

Conley Memorial Presbyterian Church, 13th Sunday After Pentecost, August 14, 2016

Do You Understand What You Pray For?

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August 14, 2016

Matthew 6:5-15

Two weeks ago our scripture reading was Luke 11:1-13 and today it is Matthew 6:5-15. Both texts discuss Jesus telling the disciples and us how to pray and both readings include versions of the Lord's Prayer. We say the Lord's Prayer week after week but do we really pray that prayer or just recite it without really thinking about it? What does God think when he hears us say the Lord's Prayer? Let us imagine God listening to our prayer and responding to what we say:

Our Father who art in heaven

Yes?

Don't interrupt me. I'm praying.

But you called Me!

No, I didn't call you. I'm praying.

Our Father who art in heaven.

There --- you did it again!

Did what?

Called Me.

You said, "Our Father who art in heaven"

Well, here I am. What's on your mind?

But I didn't mean anything by it.

I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day.

I always say the Lord's Prayer.

It makes me feel good, kind of like fulfilling my duty.

Well, all right. Go on.

Okay, hallowed be thy name.

Hold it right there.

What do you mean by that?

By what?

By "Hallowed be thy name"?

It means, it means ... good grief, I don't know what it means.
How in the world should I know? It's just a part of the prayer.

By the way, what does it mean?

It means honored, holy, wonderful.

Hey, that makes sense.

I never thought about what 'hallowed' meant before, thanks.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Do you really mean that?

Sure, why not?

What are you doing about it?

Doing? I just think it would be kind of neat if you got control of everything
down here like you have up there. We're kinda in a mess down here you
know.

Yes, I know. But, have I got control of you?

Well, I go to church.

That isn't what I asked you.

What about your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know.

And then there's the way you spend your money --- all on yourself.

And what about the kind of books you read?

Now hold on just a minute! Stop picking on me!

I'm just as good as some of the rest of those people at church!

Excuse Me. I thought you were praying for my will to be done.

If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it.

Like you --- for example.

Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang-ups.

Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

So could I!

I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to
Cut out some of those things. I would like to, you know, be really free.

Good. Now were getting somewhere.

We'll work together --- you and Me. I'm proud of you.

Look Lord, if you don't mind, I need to finish up here.

This is taking a lot longer that it usually does.

Give us this day our daily bread.

You need to cut out the bread. You're overweight as it is.

**Hey, what a minute! What is this? Here I was doing my religious duty,
and all of a sudden you break in and remind me of all my hang-ups.**

Praying is a dangerous thing. You might get what you ask for.

Remember, you called Me --- and here I am. It's too late to stop now.

Keep praying. (pause). Well, go on.

I'm scared to.

Scared? Of what?

I know what you'll say.

Try me.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

What about Mike?

See, I knew it! I knew you would bring him up!

Why, Lord, he's told lies about me, spread stories.

He never paid back the money he owes me.

I've sworn to get even with him!

But --- your prayer --- What about your prayer?

I didn't --- mean it.

Well, at least you're honest.

**But, it's quite a load carrying around all that
bitterness and resentment, isn't it?**

Yes, but I'll feel better as soon as I get even with him.

Boy, have I got some plans for him.

He'll wish he had never been born.

No, you won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet

You know how unhappy you are --- well, I can change that.

You can? How?

Forgive Mike. Then, I'll forgive you.

And the hate and the sin will be Mike's problem --- not yours.

You will have settled the problem as far as you are concerned.

Oh, you know, you're right. You always are.
And more than I want revenge, I want to be right with You. (sigh)

All right, all right ... I forgive him.

There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

Hmmmm. Well, not bad. Not bad at all.

In fact, I feel pretty great!

You know, I don't think I'll go to bed uptight tonight.

I haven't been getting much rest, you know.

Yeah, I know.

But you're not through with your prayer, are you? Go on ...

Oh, all right.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Good! Good! I'll do that.

Just don't put yourself in a place where you can be tempted.

What do you mean by that?

You know what I mean.

Yeah. I know.

Okay. Go ahead ... finish your prayer.

For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Do you know what would bring me glory ---

What would really make me happy?

No, but I'd like to know.

I want to please you now.

I've really made a mess of things.

I want to truly follow you.

I can see now how great that would be.

So tell me ... How do I make you happy?

You just did!

Amen.

Note: The author of the two person prayer and response is unknown