

## “Praying with Jesus”

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First Presbyterian Church  
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**New Testament Lesson: Matthew 6:7-13**

**Old Testament Lesson: Psalm 17:1-6**

Vicki Robin is an author who writes about living more simply. In her article titled “How Much Is Enough,” she tells about a man she met who, “from time to time, goes to a rural monastery for a silent retreat.” All the meals are provided, the place is full of walking trails meandering through the woods, and there are several small sanctuaries with just a chair or two. “Each room has a bed, a desk, a chair, a lamp and no more. The atmosphere is one of silence and peace.” On one retreat he asked himself, “If I knew that everyone in the world would have enough if I had only this much, would this be enough for me?” The answer was a clear “Yes.”

While Robin and her friends in the simplicity movement could identify with that vision, they went on to discuss what things they might add to support not only their spiritual nature, but their work and sense of community ....”

Their answer? “A telephone. Certain books. Certain files. Another chair for a guest. A computer, perhaps.” “The more we added,” said Robin, “the more difficult it was to draw the line. Where did necessity end and excess begin?”<sup>1</sup>

Our New Testament lesson today points out where necessity ends and where we begin to add extras. The Lord’s Prayer is all about our basic needs, the foundation upon which all else is built. It’s a simple prayer. So simple that we are still able to pray it today, word for word. The Lord’s prayer is not only simple in the words it uses, but in the meaning it conveys. Too often, we like the Gentiles, Jesus spoke about start to fill our prayers with all sorts of things that have nothing to do with the Lord’s Prayer. And then there’s some people say they don’t know how to pray. But it’s really quite simple.

Let’s look at the simplicity of the Lord’s Prayer. The first thing to notice about the Lord’s Prayer is that it’s not about you. It’s about “us,” and God, but not about you, as an individual, apart from your community, apart from our God.

“Pray ... in this way,” says Jesus, “Our Father in heaven...” – not my Father in heaven. Not even “the God of Jesus Christ.” Jesus doesn’t even make it about himself, though as we’ll see, this prayer does circle back around and point us to Christ, to our calling as His disciples. But first and foremost, the Lord’s Prayer is about “us” and God.

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<sup>1</sup> Vicki Robin, “How Much Is Enough,” In Context, Summer 1990, 62.

So what does Jesus want us to know about “us” and God? Well, the first thing to know is just how freeing for us when we trust in God. “Hallowed be your name...” – God, your name is above all else and I don’t need to be putting anything ahead of you.

Same with your “kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Your will for this world, O God, is what it’s all about! That’s the first thing to know regarding the Lord’s Prayer – that it’s about us as a community, God as our creator, and God’s will as the best thing there is in life.

So what is God’s will, for us? Well, I’ve already said the first thing. God’s will for us is that we live in a community formed around God, and guided by God. That’s why there is no “I” or “my” in the Lord’s Prayer. Not “my will for me,” but rather God’s will for us. God’s guidance.

Community and guidance are the first things God gives to us. And there’s just three more, three other things that God assure us in the Lord’s Prayer. Through the Lord’s Prayer, we receive sustenance – “our daily bread,” forgiveness and acceptance – “as we forgiven” and accept others, and protection, or as Jesus says, deliverance – “from evil,” from sin, from our misguided ways. Community, guidance, sustenance, forgiveness, and protection – what more could we want? What more could we want!?! We could want plenty.

And there’s the trouble. When our wants and desires outstrip the basics of what God wants for us, that’s when we find ourselves living outside of the Lord’s Prayer

The easiest way for us to live our lives with the blessings of the Lord’s Prayer is to remember each morning and throughout the day the essence of this very special prayer, and I’ve got a sentence for you to help us do that.

Come Get Something freeing and powerful - community, guidance, sustenance, forgiveness and protection – see how the first letters of those words correspond with Come Get Something freeing and powerful?  
That can help us remember the five simple blessings of the Lord’s Prayer.

You’ve got this on a bulletin insert, there for you to fill in the blanks either now or later. Come – an invitation to the community of God.

Get – guidance for life. Something – that satisfies us and sustains us (sustenance).

Freeing – forgiveness is freeing. And Powerful – God’s protection is more powerful than anything we could be facing in life.

Come Get Something Freeing and Powerful – community, guidance, sustenance, forgiveness, and protection.

The only way for us to *not* have such blessings – the only way for our community to fail us, God’s guidance to become blurred for us, life-giving sustenance unavailable, forgiveness denied, and protection withdrawn is for us to place other things above these basics, the foundations of life that God so freely gives to us.

When we put our quest for things like power, wealth, popularity and status ahead of the basics, they actually block our access to the simple things we need. Jesus never put himself above the basics. He never gave in to the temptations of power, wealth or popularity. In fact, everything Jesus did served to live out the Lord's Prayer, and to reflect this to others.

In the wilderness, when Jesus was hungry and the devil sought to tempt him, Jesus turned to God for true sustenance. When he was dared to jump from the top of the temple, Jesus said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." And when the devil asked Jesus to bow down and worship him in exchange for power, wealth and popularity, Jesus said, "Worship the Lord your God and serve only him."

And that's just what Jesus went on to do. Jesus' life is a reflection of the prayer that he taught to us. And so we, as followers of Jesus, ought to let our lives reflect that same simple prayer.

The next time you are struggling in life, concerned that you won't get enough, afraid that it won't be forgiven, or certain that trouble is just around the corner, use that moment as an opportunity to turn to God in prayer – Come Get Something Freeing and Powerful: community, guidance, sustenance, forgiveness and protection.

There's nothing that these gifts from God can't overcome, if we strive to live out this simple prayer. Let your response to life, your thoughts and actions, reflect the prayer that Jesus taught us, the Lord's Prayer. In the Lord's Prayer, we are assured of everything we could possibly need – community, guidance, sustenance, forgiveness, and the protection. Come Get Something Freeing and Prosperous, from God.

Amen.

## PASTORAL PRAYER

Most loving God, we thank you for this time together, this sacred space of prayer.

We thank you that you are always present to us, to guide and to strengthen us, especially when we are uncertain and lonely.

We pray for those who feel abandoned and isolated, and therefore feel as though they have been left behind while everyone else continues on their way.

May all for whom we pray feel surrounded by your love through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Keep us mindful of Jesus who walked this earth as we do, who also felt loneliness and betrayal but who triumphed over all adversity and lives forever as our sure foundation, the very ground of our being.

Help us to remember all this, just as surely as we remember your words to us, and particularly the words of the prayer that you taught us, the prayer that we raise to you now in song.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name;  
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on 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 forever. Amen.**