

## Title: “Our Father”

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1 Thess. 3:11-13 & Luke 21:25-27,31-36

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**Service Readings:** Jer. 33:14-16; 1 Thess. 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

*Our message this morning comes from both the epistle and the gospel passage and what I find beautiful about these two passages is that interwoven within them is the Lord's Prayer. And when we combine them, we hear a beautiful three-part harmony of the Gospel message. It is a song that enlivens the heart and encourages a response from each one of us.*

### Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Our message this morning comes from both the epistle and the gospel passage and what I find beautiful about these two passages is that interwoven within them is the Lord's Prayer. And when we combine them, we hear a beautiful three-part harmony of the Gospel message. It is a song that enlivens the heart and encourages a response from each one of us. The piece opens with the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer and continues with a portion of today's passage. What follows is a reflection and then the next verse. Let's start with the Lord's Prayer.

**“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”**

<sup>25</sup> “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, <sup>26</sup> people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken (Luke 21).

From nothing springs forth creation. Not just the moon and the stars and the earth, but even the laws that guide them. He causes the sun to rise and set, and he controls the oceans and the wind. Not even good and evil can escape his grasp, but how often do we dismiss his power? The power of God is available to us every day, and yet we continue to cling tightly to our troubles and stresses. Why? Is it because we don't believe in his power or is it that we are afraid of his solution? Will he solve them *our way*? But a day will come when no one will be able to dismiss or deny his power. A day will come when our troubles fade away and be replaced with witness of Christ's return. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

**“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”**

<sup>27</sup> And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

He came once, not with glory but with humility. Wrapped in swaddling clothes he humbly entered the world as an infant, his life dependent on the ones that he had been sent to save. This is the story of Christmas but it's a story that makes little sense to human reason. Why a vulnerable child?

Why in the dark of night? With loud voice God created, yet with barely a whisper he entered his creation. It is illogical. But it is the plan from an all-powerful, all-knowing God. He has not revealed all, but what he has revealed gives us confidence to know that in our own lives the plans that God has for us and the answers to the prayers that we send him are perfect. We may not understand his reasoning and we may want to reject his answers, but we pray that the Holy Spirit strengthen our faith so that we place our trust, not in our own understanding, but in the almighty and powerful God of the created universe.

**“Give us this day our daily bread. As we forgive those who trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”**

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, <sup>12</sup> and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, <sup>13</sup> so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

The baby God child, born of a virgin grew into a man. And because he is God, he took the punishment of our sins to the cross where he suffered and died. We were his enemies, every one of us. We were born waging war against him, unable and unwilling to turn towards him. But even while we fought against him, he still loved us and earned salvation on our behalf. What are we to do with his selfless action? How can we reconcile his actions towards us and our actions towards each other? But those are the wrong questions. The real question, the heart question is this: How can we *not* forgive our own enemies when while we were still enemies of God, he forgave and even died for us? At times it may seem difficult, even impossible. Especially when we hurt so deeply. But when it seems impossible, we turn to Jesus in prayer. We ask him to change our heart for us because we can't, and sometimes don't even want it changed. And yet we know that we must. We must forgive even our most hated enemies. It is in these times when we call out to Jesus for strength and courage to forgive.

**“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”**

<sup>34</sup> “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

In our baptism we have been washed clean. We have been buried with Christ and have shared in his resurrection. We have been adopted into the family of God and can trust in his promises of everlasting life. But we must protect our faith lest it be stolen from us by the evil one. We must put on the full armor of God, including the sword of the Spirit. For we find in these the protection against the devil. But it is not of our own strength that we resist, that power comes from the gospel. You see, the gospel is not just a description of God's power, it *is* God's power. His word doesn't just inform, it *performs*. It creates in us a new life, it forgives us all our sins, and it destroys for us the power of death and the devil. Lord, protect us from desiring anyone but you.

**“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.**

<sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Cling to this awesome and powerful God. Know with certainty that the God of creation is a personal God. He will never abandon or forsake you. He formed you in your mother’s womb, sacrificed his only son, and made you an heir to the riches of his mercy and grace. He loves you more than you can know. Trust him in all your days. Turn to him in times of struggle and in times of peace. And know, really know, that the creator is the sustainer, and the sustainer is the protector. And when the world seems to be falling apart, know that God is still holding it together and that it is a sign that the Son of Man is on coming near. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

**“Amen.”**

Please pray with me.

My God. Through your mighty word you have created all things. Create in us a trusting heart to know that you remain in control over your creation and give us the courage to share this comforting message with those around us. In your name we pray.

Amen.