Sermon on the Mount – Lesson 6
Matthew 6:9-15

Background

- Our Father: By addressing God as Father Jesus is saying we are part of a larger family. But to call God "Father" does not mean God is not also Mother, King, Fortress or any of our other images for God. God is always greater than our names for God.
- In heaven: God is our Father in heaven as opposed to (at the time) Caesar who had the title "father of the fatherland (Rome)." Our Father in heaven is a higher authority than worldly authorities.
- Hallowed: Hallowed means to make sacred or holy. Our Father in heaven is the holy/hallowed One, not Caesar or worldly authorities. These were political statements and still are.
- Your kingdom come: Because the kingdoms of this world leave much to be desired.
- Your will be done: Matthew has established that God's will is best found in the Torah (God's "instructions"). We see this as Jesus fended off Satan's temptations in Matthew 4:1-11. When we do God's will, as opposed to our own, heaven becomes real on earth.
- Daily bread: Amy-Jill Levine says this line can be translated, "Give us tomorrow's bread today." Having needs met not just for today but knowing they are met for tomorrow can relieve a great deal of fear and anxiety. Tomorrow's bread also anticipates the heavenly banquet Jesus promised in the world yet to come where no one has to go without their daily bread.
- Forgive us our…debts, sins, trespasses. Each of these words is a fitting translation and they are related. One way to think about them is that sin is internal, debts is external, and trespass is communal.
- Temptations/Time of trial: Matthew has set us up for understanding by setting Jesus' own temptation shortly before the Sermon. Later, Jesus will be "tested" (similar root to temptation and trial) by the religious leaders. Temptations/trials/tests are all around us, but God shows us how to avoid them or pass the test.
- Rescue us from the evil one/deliver us from evil: For Matthew and his community, the evil one/Satan was real (see Mt. 4:1-11 again). Whether we believe in evil as a person (Satan/devil) or not, evil is real and to be resisted which is possible with God.
- Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever: This line is not in either Matthew or Luke but does appear in a writing from the early church called the *Didache,* and other, later manuscripts of the gospels. It was likely used within the early church.

- v.14-15 connects “trespasses” to forgiveness, noting that forgiving others is as expected as being forgiven. As with v. 12, there is to be a connection between the mercy we give and the mercy we receive.

Reflection

- Compare this version to the one in Luke 11:2-4 (see below, both from NRSVUE). What are some of the differences? Does it affect how you hear/say the prayer? Some reasons given for different versions are that Jesus maybe used different versions himself; his followers remembered the prayer differently; the authors tailored it to suit their own needs. Would any of these reasons change how you hear/say the prayer?
- What does it mean to be a part of God’s larger family? And what are some of the positive qualities of a father we can attribute to God at Our Father?
- How can we be more mindful of our daily bread and not take God’s blessings for granted?
- How do we give power and glory to God and not to other people or systems?

Summary

For most of us, the Lord’s Prayer is something we say without always focusing on the meaning behind the words. When Jesus used this as an example of “how to pray,” he certainly didn’t intend it be the only prayer but likely a template for addressing Go directly and intimately.

Matthew 6:9-13

9 “Pray, then, in this way:
Our Father in heaven,
may your name be revered as holy.
10 May your kingdom come.
May your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

Luke 11:2-4

2 So he said to them, “When you pray, say:
Father, may your name be revered as holy.
May your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone
indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.”