



- Video: Pray in This Way
- Read Luke 11:1-4
- Pray

-- Review: Last week, we learned at least two important truths from the Lord's Prayer.

1.) How we pray matters.

- In response to the disciples asking how they should pray, we can learn much from what Jesus doesn't say.
- It says nothing about the times, places, or postures of prayer.
- However, notice that Jesus doesn't say, "Oh, it doesn't really matter how you pray."
- Rather, He provides a His own framework for prayer.

2.) The Lord's Prayer is so important because it is God's perfect framework for prayer.

- This prayer, therefore, is a divinely-inspired template from which tremendous depths of prayer are meant to spring up and grow.
- The Lord's Prayer tells the proper content for prayer.
- It teaches us the proper attitudes for prayer.
- Over the course of the next several sermons, we will be blessed to dive into this framework and then apply it to our prayer lives for the glory of God and the good of our souls.

-- **Big Idea: Pray affectionately, like a child to His Father.**

- v. 2 – "Pray, Father..."

1.) The religious leaders of the day despised the idea of referring to God as “Father.”

- Jesus entered a scene in which Israel’s religious leaders had encouraged a widening disconnection between God and man.
- Although the Pharisees boasted in the quantity of their prayers, their prayers had become ritual, routine, and rote recitations.
- Their prayers were distant, hollow, fearful prayers that surely went largely unanswered.

In fact, Israel’s religious leaders began to think God was so distant and unapproachable that they made it illegal to say the name of God, “Yahweh.” According to their man-made regulations, God’s name could not be said in public prayer, or in public speech, or even when reading Scripture. And if Israel was forbidden to even speak God’s formal name, “Yahweh,” then you can just imagine how terrible an offense it would have been to call upon God as “Father.” The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees simply would not stand for it.

2.) Jesus, conversely, constantly referred to God as “Father.”

- God is called “Father” 65 times in Matthew, Mark, and Luke and 100 times in the Gospel of John alone.
- Whenever Jesus prays, He almost always addresses God as Father.
 - The only exception: Mark 15:34 – “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*”
 - This is the only time in all history when the perfectly intimate relationship between the Father and the Son was broken.
- Among the countless ways that Jesus agitated the religious leaders of Israel, few seem to have irritated them more than the fact that He referred to God as “Father.”
 - John 5:17-18 – “*Jesus said to them, ‘My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.’ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*”

3.) Not everyone can call upon God as Father.

- While God is the Creator of all, He is Father only to those who have come to Him in Christ.
- John 8:42-44 – *“Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.’”*

4.) If we are in Christ, God is our Father as well.

- Galatians 3:26-27 – *“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”*
- God is our Father, for He gave us life in Christ. He adopted us into His family. He calls us His children. And in His perfect love for us, He sustains and blesses us forever as His children.
- Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT) – *“Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure.”*

5.) Because God is our Father, we can pray to Him affectionately.

- As children of God, Scripture encourages to call to God as “Abba, Father.”
 - Galatians 4:6 – *“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”*
 - Romans 8:15-17 – *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*
 - “Abba, Father”
 - Many have claimed that “Abba” is an Aramaic equivalent of “Daddy.”
 - While that is most likely not true, it is certainly true that to call upon God as “Abba” is to call upon Him in a very affectionate and intimate way.
 - Easton's Illustrated Dictionary – “[Abba] is a term expressing warm affection and filial confidence.”
- My girls upon my return from Haiti – “Daddy!”

- Even if each of them came to me offering me millions of dollars, I'd still rather hear that joyful, affectionate cry of "Daddy!"
- The attitude they displayed is a glorious element of what it means to call upon God as Father.
- Mark 10:14-16 – *"[Jesus] said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."*
 - Can't you just hear the children shouting out, "Jesus!" and rushing to give Him hugs?
 - God is delighted when His children come to Him with joy and affectionately call out, "Father!"

-- Response

A.) Praying to God as Father drives away all worry.

- Our Father in Heaven promises to provide for our every need.
- Matthew 6:31-32 – *"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."*
- Matthew 7:9-11 – *"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!"*

B.) Praying to God as Father drives away all fear.

- The prayers of every other religion are motivated by or mixed with fear.
 - The so called "gods" of all other religions are, in reality, destructive idols.
 - Psalms 96:4-5 – *"For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens."*
 - Anyone who prays to anything apart from the God revealed in the Bible is, in reality, praying to a demon in disguise.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:20 – *"The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons."*

- Is it any wonder, then, that non-Christian religious cultures are haunted by the gods they serve?
 - Demons are at best indifferent and at worst horrifying.
 - They have no capacity to express true fatherly love.
- Prayers to our Father in Heaven are prayers without fear.
 - Romans 8:15 – *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.*
 - Luke 12:32 – *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”*
 - Our Father in Heaven is a God of kindness, love, grace, compassion, tenderness, and mercy.
 - If you do not know Jesus as Lord, then you ought to fear God greatly. However, if you are in Christ, then God is your Father, and for His children there is no fear.
- Calling upon God as our loving Father in Heaven drives away all fear, because His love for His children is perfect and *“perfect love drives out fear”* (1 John 4:18).

C.) Praying to God as Father drives away all loneliness.

- 1 John 1:3 – *“Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”*
- Regardless of what happens in this life, and no matter how incomplete or broken our relationships on earth have been, in Christ God has made us members of His family forever.
- John 8:34-36 – *“Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’”*

D.) Praying to God as Father drives away all despair.

- Regardless of what happens in this life, we have a Father who will redeem it all.
 - Jeremiah 31:9 – *“They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am [their] father.”*
 - Romans 8:28 – *“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

- The God of all Creation is our Father forever, and we are not home yet.
- Our home is in heaven with our Father who will love us with an unfathomable love forever.

-- Conclusion

In this perfect framework for prayer, Jesus tells us to begin by calling upon God as our Father in Heaven. As we do, worry doesn't fit, fear melts away, and hope is established forever, because we do not pray to a god who is aloof, indifferent, or unpredictable. Rather, Jesus tells us to pray to our Heavenly Father who knows us intimately, who loves us perfectly, and who is delighted to hear from His children. Therefore, when we pray, let us run to His arms with joy and call upon Him great adoration and affection. Let us pray like a children coming to a Father who loves His children without limit.