

MESSAGE..... “The Lord’s Prayer: Part 1 – Praising God”.....Pastor Susan

The Lord’s prayer is the most well-known, most prayed prayer in the entire world. Some say it’s the summation of the Christian faith, some say it’s the most radical prayer ever, and some say it is the most perfect prayer one can pray. It is known by Christians of all denominations, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and non-believers. In fact, although in my AA groups everyone is encouraged to find a Higher Power of their own understanding (not necessarily a Christian God), at every single meeting I attend, we always close with everyone standing in a circle, holding hands and collectively praying the Lord’s Prayer. So, with that, I’m going to spend 2 Sundays explaining to the best of my knowledge the Lord’s Prayer as interpreted by Emmet Fox in “The Sermon on the Mount.” The prayer is broken into two parts. The first part we praise God and the second part we petition God (petition means we ask for something or some things.)

So let’s begin with the first line....OUR FATHER

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “My religion is summed up in the first two words of the Lord’s Prayer.” What did he mean? How is that possible? When I’m done reflecting on OUR FATHER, then maybe we’ll all agree that our religion too, can be summed up in OUR FATHER.

First of all, “father” – why father? Father is simply another word for parent. It could be mother. It doesn’t matter whether we say father or mother because for both the character of a parent is the same. Parents, more often than not, love their children. They want the best for them. They wish only for them to live happy, long and fulfilled lives.

Parents over the entire world and throughout time share this character of what it is to care for their children. Granted, not all parents love their child. That is very very true. But overall, the parent figure does truly love those little people that they bring into the world. By calling his God Abba, meaning father, Jesus is telling us that the character of God is that of a parent, a Divine Parent. If we accept that, then all those notions of a wrathful angry spiteful destructive God fall away. Because a parent who loves their child is none of those things. We can rest in knowing that our God loves us deeply.

In fact, we are told in one of Jesus’ parables, “If you, who are broken, do your best for your children, how much more will God, who is perfect, do for you.” Jesus is explaining God’s character as a parent to be loving and wanting only the best for each and every one of us.

Now, secondly, regarding FATHER, if God is our father, then it’s right to assume that we are His children. God has a certain DNA, a certain Spirit. In creating you and I, that DNA is passed on. That Divine Spirit is a part of us, just as it is a part of God. We are not God, but God lives in us and through us. Keep that in mind, I’m going to come back to it.

Third thing regarding OUR FATHER. Notice that the wording is not MY FATHER. The prayer is OUR Father. The DNA that I have inherited from my Divine Parent, happens to be the exact same DNA that you have inherited. That means that in God’s parental eyes, we are no different from one another. We are all His children which makes each and every one of us brothers and sisters. Remember that Paul tells us that for God, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, chosen or unchosen, black or white, immigrant or citizen, gay or straight.” For our Divine Parent, not one of us has any superiority over another AT ALL. PERIOD.

Not only does OUR tell us that we are all siblings, but it also teaches us to not simply pray for ourselves, but we must pray for all human kind.

Let’s move on to WHO ART IN HEAVEN.

The meaning of “heaven” is simply the presence of God. The presence of God is not only experienced after we die. Many of us, many times experience God’s presence right here on earth. So, let go of your thinking that heaven has to mean the after-life. It doesn’t.

The meaning of “earth” is simply the manifestation of God. What do I mean by manifestation? I mean that God creates. We are created by God. We are the result of God doing the creating. As divinely created beings, our destiny is to express God in all sorts of glorious and wonderful ways! It is about letting that inherited Divine DNA shine forth and be a thing of absolute beauty in this world. In fact, that is the purpose of all God’s creation, the lily, the tiger, the ocean, and everything in it. All creation, including you and I, is created for the purpose of glorifying God.

Next. HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

Essentially, “name” is one’s nature or character. In some cultures, names are not given to children until they are old enough to show their character. Then a proper and fitting name can be given. But God’s name is HALLOWED. What does “hallowed” mean? Many of us stop at “holy.” It means God is holy. But did you know that HALLOWED also can be translated as whole and healed? The nature of God is holy and whole and healing. God is perfect. And just as a rosebush cannot produce lilies, God cannot produce anything except for perfect good creations. That my friends, is you and me. Perfect. Good.

Now how about THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN?

The bottom line of this verse is that we have a purpose on this earth. Our purpose is to express in concrete, definitive ways, the abstract concept of the love of God. That’s it. That’s our purpose in life.

God created us to have creative power, just like him. And that creative power is to be used to express God’s love. Without our own creative power, we’d simply be robots. Being without any free will.

“Kingdom come” means that we are to establish, through our own efforts, God’s ideas. We are to turn God’s love into some kind of concrete manifestation right here on earth. It is true that we are all the same in our Divine DNA, but we are all unique in who we’ve been created to be. That means your way of expressing God’s love will be unique to you. And my way of expressing God’s love will be unique to me.

Ever hear someone say, “God has a plan for you?” I believe that 100%. But simply put, God’s plan for you and God’s plan for me is this: We are called to tap into God’s Love and express it in whatever way is unique to us. I believe that is what God’s plan means.

In closing I want to share with you two things from two geniuses: Dante and Augustine. First you may have heard of Dante through his literary work called “Dante’s Inferno.” In it, he details the different levels of spirituality and in a nutshell, he breaks it down into three possible states of consciousness. The INFERNO – is the state of being where we endeavor to live without God. PARADISO is the state of consciousness that is achieved when we are in union with our Divine will. And PURGATORIO – is the consciousness that struggles to pass from one state to another.

Our purpose is to live in union with God. And as Augustine wrote, “You God, have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

Now that’s an awful lot of meaning for twenty-two words, but it certainly offers a significant reason why this prayer is the most famous prayer in the world.