

a wife when he has already been married for many years! Such a prayer would surely not go over very well, especially with his wife, would it? Neither does it sound right when one prays for the coming of the kingdom when we know by Scripture that the kingdom has already come. Of course we can pray for *the spreading* of the kingdom or *the growth* of the kingdom, but not for the *coming* of the kingdom, because it is already here.

As far as the rest of the prayer is concerned, it is brief and to the point. It calls for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven; that acknowledgement be made of one's physical needs, and especially of our spiritual needs; that the speaker be willing to forgive those who have sinned against him, as well as to ask the Father for forgiveness, realizing that one cannot be forgiven unless he is willing to forgive.

While this was a wonderful prayer for the disciples of Jesus' day, and there are many good points that we can incorporate into our prayers as Christians today, the prayer as a whole was not intended for us to repeat, word for word.

Because of the very nature of its content, we cannot scripturally repeat all of it as our own today. In fact, Jesus condemned *repetition* in prayers, wanting us to pray our own words sincerely from the heart, rather than to follow a form

or ritual prayer. Those who personally say this prayer as their own, and groups that pray it in unison, fail to understand what Jesus' lesson was all about.

We are taught to pray, and under the law of Christ we have prayers of example. We should therefore pray accordingly (Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 4:6; James 5:16).

Only God's children are blessed with the privilege of prayer, and even they should always pray according to the will of the Father, if their prayers are to be heard and answered (1 John 5:14,15). We should not ask the Father for things that He cannot give or ask Him to do something that He has not promised to do. Our prayers should always be to honor God, to acknowledge our need for His physical and spiritual blessings, and **they should be made in the name of Christ.**

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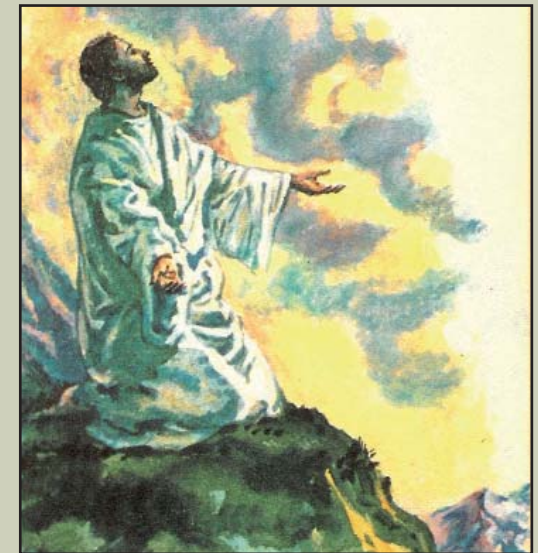
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# The Lord's Prayer

J.C. Choate



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Most of those today who believe in Christ speak of "The Lord's Prayer", they say it in their worship, and they sing it. Those who do not use it in these ways are questioned and criticized.

The prayer that is referred to as "The Lord's Prayer" is found in Matthew 6. There Jesus says to His disciples, *"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, for ever. Amen"* (Matthew 6:9-13).

In our discussion of this prayer, it is not our intention to be different simply for the sake of being different. It is not our desire to be negative and to disturb people. Yet, we must point out that this is not "the Lord's prayer". It was never intended to be His prayer and the Scriptures do not designate it as "the Lord's prayer". So, what is the purpose of these verses, and how should they be used by Christians today?

In this setting Christ was teaching the disciples about worship. First, he was condemning the motivation of the hypocrites in their giving. Many of them were giving of their alms only to be seen of men. Some would even sound a trumpet before they presented their gift, to get the attention of everyone. Jesus taught that they should rather give in secret and the Father, knowing of their gifts, would reward them openly.

Jesus also found fault with those who prayed in public long and repetitious prayers to be seen and heard of men. Rather, He said that they should go into the closet and shut the door and there pray to the Father. He said the Father already knew what they needed, anyway.

After saying all of these things, the Lord begins to teach His disciples how to pray. This was not *His prayer*, as such, but it was *a prayer of example*. If you really want a prayer that could be called "the Lord's prayer", go to John 17 where Jesus, with supplication and tears, calls on the Father on behalf of His disciples, **that they all might be united as one, in order that the world might believe in Him.**

Not only was Matthew 6 not "the Lord's Prayer", but He never intended it to be our prayer, either. As you go through the words of the prayer you will see that it was fitting for that

day, but not for our day, in its entirety. Let us consider some reasons why:

1. In John 14:13, looking toward the time when He would return to the Father, and the kingdom would have been begun, Jesus instructed the disciples to pray to the Father in *His name*, and to honor and glorify Him in this way. But, in the prayer of Matthew 6 you will notice that nothing is said about Christ, and neither is the prayer in the name of Christ.

2. Obviously, when the example prayer of Matthew 6 was worded, the Lord's spiritual kingdom had not yet been established in the world. It had been prophesied and promised, but it was yet to come. Therefore, the Lord taught the disciples that they should *pray for the coming of the kingdom*. Now this would not suit our present day setting because shortly after the Lord taught the disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom, the kingdom came, and it came with power, being established in Jerusalem in A.D. 33.

Most believers in Christ today, thinking that this prayer is "The Lord's Prayer", repeat it word for word, even praying for the coming of the kingdom [the church] after it has already come, having been in existence now for nearly 2000 years! That would be like a man praying for