus says about God, and about how we are related to God in this prayer that's really important, because Jesus said that when we pray, we're to say, our Father in heaven. So what Jesus is saying is that if God is going to hear us and answer us, and if we're able to pray to God, we need to be able to pray to God as our Father. We need to be part of the family. Prayer is a present, or a privilege, for family members. So if we're part of God's family, then we can pray, and God hears us, and God answers us. That's what Jesus is saying when we say, our Father in heaven. And then the Bible says that the way you show that you're part of the family is by trusting in Jesus. You know, John, in his book where he tells us all about Jesus, he says that to those who believe in Jesus, we're given the right to be called sons and daughters of God. So that's the very first thing we need to be clear on, that we're part of God's family, we're trusting in Jesus, and if that's true, then we have this great privilege that we can speak to God and say, our Father in heaven.

Now, after that, Jesus gave the disciples six things that they should ask for. We could call them six petitions. That's a bit just of a fancy word for six things that you can ask for, or that you should ask God for. Now, there's lots of other things that you can ask God for, but these must be the really, really important ones, because these are the ones that Jesus said that we should always remember when we pray. Maybe not in every single prayer, but as we pray, these things should always be present over all the praying that we do. So let's just go through them one by one and see what they mean, because although the prayer is very familiar and you've sung it, some of the words in it are actually quite difficult, and the first one is really difficult, because the first thing that we need to ask God for is this, hallowed be your name. Now, what does that mean, hallowed? I'm not sure if I think this is a good idea, but go for it, Aurel. What do you think hallowed means?

You see, you just put your hand up before you thought about it, didn't you? You've proved my point, that it is quite a difficult word. Yeah, hallowed. It's not the kind of word you hear in school. I don't think your teacher would ever use that word, or at playtime, I don't think your friends would be using that word, or maybe even watching TV. It's not a really common word, but I'll tell you what it means. It means to honor or to respect, and what we're asking is that God's name be honored, be respected, and when it says God's name, that's just another way of saying God, that God should be honored and respected. That's what we want as his sons and daughters, that he be honored, that he be respected by everybody, and so we pray, hallowed be your name.

Now, there's lots of ways that we can disrespect God, and disrespect his name especially. There's so many ways, but just give you one example that happens all the time, and I'm sure you hear it all the time, when people without thinking will say, oh my God, or Jesus Christ. They're not thinking about God. They're not thinking about Jesus, but they just throw out his name. That's one way. There's other ways. That's one way in which we disrespect God, or people are on their phone, and they put, OMG. What does that mean? Oh my God. We're not thinking about God. Now, there's lots of other ways we can disrespect God, but that's one way that we have to be careful not to do. When we pray, we're asking that God's name be honored and respected, first of all by us, but we also want his name to be honored by others. Now, what's the second thing that we pray for in the Lord's Prayer?

Well, what does it say here in the Bible? It says, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Your kingdom come. That's another one that's quite difficult to understand.

[9 : 01] What does that mean? Your kingdom come. Well, a kingdom, one thing that a kingdom has got to have, what is the one thing a kingdom really needs to have, or else it's not a kingdom? Who's at the top of the kingdom? Just shout it out. A king. That's right. You need a king. If you haven't got a king, you haven't got a kingdom. And so, what we're praying for here is that King Jesus be recognized as king in this world. That we recognize him as king, that we obey him as king, but we also want other people to know that he's the king, to honor him as king, and to obey him as king. And we're asking God to help us and others recognize Jesus as king, and obey him as king. So, that's another thing we're asking for. Now, what's the third thing? Well, let's read it. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

So, we've done that. Your kingdom come. And then it says, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, what's God's will? Well, God's will is God's perfect plan and purposes for us and for the world.

And because we know it's perfect, we want his will to be done, because that's the best thing that can happen. And that's what we're asking for. And we're also asking God to help us do our bit, that in our lives, we would do God's will. Now, then we're thinking, well, okay, I want to do God's will, but how can I know? Well, that's why God has given us the Bible. You see, in the Bible, we discover God's will for us, what God wants us to do, how God wants us to live, how he wants us to pray, his will for how we should pray, and so many other things. So, if we're praying that we want God's will to be done, then we're asking God to help us, as well as others, do God's will. Now, that was number three, wasn't it? So, hallowed be your name, that was the first one. Your kingdom come, that was the second one. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, that's the third one. And the fourth one, what's the fourth one? Does anyone know what the fourth one is without looking? Or you can look if you want, if your Bible's open. It starts with give us. Give us what? Yes. Give us our daily bread.

That's right. Give us this day our daily bread. I was thinking as I was going through them, I thought, well, this one's a bit easier, isn't it? It's easier to understand. Give us this day our daily bread. Oh, I haven't got there yet. I haven't got there. I was going to say something about it. I know it's easy, but I still was going to say something about it. So, ministers do, even easy things. They've always got something to say. So, what was I going to say about give us this day our daily bread? [11:55] Well, a couple of things. One of the things that we're doing when we ask for that, obviously, the main thing is we're asking God to give us what we need, our daily bread. That's the main thing we're doing. But the way in which we do it is we're saying that we recognize that we depend on God always because it's our daily bread every day. We're not thinking, oh, I've got plenty bread. I've got plenty money. I've got plenty ways of providing for myself. I don't really need to ask God because the cupboards are full and there's plenty of things I can buy in the supermarket and I've got plenty money and I don't really need God. Now, when we pray this, we're recognizing that we need God to provide for us, to be generous to us every single day. And we're asking for him to provide us with what we need. So, our daily bread really is talking about the things that we need, not about the things that we want. Now, we can ask God for things that we want and he may give them to us or he may say, well, no, you don't really need that. I'm not going to give you that. But the things that we need, God has promised that he'll give to us. And so, we can ask for those things confident that he will give them to us as he always has. So, that was the fourth thing. The fifth thing is, and forgive us our debts or our sins. It's another way of saying our sins as we also forgive our debtors or those who sin against us. Now, this is a really important thing we need to include when we pray that we need to ask of God. You see, all of us, from the youngest to the oldest, all of us sin.

We all disobey God in many different ways. So, we all need to be forgiven. And God can and does forgive. But we need to ask him. And that's the thing about the prayer. We need to ask him to forgive us. We need to be forgiven. God wants to forgive us. He enjoys forgiving. The Bible says that God delights in mercy. What that means is that he enjoys forgiving. So, that's good news. But we do need to ask him. I'm going to tell you a true story about a very silly man. Okay? Now, this very silly man, he lived his life disobeying God all the time. And he thought that was just fine. He knew what God commanded in the Bible. But he thought, hey, I don't need to do that. I'm going to live my life the way I please. And so, he was always disobeying God. Now, we all disobey God. But this man thought it was just fine to disobey God. So, he'd been disobeying God all his life. And then he was very old. And he was about to die. And one of his friends visited him. And he said to his friend, he said, now you're about to die. Do you think that when you die, God will forgive you? And this man, he was old. You'd have thought he'd have maybe got a little bit wiser with years. But he hadn't. So, he turned to his friend.

And he said, oh, yes, God will forgive me. That's his job. Can you imagine that? That's a true story. Somebody said that. You see, he thought that he didn't need to ask God to forgive him. No, God will forgive me. That's his job. Now, the Lord's Prayer and Jesus is reminding us that we do need to be forgiven. And God is able and willing to forgive. But we do need to ask him.

We need to ask him, forgive us our sins. And if we do, then he will. So, that's the fifth thing. And then there's one final thing. And it's, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. And really there, we're asking God to help us not to sin. We do sin. And when we sin, we need to ask to be forgiven. But we're asking God to help us because we find it so difficult not to sin. And so, we're saying, God, help me not to sin. In whatever way God sees fit, help me not to sin.

And protect me from those who would do me wrong or would lead me to sin, and especially the devil himself. So, those are six petitions or six things that we ask God for in the Lord's Prayer. [16:11] But there's one final thing I want to say, and it's about all of them. So, it's quite a long final thing. And what I think is really important when we think about the Lord's Prayer is that for each of these things that we've looked at, for each of them, it's not enough for us just to say the words. But for each of them, there are things that we need to do alongside saying the words or praying the prayer. Just look at that with me. We're asking that God's name be hallowed or that God be honored. Well, we ask for that, but then we need to do it. We need to respect God. We're asking for His kingdom to come, but we don't just ask for that. We need to obey King Jesus and do what the King says. We ask for God's will to be done, but then as we ask, we need to be sure that we're doing God's will. We're reading the Bible, we're listening to what God says, and with God's help, we're doing His will. We ask for our daily bread. But then it doesn't just appear on the table. Maybe you as children, you don't yet have to work for the meals that you eat, but your mom or your dad has to go to work in order for that food to be provided. But also, as we were thinking about earlier when we were praying, when we think of people in the world who, through no fault of their own, don't have enough food because of a cyclone or a disaster of one kind, we can't just say, oh God, provide for the poor people all over the world.

Well, we can do that, and it's good to pray that, but if that's all we do, it's not really enough. We ask God to provide food for those who need it, but then we can also, from all that we receive, share with others, so that others who need it can also be fed. We ask God to forgive us. Now, you might say, well, there's one where we have got nothing we can do, because we can't forgive ourselves. It's completely up to God to do that, and that's true. But even in that petition, we're told that we have to forgive others. So we can't forgive ourselves, but if we want God to forgive us, we need to show that we are grateful, and that we think it's a serious matter, that we are willing to forgive others who have hurt us, or insulted us, or been nasty to us, or lied to us, or whatever it is, then if we want God to forgive us, then Jesus is saying it's important for us to forgive others.

And then the last petition, lead us not into temptation. We're asking God to help us, but then we've got to be careful not to be silly about walking into places or situations where we know we're going to be tempted. Maybe something we're watching on TV, or something on our phone, or a conversation we're having with friends at school, and we know it's going in a direction where maybe we're going to be saying things that don't please God. Well, we've got to say, whoa, one moment, and not walk into situations where we will sin. So we're asking God to help us, but then we also have to do our bit as well. So there are some of the things that Jesus teaches us about prayer, and I hope we can learn, and I hope that when we pray, we'll remember these things that Jesus has taught us this morning. So let's finish now by just praying and trying to remember some of the things that we've learned this morning. So let's bow our heads and let's pray to God. Our Father in heaven, we do pray that you would help us to honor your name, to respect you as we think of how great a God you are, how wonderful your love for us is, that we would respond by honoring and respecting you in the way in which we live our lives. We pray that your kingdom would come. Help us to acknowledge Jesus as King and to obey Jesus as our King and to speak of Jesus as our King to others. We pray that your will would be done in the world, in our country, in our families, and in our own lives. We thank you for the Bible where we have instruction given to us as to what your will is for our lives. We pray that you would give us our daily bread. We thank you that you do. We thank you that you are so generous with us in so many ways. Help us to be grateful, but help us also to share with others who are in need.

Forgive us our many sins, and we thank you that as we ask, so we receive your forgiveness. But help us also even and especially when we find it very difficult, help us to forgive others who are nasty to us or who have done bad things to us. And we pray that you would lead us away from temptation, from situations where we will find it so difficult to resist temptation. Give us the strength, and help us also not to be silly or foolish and walk into situations where we are likely to be disobedient to you. And we pray all of these things in Jesus' name. Amen.