

Matthew 6.<sup>9-13</sup>— lent

<sup>9</sup>After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

<sup>10</sup>Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

<sup>13</sup>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.

This reading is our 26<sup>th</sup> reading for Lent 2025.

Lent is a time for enhanced prayer and a more robust prayer life. For our 26<sup>th</sup> Lent reading, we turn our attention to the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples for instructional purposes. This reading is also part of a series of readings on the Sermon on the Mount.

1. Jesus begins his instructional prayer with “Our Father which art in heaven.”
  - ? What is it that Jesus was trying to teach his disciples with this opening?
  - ? How is this opening more than a formula?
  - ? How does this opening remind us of God’s intimate feelings for us and of the intimate relationship and communication we can enjoy with him?
  - ? How can and should this opening impact the way we approach God in prayer—our attitude and language?
2. In his prayer, Jesus is traditionally viewed as making seven requests to God.
  - ? What are those seven requests?
  - ? How are these seven requests reflected in your own personal prayers?
  - ? There are any number of very specific requests we can make for ourselves and others. But, after identifying a few of the specific requests you have recently made, consider if and how they fit into one of Jesus’ seven?
3. After affirming God’s intimate feelings for us and our desire to enjoy intimate communication with him, Jesus offers the first of what is counted as seven requests: “Hallowed be thy name.”
  - ? What does it mean for God’s “name” to be “hallowed”?
  - ? What, do you think, is the purpose of this request?
  - ? How much of your prayer time is devoted to talking to God about Him, sharing your feelings about Him?
  - ? Why might God wish us to spend time in prayer considering Him and the greatness of His character and sharing with Him what we think and feel about such things?

One way among many to understand this first request is to understand God’s “name” as “his character” and the “hallowedness” of his character as being reflective of his character’s uniqueness and superiority.

- ? How is the uniqueness and superiority of God’s character reflected in your life?

- ? How is the way you live your daily life a reflection of how you feel about God and his character?
4. Consider the following questions as you reflect upon the remaining requests.
- ? How much a part of your thoughts—both in and out of prayer—is the coming of God’s “kingdom”?
  - ? What role does it play in your daily life?
  - ? What does it mean for God’s will to be “done in earth, as it is in heaven”?
  - ? What would be the consequences in your daily life of this request being a regular part of your prayer?
  - ? What is the significance of Jesus’ repeated “us” and “our” rather than “me” and “my” in the fifth, sixth, and seventh requests?
  - ? What is the role and purpose of the final, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever”?
  - ? How is this sentiment reflected in your prayers?