

TEACH US TO *Pray*

An Order of Worship for the Home

March 14, 2021

This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.

There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we continue our Covid adjustments related to gathering, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit www.calvaryslz.org to give online.

Invocation

Reader 1: We invite you, Father,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We ask you, Jesus,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We desire your presence, Holy Spirit,
Reader 2: Teach us to pray.
Reader 1: We need you, God...
Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Reader 1: Teach us to pray.
Together: Amen.

Psalm 44:14-26

¹⁴You have made us a byword among the nations,
a laughingstock among the peoples.

¹⁵ All day long my disgrace is before me,
and shame has covered my face
¹⁶ at the sound of the taunter and reviler,
at the sight of the enemy and the avenger.

¹⁷ All this has come upon us,
though we have not forgotten you,
and we have not been false to your covenant.

¹⁸ Our heart has not turned back,
nor have our steps departed from your way;
¹⁹ yet you have broken us in the place of jackals
and covered us with the shadow of death.

²⁰ If we had forgotten the name of our God
or spread out our hands to a foreign god,

²¹ would not God discover this?
For he knows the secrets of the heart.

²² Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

²³ Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever!

²⁴ Why do you hide your face?
Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?

²⁵ For our soul is bowed down to the dust;
our belly clings to the ground.

²⁶ Rise up; come to our help!
Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!

Confession & Absolution

Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.

Christian Confessing: My prayers are weak and faltering. My thoughts waver
and my words wander. Some days I enter prayer

oblivious to my own sin and the holiness of the God I approach. Other days, I struggle to pray on account of the guilt I feel. I fail in the action of prayer. I fail in the attitude of prayer. My struggles in prayer reflect my struggles in all of life. I need forgiveness. I need faith. I need a Savior.

Christian Responding: Know for certain, that your God loves you. He meets your weak prayers with his strength. He meets your faltering prayers with the certainty of his promises. Jesus is your Savior, and he grants you forgiveness. He sends his Holy Spirit to strengthen your faith. He invites you to pray to your Father in confidence. Your heavenly Father gives good gifts to his children. You are his child, and his gifts are yours.

Together: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: The Third Petition (Luther's Small Catechism)

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?

The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done?

God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die.

This is His good and gracious will.

Romans 8:31-39

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Matthew 26:36-45

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” ³⁷And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said

to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." ³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." ⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Message

Hard to See

God's plans are good. That's what we read a little earlier in Luther's explanation to the Third Petition.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer...

God's plans are good. But, sometimes that's hard to see.

It's hard to see God's good plans when we lose someone we love.

It's hard to see God's good plans when we struggle with addiction – whether it's addiction to a substance, an activity, or even a fantasy.

It's hard to see God's good plans when our own good plans unravel. (When we lose a job. When we lose an opportunity.)

It's hard to see God's good plans when a pregnancy is lost.

It's hard to see God's good plans when health deteriorates.

It's hard to see God's good plans when the people I love are leaving God out of their plans.

It's hard to see God's good plans when life seems to hold little good for us.

The struggle to see God's good plans is addressed in this line in the Lord's Prayer:

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

God's good will is already seen clearly in heaven, and we pray that it would also be seen clearly by us. In heaven, his goodness and his plans are crystal clear. On earth, God's good plans can be difficult to see.

God's goodness drives out evil. His plans are the removal of pain, and hurt, and sorrow, and death. We get a glimpse into this reality throughout the Bible. God's Word provides a heavenly perspective on God's good plans coming to fruition.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Lord, let us see your good plans here, like they are known there. Let us see what seems not so clear from our perspective.

What is true lies hidden. That does not make it less true. God's good plans may not be clear to us yet, but that doesn't make his plans any less good, or any less true.

On June 19, 1865 General Gordon Granger of the Union Army marched his troops through Galveston Island making the announcement that "all slaves are free." It was an announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation signed as an Executive Order by President Abraham Lincoln. The order was signed 2½ years earlier. Slaves in the Confederate States had legal freedom throughout that time, but it was sure hard to see.

The Emancipation Proclamation wasn't a falsehood. It wasn't a myth. It wasn't a rumor. It was true, but the reading by General Granger in the port of Galveston made it known. The truth was being revealed. It was a big step toward clarity.

To be certain, in many ways the truth of racial equality is still hidden. The truth of dignity recognized in each individual is hard to see. That doesn't change what's true. When the truth is hidden it's hard to see, but it is not any less true.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We want to see the truth clearly. We want a vision for the truth of God's good will. Lord, let us see your good and gracious will!

- Let us see clearly, like when you brought your children out of slavery in Egypt.
- Let us see clearly, like when you brought down the walls of Jericho and gave your people victory without their having to fight.
- Let us see clearly, like when Deborah promised victory to Israel's army and predicted the honor would be given to a woman.
- Let us see clearly, like when you routed 130,000 Midianites before Gideon's band of 300.
- Let us see clearly, like when you took a shepherd boy, the smallest among his brothers, and chose him to be the model king for your people.
- Let us see clearly, like when Daniel was unharmed in the lions' den because your angel stood vigil throughout the night
- Let us see clearly, like when you raised Esther to a position of influence in a pagan country in order to preserve your people.
- Let us see clearly, like when your servants Ezra and Nehemiah rebuilt structures, called your people back to you, and allowed your Word to reestablish an identity for your people.
- Let us see clearly, Lord.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Your God answers that prayer. Your God grants a clear picture of his will. In the midst of the pain, and hurt, and challenge, and grief, and loss he provides clarity around this truth: God died for you. Jesus entered this world where it is so hard to see what is true. Jesus – the Way, the Truth, and the Life – came to you so that you could see him clearly. He came so that you could see his love. Jesus died on a cross as a clear sign of his love and care for you. Jesus died so that you could see God's good and gracious will. His good and gracious will was to die for you, so that you could live.

Jesus died and rose, and you will rise too. He made it clear that death does not have to be the end. The resurrection of Jesus reveals what is true. You are loved.

God knows your pain. God has good plans for you, and he is strong enough to carry them out. What we see before us is not all there is to see.

There is life on the far side of death. There is healing on the far side of pain. There is wholeness on the far side of loss.

The truth changes how we live. The truth changes how we see this world. The truth changes how we see ourselves. The Apostle Paul is a great example of what this truth means for us. Paul lists his difficulties in 2 Corinthians 11:

Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (2 Corinthians 11:24-27)

It had to be hard to see God's good plans. It had to be difficult to hold to the truth when it was so hard to see. It had to be hard, like it's hard for you and I when we're faced with the things we mentioned before:

- when we lose someone we love.
- when we struggle with addiction
- when our own good plans unravel.
- When we lose a job
- When we lose an opportunity
- when a pregnancy is lost.
- when health deteriorates.
- when the people you love are leaving God out of their plans.
- when life seems to hold little good for us.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I believe the Apostle Paul prayed that same prayer. Did you ever think of that? I don't have a document which tells me that happened, but I have a confidence that the Lord's Prayer was shared among Christians well before the written gospels were circulated. The Apostle Paul needed that prayer, and he received an answer to that prayer. He had clarity when it came to the truth.

At just about the same time that he wrote that list of hardships to believers in Corinth, Paul also wrote to Christians in Rome. The same man who suffered all those things, had clarity about heavenly truth. Even when it was hard to see, he spelled out what that truth meant for himself and for his fellow believers.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (Romans 8:31-34)

Did you catch that? Jesus is standing before God the Father asking for good things for you. Jesus stands vigil in prayer for you. This is the good and gracious will of God.

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." (Romans 8:35-36)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall losses, addictions, poor health, longing, or disappointment?

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

“Him who loved us.” That’s past tense because it points to a past event. The death of Jesus reveals what is true. The death of God’s Son reveals how deeply you are loved. “We are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”

³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

God’s will is being done. It may seem hidden, but that makes it no less true. Let us cling to the truth even when it’s hard to see. Let us cling to Jesus.

Amen.

Prayers and the Lord’s Prayer

Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord’s Prayer together.

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Offering Prayer

If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.

Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.

Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.

Reader 2: Receive our offerings.

Together: Receive us as your own. Amen.

Blessing *(Philippians 4:4-7)*

Reader 1: The Lord is at hand;

Reader 2: do not be anxious about anything,

Reader 1: but in everything by prayer and supplication

Reader 2: with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God.

Reader 1: And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,

Reader 2: will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.

Together: Amen.

As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at www.calvaryslz.org. We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.

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