

Our Father Which Art In Heaven...

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help this evening, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 6, and if we read again from verse 9, where Jesus says, After this manner, therefore, pray ye, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

You know, these words of Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, as we said, they're very familiar to us, because most of us, and if not all of us, we have memorised these words from a very young age, especially the words that we have them in the authorised version.

And we would have been taught these words, and taught to recite them at home, and in school, and also in Sunday school. But as you know, the Lord's Prayer, it's in danger of being neglected.

[1 : 19] And it's in danger of being neglected for two reasons. The first reason is fashion. Because some would say that the Lord's Prayer is old-fashioned, and that the Lord's Prayer belongs to a time in history when we needed to believe in God.

But now that we've moved on, and we've progressed in science, and in our intelligence, the Lord's Prayer doesn't feature as part of our ever-growing, multi-faith, and multicultural, inclusive, and tolerant society.

Therefore, many seek to regard the Lord's Prayer as an indoctrination of children, and they want to remove it from our schools, and even ridicule it as unsafe.

You know, thankfully, our teachers, especially here in our local school in Barvis, and also other schools throughout the island, they still begin each school day with the Lord's Prayer, either in Gaelic or in English.

And of course, those who wish to opt out, they can do so if they want to. But you know, the Lord's Prayer, it's not only in danger of being neglected because of fashion, it's also in danger of being neglected because of formality.

[2 : 32] Because for those who are very familiar with the Lord's Prayer, and maybe recite the Lord's Prayer every day at family worship, or at school, our familiarity with the Lord's Prayer can be in danger of becoming a formality, where we miss out on the fullness of the Lord's Prayer.

I'll say that again. Our familiarity of the Lord's Prayer can be in danger of becoming a formality, where we miss out on the fullness of the Lord's Prayer.

And in many ways, this is the reason why I think it would be helpful for us to study the Lord's Prayer together. Because there's always the danger of the Lord's Prayer, or even prayer itself, there's always the danger of it becoming a formality.

And you know, I don't think there's anyone who honestly feels that they've mastered how to pray, not even if they've been a Christian for over 50 years. Because you know, when it comes to prayer, and when it comes to speaking about our prayer life, we're probably better at talking about prayer than we are at actually engaging in prayer.

Because we would say that prayer is one area in our lives that we always feel is lacking, and that it's something that we don't do enough of, and it's something that we don't persevere with.

[3 : 53] And yet the Lord has given to us the Lord's Prayer in order to teach us how to pray. In fact, in Luke's account, Jesus' teaching on the Lord's Prayer was initiated by a request from the disciples in the first century.

Lord, teach us to pray. And you know, I don't think the disciples of Jesus in the 21st century should ever stop making that same request.

Lord, teach us to pray. My friend, it's good for us to be taught how to pray. And who better to teach us than the Lord himself?

And so as we begin our study of the Lord's Prayer, we're considering this evening the opening words, Our Father, which art in heaven. And I'd like us to think about these opening words with three headings.

Accessing our Father, Adoption with our Father, and Addressing our Father. Accessing our Father, Adoption with our Father, and Addressing our Father.

[5 : 04] So first of all, Accessing our Father. Accessing our Father. You know, when we speak about accessing the Father, we're speaking about God the Father, who's the first person in the Trinity.

Because as you know, there are three persons in the Godhead. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And these three persons are one. And they're the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

But you know, God the Father, he's revealed to us in Scripture, in what you could say is, he's revealed to us in the lowest sense, as the Father of creation. Therefore, when we pray, we address him as Father, because he's our creator.

He is, as James reminds us, he is the Father of lights, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. And even when the prophet Isaiah prayed, he said, Thou art our Father, and we are the clay.

Thou art potter, and we are the work of thy hand. And the Apostle Paul, he even confirmed, that it's the Father, it's in the Father, that we live and move, and have our being.

[6 : 16] Therefore, when we pray, we address him as Father, because in the lowest sense, he's our creator. But in the highest sense, we address him as Father, because he is the God and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus, as you know, he's the Son of God. He's the only begotten Son, of the Father. He's equal to the Father, and he's eternally begotten, of the Father.

And you know, we considered this, and we touched on it last week, when we looked at the prologue, to John's Gospel, the first 18 verses. And we saw that God the Father, and God the Son, they have this uniquely intimate, and eternal relationship.

As John began his Gospel, he said, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John said that before the foundation of the world, God the Son was with God the Father.

God the Son was literally face to face with God the Father, enjoying this uniquely intimate, and eternal relationship. And they were enjoying that uniquely intimate, and eternal relationship, as one God.

[7 : 33] He was the Word, who was with God, and who was God. And you know, this uniquely intimate, and eternal relationship, it's something that's repeatedly highlighted, in the Gospels.

And it's highlighted by Jesus. Because Jesus says, time and time again, the Father is in me, and I am in the Father. As the Father knows me, I know the Father.

I and the Father are one. But you know, what's remarkable, is that the Father sent the Son. God the Father, as we're told in John 3.16, God the Father, so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, will not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Father sent the Son, in order to reveal the Father. Jesus was sent, to make the Father known. John tells us that, in his Gospel.

No one has seen God at any time, but the Son, has made him known. And you remember Philip, Philip's question, Philip's desire, he said, he said, Lord, show us the Father.

[8 : 52] But Jesus said, whoever has seen me, has seen the Father, because I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Therefore, accessing God the Father, can only be made through God the Son.

Accessing God the Father, can only be made through God the Son. And you know, that's what Jesus asserted, and affirmed, to his disciples. He said, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by me. You know, my friend, our only access to God the Father, is through the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is something, which Paul also repeatedly taught, and emphasised, to the church. That accessing our Father, can only be made, through God the Son.

Because, Paul reminds us, that the creation, was brought into being, by God the Father, through God the Son. We are elect, according to the foreknowledge, of God the Father, through the blood, of God the Son.

[9 : 56] We experience, reconciliation, with God the Father, through God the Son. We have peace, with God the Father, through God the Son. We are made righteous, before God the Father, through God the Son.

We give thanks, to God the Father, through God the Son. We're blessed, by God the Father, with every spiritual blessing, in heavenly places, through God the Son.

Because, through him, through God the Son, we have access, to the Father. My friend, it's through the Lord Jesus Christ, that we gain access, to our Father.

Because, as the Bible, clearly, reveals to us, Jesus is our, great high priest. He's, our intercessor. He's, our mediator.

The mediator, between God the Father, and the sons, of Adam. He's our advocate, with the Father. And it's in his name, that we approach, the throne of grace.

[11 : 00] The name, of Jesus Christ, the righteous. And you know, it was Jesus, who actually, repeatedly said to his disciples, whatever you ask the Father, in my name, he may give it to you.

Now, notice that, Jesus never said, that he will give it to you. He will give you, whatever you ask. He said, he may give you, whatever you ask, but he will give you, what you need.

And you know, my friend, you may be asking, the Father, this evening. You may be asking, for help, or healing, or harmony. You may be asking, the Father, for grace, gladness, or guidance.

You may be asking, the Father, for strength, to deal with sin, sickness, suffering, or sorrow. But you know, your assurance, your assurance, that your voice, will be heard in heaven, is that you have access, to God the Father, through God the Son.

Because it's, because of the Son, it's because of God the Son, that we have adoption, with our Father. Which is what we see, secondly. It's because of God the Son, that we have adoption, with our Father.

[12 : 14] Adoption with our Father. So we've seen, accessing our Father. Then secondly, adoption, with our Father. Adoption with our Father. And you know, one of the greatest privileges, of salvation, is being able, to call God, our Father.

Because without, accessing the Father, through God the Son, the Lord's Prayer, would be very different. It would probably, begin with the words, our mighty God, or our creator God, or our righteous judge.

And yet Jesus, teaches us here, that because of him, we are able, to call God, our Father. And you know, this is what's remarkable, because as we said, from before the foundation, of the world, Jesus enjoyed, this uniquely intimate, and eternal, relationship, with his Father.

Jesus enjoyed, uninterrupted communion, with his Father. Where there was always, this joyful, face to face, and heart to heart, conversation, between God the Father, and God the Son.

And even when Jesus, became flesh, and dwelt among us, when Jesus became, one of us, when God took to himself, our human nature, they still carried on, the Father and the Son, still carried on, the conversation.

[13 : 36] There was still, perfect communion, and fellowship, between God the Father, and God the Son. The only difference, was that, Jesus, was in communion, with the Father, not only, as the Son, but also, as our, elder brother.

Because as you know, the only way, which we could be brought, to share, in this conversation, and this communion, and fellowship, of the Father, and the Son, the only way, we could enter into, that wonderful relationship, is by the Son of God, dying as our, sin bearer, and substitute, on the cross. And the cross, is the only time, my friend, the cross, is the only time, in the life of Jesus, where, that, unique, and intimate, relationship, with the Father, where that conversation, it's the only time, it's on the cross, that, it's the only time, in the life of Jesus, where that conversation, is silenced, and the communion, and fellowship, ceases, with the Father.

As you know, when Jesus, became sin for us, when he became, our sin bearer, and substitute, he was left crying, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And as you know, my friend, the answer to Jesus' question, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The answer, is because of the love, the love of God the Father, and God the Son, for the lost, sons and daughters, of Adam.

[15:13] You know, our Bible says to us, behold, what manner of love, the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, the children of God.

And the love which the Father, bestowed on us, is the love which we behold, at the cross. Because the love of the Father, was demonstrated to us, through the death, of his only begotten Son. It's not what Paul said, God demonstrated, his love towards us, in that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. But you know, our catechism, it's a wonderful document, which teaches us, also teaches us, about the Lord's Prayer.

But our catechism, also teaches us, that there are three benefits, which we receive, through the death, of Jesus Christ. Christ. And these benefits, are justification, adoption, and sanctification. And in our justification, as you know, we're declared righteous, before God the Father. Because on the cross, Jesus became sin for us, so that we could receive, his righteousness.

[16:27] We're told in the catechism, justification, is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons, all our sins, and accepts us, as righteous, in his sight, only for the righteousness, of Christ, imputed to us, and received, by faith, alone.

So that's our justification. But in our adoption, we're declared, to be loved, and cared for, by God the Father, as his own children. In our adoption, we're given all the rights, and privileges, of children, in a family.

A family which we didn't, belong to, by nature. Because by nature, we were born, the children of Adam. By nature, we were the children, of a fallen humanity.

By nature, we were children, of wrath, as Paul puts it, in Ephesians 2. But our adoption, our adoption, was an act, of God's free grace, whereby, we were received, into the number.

And now we have, all the rights, to all these privileges, as the sons, and daughters, of God. And you know, it's as we were brought, into the family of God, that our sanctification, then begins, to work in our lives, where we're transformed, day by day, to become more, and more, like the only begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:50] Our sanctification, as the Catechism teaches, it's a work, of God's free grace, whereby we're renewed, in the whole man, after the image, of God, and we are enabled, more and more, to die unto sin, and live, unto righteousness.

But you know, what's key to receiving, these benefits, of justification, adoption, and sanctification, the way to receive, these benefits, of justification, adoption, and sanctification, is that, it's that we receive, Christ as our saviour.

What's key, to receiving, these benefits, what's key, to becoming, sons and daughters, of our heavenly father, is that we receive, Christ as our saviour. Because, it's when we receive, Christ as our saviour, that we're born again, of the spirit of God.

It's when we receive, Christ as our saviour, Paul tells us, in Romans 8, that we're not, we not only experience, no condemnation, and no separation, we also receive, that spirit, of adoption, in which we are enabled, to cry, Abba, Father.

Father. And of course, Abba is, the Hebrew word, for father. It's also used in, many languages, from the Middle East.

[19:08] But the word Abba, it's a term of, endearment. And it expresses, the intimate relationship, that exists, between a father, and his children. And like it is, for us, with one of the first, words of a baby, being, one of the first, words of a baby, when, after they're born, is, Daddy.

And like it is, for a Jewish baby, their first word, would be, Abba. And as you know, even when a child, grows up, they never stop, calling their father, Dad, or Daddy.

That stays with them, throughout their life. And the same, was true of the Jews, they would always, address their, earthly father, with the intimate term, of Abba. But you know, for Jesus, the disciples, would have heard Jesus, always addressing, his heavenly father, as Abba.

And, what Jesus, is teaching us here, is that, by receiving him, we enter into this, wonderful relationship, in which we are able to, speak to our heavenly father, with that same term, Abba.

And that's what Paul, emphasizes as well, in Romans 8. that when we receive, Christ as our saviour, when we are in Christ, when we are in union, with Christ, when our identity, is in Christ, as those who are, in Christ, we receive, that spirit of adoption, which enables us, to cry, Abba, Father.

[20 : 38] We have the privilege, of praying, to our heavenly father, and entering, into that conversation, and communion, and fellowship, which Jesus, enjoyed, with his father.

My friend, it's our relationship, with Jesus Christ, that exhorts, encourages us, and enables us, to pray, our father, which art, in heaven.

You know, as Jesus teaches, in this section, we receive, that spirit of adoption, that when we receive, that spirit of adoption, we don't need to pray, like the hypocrites, who love to make, long public prayers.

Jesus says, we can pray to our father, and we can go, into our closet, and we can, utter the most private, and personal, prayers. And Jesus also says, we don't need, vain repetitions.

We don't need, vain repetitions, but we just need, to come to our father, and speak to him, like a child, to their father. And you know, is that not what Jesus, says to us in the gospel, about how we are to come, to our father.

[21 : 48] Jesus said, unless you become, like little children, you shall never enter, the kingdom of heaven. You know, someone once said, when it comes to prayer, when it comes to prayer, we are not world, weary soldiers, calling on our, heavenly sergeant major.

We're not overworked employees, calling on our, divine line manager. No, we're children. We're children, adopted in the beloved son, calling on our, Abba, father.

But you know, for some people, they find the concept, of God, as a father. They find it difficult. And that's because, they have a tainted, or tarnished view, of God the father.

Because of an absence, or because of abuse, of their earthly father. As you know, the reality for, many families in our nation, is that, there are, single parent families, where the mother, brings up the children, either because, of a broken relationship, or because, the father has passed away.

And for many children, there's also the case, that they've been abused, by their father. They've been abused, either mentally, physically, or in some, awful cases, sexually. And sadly, the outcome, is that they have, a tainted, or tarnished view, of God the father.

[23 : 12] Because of the absence, or the abuse, of their earthly father. And it's because of this, that some, liberal theologians, they seek to, describe God, as our mother.

But of course, that description, is not only blasphemy, it's also, completely, unbiblical. You know, the concept of God, as our father, it's not only taken, from the gospels, and the words of Jesus. It's also taken, from the New Testament letters. But it's also drawn, from the Old Testament, as well. Because, when the Lord, brought the people, of Israel, out of Egypt, he said, Israel, is my firstborn son.

And you know, God's covenant promise, to his people, that's repeated, throughout the Old Testament, is, I will be to you, a father. You shall be to me, a son.

Therefore, God has always revealed himself, to his people, as a father. And, even where earthly fathers, may fail, God remains, a faithful father.

[24 : 19] You know, if our earthly father, is absent, our heavenly father, is described, in Psalm 68, as a father, to the fatherless. If our earthly father, is abusive, our heavenly father, is described, in Psalm 103, as gracious, and compassionate.

If our earthly father, is careless, we're told, in Hebrews 12, that our heavenly father, is careful, because he deals, and disciplines us, out of love. If our earthly father, is comfortless, our heavenly father, is comforting, because, Paul reminds us, in 2 Corinthians 1, that the God, and father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is the father, of mercies, and the God, of all comfort.

My friend, earthly fathers, may faint, and fail, but the wonder is, and this is something, we need to cling to, the wonder is, our heavenly father, is a faithful, father.

Our heavenly father, is a faithful, father. But you know, what I've always found, interesting, is that, if God is our father, and Jesus, is our brother, then the church, is our mother.

And this is something, that Calvin, proposed in his institutes, where he said that, you can't have God, as your father, unless you have the church, as your mother. Calvin said, there is no other way, to enter into eternal life, unless this mother, the church, unless this mother, conceive us in her womb, give birth to us, nourish us, at her breast, and she keep us, under her care, and guidance, until we enter, heaven.

[26 : 05] And you know, it's a wonderful thought, that just like Jesus, had a heavenly father, and an earthly mother, so too, are those, who are brothers, and sisters in Christ, we receive a heavenly father, and we have an earthly mother, in the church, where God is our father, and the church is our

mother, and it's through the church, that we're nourished, and encouraged, and taught, and challenged, and cared for.

You know, it's a wonderful family imagery, isn't it? The family imagery of, God is our father, the church is our mother, Jesus as our elder brother, and every Christian, throughout the world, as our brother, and sister, in Christ.

My friend, when Jesus taught us, to pray the Lord's Prayer, he was teaching us, as a family. He was teaching us, as a family. He was showing us, that the Lord's Prayer, is a family prayer.

The Lord's Prayer, is a family prayer. And it's a prayer, we should be encouraged, to use, when the family, when the family, gathers together, whether in private, or in public.

The Lord's Prayer, is a family prayer, in which, brothers and sisters, in Christ, who have experienced, adoption, with the Father, are able to, collectively, and even corporately, come together, and pray, our Father, which art, in heaven.

[27 : 40] And so, as we begin, this study on the Lord's Prayer, we're considering, accessing our Father, and adoption, with our Father. But then lastly, and briefly, I want us to see, addressing, our Father.

Addressing our Father. We said earlier, that we're able to, address God, as our Father, because, of our access, through Christ, and our adoption, with the Father, in Christ.

But I want to highlight, and home in on the fact, that Jesus teaches us, in the Lord's Prayer, to be addressing God, as our Father. Which means, that we're not to pray, to the Virgin Mary, or to the saints, or to angels, we're to pray, to our Father.

But more so, we're not to pray, to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit, we're to pray, to our Father. And I want to highlight, and home in on this point, because, you know, in recent years, I've heard many people, even ministers, I've heard them, praying to all three persons, of the Trinity.

I've heard them praying, to the Father, and to Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit. But you know, I don't find that teaching, in the Lord's Prayer. And, in my understanding, I don't find it, anywhere in the Bible.

[29 : 01] And I would think, that it's a misunderstanding, of what prayer is. But it's also, a misunderstanding, of our relationship, with God. Because even as we've, discovered this evening, that as children, as children, we are able to address, the God of Heaven, as our Father.

And we're able to address, Him as our Father, because of our access, through Christ, and our adoption, with the Father, in Christ. And we're able to come, because of the power, of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, we're to pray, to the Father, through the Son, by the enabling, of the Holy Spirit. We're to pray, to the Father, through the Son, by the enabling, of the Holy Spirit.

You know, is that not what Jesus said? We mentioned it earlier. Whatever you ask the Father, in my name, He may give it to you. We're to pray, to God the Father, in the name, of Jesus Christ.

You know, we don't pray, in the name of the Father. We don't pray, in the name of the Holy Spirit. Because the Father, didn't die for us, and our adoption, isn't through the sacrifice, of the Holy Spirit.

[30 : 12] Therefore, we must come, in prayer, addressing God, as our Father. And we're to come, in Christ's name, and for Christ's sake. And we come, by the enabling, of the Holy Spirit.

We're to pray, to the Father, through the Son, by the enabling, of the Holy Spirit. But you know, and with this, I'll close. Whenever, we're addressing God, as our Father, you know, although we are to come, with that intimate term, Abba, and always remember, that we have, a close relationship.

We have entered, into this relationship, that Jesus, has with his Father. You know, whenever we're addressing, God as our Father, we must never forget, where he is, and where we are.

He is our, our Father, which art, in heaven. Therefore, when we're addressing, God as our Father, we must always remember, that he is in heaven, and we are on earth.

And as the Bible, reminds us, heaven is his throne, and the earth, is his footstone. Therefore, we're not to come, to him, flippantly.

[31 : 24] Yes, we're to come, as children to our Father, but we're to come, with reverence. We're to come, with godly fear. We're to come, as knowing, that heaven is his throne, and the earth, is his footstone.

And you know, Leon Morris, he says in his commentary, we should not miss, the balance, in this opening, to the Lord's Prayer. We are to address, God intimately, as Father.

But we recognize, his infinite greatness, because he is in heaven. So we're to come, my friend, on bended knee, before our great God, and King.

And yet, we're to come, with boldness, to our Father. We're to come, on bended knee, but we're to come, with boldness. Therefore, my friend, as we close, we'll close, with the words, of the letter, to the Hebrews, where the writer, to the Hebrews, says, let us come, boldly, to the throne, of grace, that we may obtain, mercy, and find grace, to help, in our time, of need.

Our Father, which art, in heaven. Well, may the Lord bless, these thoughts to us. Let us pray together. Our loving, heavenly Father, we give thanks to thee, for the relationship, we now enjoy, through Jesus Christ.

[32 : 52] And we thank thee, O Lord, that thy Son, he has made, that new, and living way, in which we are able, to approach thy throne, that we are able, to come, with boldness. And yet, Lord, we are able, to come, on bended knee, seeking thy face, knowing, Lord, that we come, not in our own righteousness, but in the righteousness, of thy Son, that we come, not in our own name, but in the name, that is above, every other name.

And we thank thee, that we come, not for our own sake, and not in our own sake, but through the sake of Christ, through his death, and through his resurrection, that he is, our mediator, between God and men.

He is our advocate, with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, that he has ascended, up on high, he is seated, at thy right hand. And even tonight, he makes intercession, for us.

We thank thee, Lord, for thy Son. And Lord, we pray, all that more and more, even as we learn, and are taught, about the Lord's Prayer, that it would cause us, to have a greater love, of our God, to seek to walk, with thee more closely, and to pray, to thee more earnestly.

And Lord, to live lives, that seek, to bring glory, to thy name. All go before us, and we pray, bless us, we ask, for we ask it, in Jesus name, and for his sake.

[34 : 14] Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service, to our conclusion, by singing the words, of Psalm 103. Psalm 103, we're singing, in the Scottish Psalter, and we're singing, from verse 8, down to, the verse marked 13.

Psalm 103, at verse 8. And we'll sing on down, to verses 12 and 13.

As far as east is distant, from the west, so far hath he, from us removed, in his love, all our iniquity. Such pity, as a father hath, unto his children dear, like pity shows, the Lord to such, as worship him, in fear.

So we'll sing Psalm 103, from verse 8, down to the verse marked 13, to God's praise. The Lord our God is merciful, and he is gracious, of Isaiah 90.

He is esté ■■ gaya■■, of house he gives.

[35 : 39] He isoko sting, Him sle■ at hand, in his blood. He will watch me continue, He will watch me continue, We will be agreed with the kings and authors too, in the will of the plains intake■■.

The Friar show is broad andätted, in the countries that have gone by the courts are really World War II The Father had unto his children dear, My pity shows the Lord to such As worship him in fear.