

Finding out Series

1

finding out about

The Lord's Prayer



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The New Church Sunday School Union



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Do you know the Lord's Prayer ?

Nearly everyone knows the words of the Lord's Prayer, but how many people know what these words mean?

Do you want to find out?

There is one question that we should settle right at the beginning:

Why should we pray ?

The Lord Jesus Christ wants us to pray.
He commanded us to pray:

"Watch and pray." Mark 13 : 33

"Pray for those who persecute you." Matthew 5 : 44

"Pray like this. . ." Matthew 6 : 9

And Jesus told us a parable to the effect that
"men ought always to pray and not lose heart".

Luke 18 : 1

Our first reason for praying as Christians, is :

**because our Lord Jesus Christ
told us to pray**

And now we may ask why He wants us to pray. He once said :

"Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

Matthew 6 : 8

When some people read these words, they say :

"But what is the use of praying then?"

What is the use of telling God what He already knows?" When people say this, it means that they do not understand what prayer is, and so they think that prayer is "telling God".

This is a mistake, because God does not need "telling". Prayer is something quite different.

Quite simply:

prayer is talking with God

Real prayer is like a conversation between two people. Each must speak and also listen to what the other man is saying. But if a man only talks and does not give anyone a chance to reply or say something, then he is either giving orders, or he is a very rude man.

Many people, unfortunately, behave just in such a way when they say their prayers. They have their say. They tell God what they think He should do for them. They say a quick "Amen". And then they often say that prayers are not "answered". But of course, they never gave God the time to answer, because they were not willing to listen to Him.



A prayer is not meant to teach God

A prayer is meant to teach us.

First of all, we tell the Lord what is on our mind—the things that worry us, the things we should like to have, or the things we should like to do. But then we must let the Lord have His say, and ask Him quite plainly:

"Do You want me to have those things which I think I need so much?"

"I often want to do what my friends are doing, but do You want me to copy them in everything? And if not, what are the things that I should not do with them?"

"I am sometimes very cross with my sister; can You please let me see if this is always her fault, or is it sometimes my fault? What do You want me to do, so that we shall not quarrel so much?"

When we pray in this way, then we are praying in the right spirit, because we are humbly asking the Lord to teach us and to lead us. We are not telling Him what He should be doing, but He is telling us.

Can you see the difference?

Is God really listening ? How can He answer my prayer ?

There is a very simple reply to these two questions:

**Just try, and you will be
quite sure.**

It is no use being told by others that prayers work. We must find out for ourselves. Pray in order that you may find out what the Lord wishes you to do, and then you will know. When He fills our mind with His love and His presence which cleanse our mind from impure and ugly thoughts, then there is no doubt left.

"Thou dost show me the path of life;

In Thy presence there is fulness of joy." Psalm 16 : 11



The finest prayer is the one which the Lord Himself teaches us, so we call it "The Lord's Prayer". There are many translations : some very strictly in keeping with the original Greek of the Gospel; in others the translator has let himself be moved by his own thoughts. And the version used in this booklet is as near to the original as can be made. The changes which have been made are demanded by the original Greek.

ΠΑΤΕΡ ΗΜΩΝ Ο ΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΙΣ
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Η ΔΟΞΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΑΙΩΝΑΣ ΑΜΗΝ

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN
THE HEAVENS,
HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
THY KINGDOM COME.
THY WILL BE DONE, AS IN
HEAVEN,
SO UPON THE EARTH.
GIVE US THIS DAY OUR
DAILY BREAD.
AND FORGIVE US OUR
DEBTS,
AS WE ALSO 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,
FOR EVER. AMEN. Matthew 6 : 9-13

Our Father, who art in the Heavens

As we start to pray,
we must be quite sure
to whom we are speaking.
Who is our Father in the heavens?

It is Jesus.

We must always think of Him,
because there is no other to think of !

**He is our Creator and Saviour:
the only God.**

Before He came to earth, men knew that they had a heavenly Father, and they prayed to Him, but they could not think of Him as we can think of Him today. Because we know Jesus—His words, His actions, His power, His kindness and love—it is easy for us to speak with Him, and it is also easy for us to understand what He is trying to tell us in prayer.

How wonderful it is that we can actually speak with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our loving Father in the heavens.

Hallowed be thy name

Do you know what the words "to hallow" mean?

**It means to have respect,
or to hold in deep affection.**

And this is how it comes about: As we begin to pray to the Lord, and say, "Our Father, who art in the heavens", we first of all **think** of the Lord. This is important, because we have the power to think of anything we want : at this moment you can think of your own room at home, of your school, or your last holiday. In the same way, you can bring your thoughts to Jesus. This power of concentration is something that we must all master. It is quite useless to say the words of the prayer with the mouth, but to allow our thoughts to roam about. We all have to learn to think of Jesus clearly, and with our full attention.



Having done this,
we begin to **feel** something about Him.

What do we feel?

Love and joy.

That is why a real prayer is so wonderful, because we feel the Lord Jesus very near, and as the quietness and peace fill our hearts, that is how we hallow Him.

Remember that you have all these wonderful powers, and that you should use them. You can order your mind to think and to love. You turn your **thoughts** to Jesus as you say 'Our Father', and you begin to **feel in your heart** His presence when you say "hallowed be Thy name".



Thy kingdom come

Why does the Lord call Himself our "KING",
and heaven His "KINGDOM"?

A king is a person who rules his subjects by means of laws and commandments. If his subjects are disobedient, then he is not really their king.

The Lord calls Himself a King, because He wishes to reign in our lives by means of the wonderful commandments which He gives us in His Word. The Lord is our King when we obey His truth and commandments.

It is no good asking for the Lord's kingdom to come all around us, if we are not ready to receive it ourselves. These words of the prayer are really quite serious, and we should not say them lightly. They are our dedication in the Lord's service, and when we say them we should mean,

Yes, my King, I want You to come and rule my heart and life,
and

I promise to be obedient.

If we do not mean just that,
His kingdom will never come!

The Lord will have no disciples who are ready to enter
His service.

Is the Lord Jesus Christ your King?

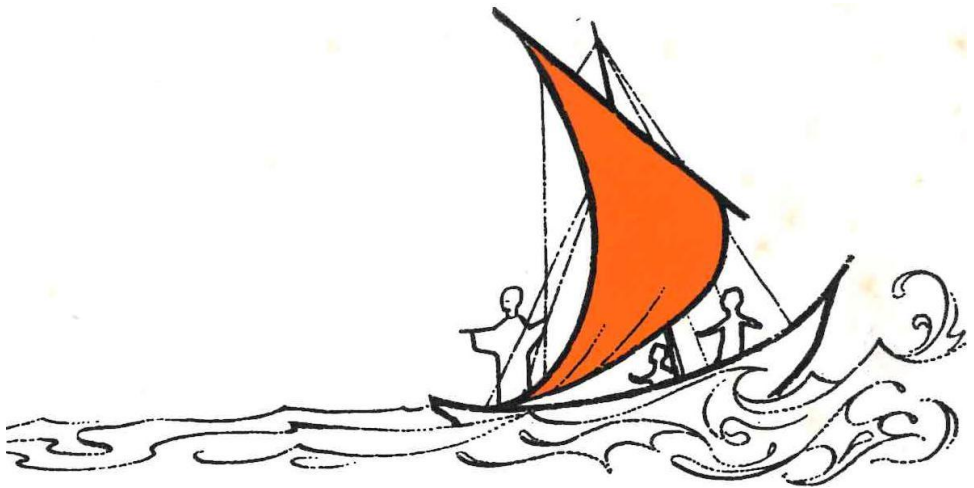
Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon the earth

Sometimes, when anything dreadful happens, perhaps a bad accident, people say, "It is the Lord's will". But this is quite untrue.

**We must never blame the Lord
for the bad things that happen.**

Nothing painful or disastrous is the Lord's will. He only wants beauty and happiness for all His children. We know this, because He healed people, raised the dead, stilled the raging storms, gave strength and courage to the weak. In all these actions we see His will.

Then why do so many terrible things happen? Wars, car accidents, robbery, sickness, hunger and poverty? These things are the results of man's will, which is selfish and evil. These terrible and painful things would soon disappear if the Lord's will were understood and obeyed by man.



You know very well that if you do just what you want to do and never think of others, this leads to quarrels, fights, punishment, and so to unhappiness and misery for everybody.

But when you try to do what you know is right, and you think of others as well as yourself, then you feel happy and cheerful, and so do the people around.

That is the reason why we must want to see the Lord's will done, rather than our own.

His will is love, goodness, peace and order.

From our will comes hatred of others, evil, fighting and disorder.

In the prayer the Lord teaches us that we can be like the angels in heaven even while we are on this earth. Do you believe that this is possible?

Just try and find out whose will is best.



Give us this day our daily bread

Do you know that little babies can die if they are only fed, but not loved and nursed by their mothers or nurses? They need more than just food: they need loving as well.

You see, you are more than just a body. You have a mind (or spirit) as well, and both mind and body have to be fed. You need food and drink every day, otherwise you would feel hungry and thirsty, and you would stop growing, and soon you would die. But you also need someone to love you, to care for your mind by talking to you and teaching you. Without this love and instruction your mind could not grow and become strong and healthy. If you did not learn human ways, you would never become a man. If you did not learn the Lord's ways, you would never become an angel.

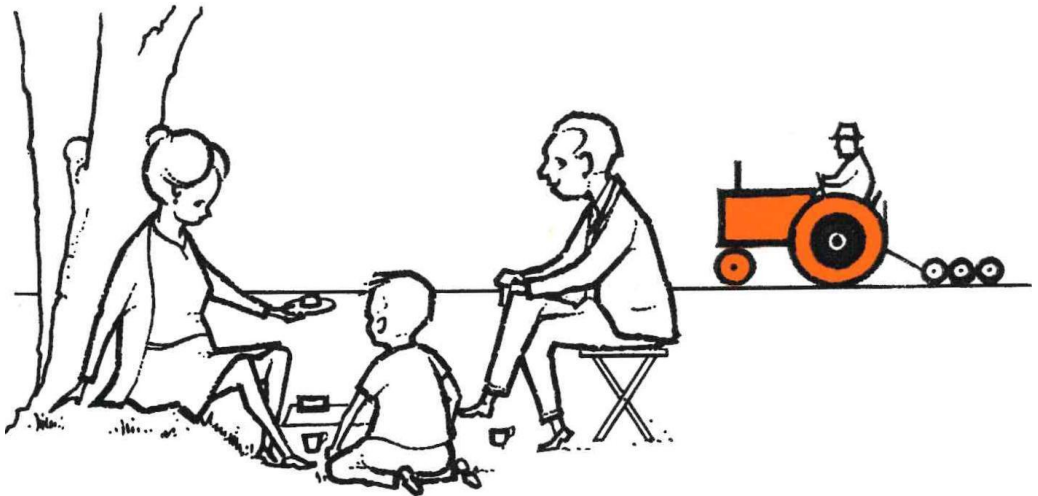
Both types of nourishment come from the Lord.

He sends us harvest which gives us our daily bread for our bodies, and He also fills our life with His love, so that we can be happy and bright. All these good things come from the Lord, and we depend on Him for everything.

All true and unselfish love is from the Lord. Unless the Lord were present in the hearts of all mothers, then no babies would ever grow up. Before we can ever learn to love someone, we must have the Lord in our heart. That is why He said—

I am the bread of life. John 6 : 35

Therefore you pray not only for the food you eat, but also that a little of that true love may fill your heart every day and keep it warm and alive.



And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors

You have just learnt how important is the Lord's love for you. Without love, you would die. The Lord Jesus Christ is always willing to give you this love, but there are times when you cannot receive it.

That is when you are feeling angry.

We find it very easy to hate others.

Watch some boys or girls playing together.

How quickly they can fall out over mere trifles! Angry looks flash in the eyes and fighting starts. You must see quite clearly that the Lord cannot be in the heart that is at that moment burning with anger or greed. Therefore whenever we feel like that—

We drive the Lord out.

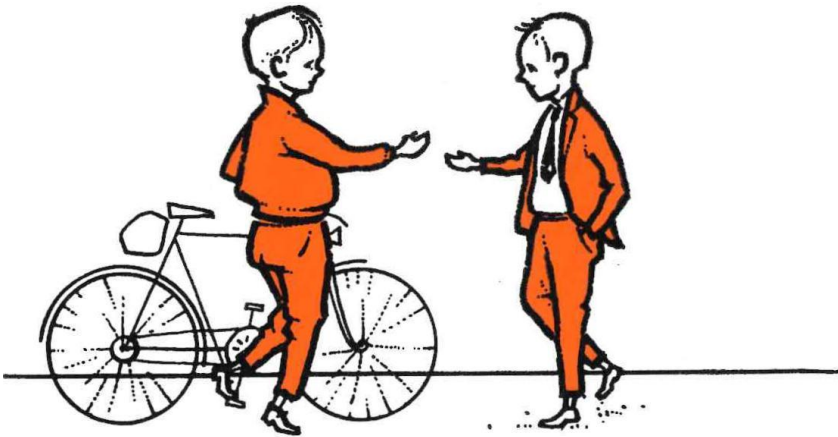
In this way we deprive the Lord of the use of our minds and bodies which really belong to Him. We become His "debtors", because we hold back something which is His. How then can we give Him back our minds and bodies which He wants to use to bring good to others? Only if we remove those things which drive Him out. That is why we must learn to be forgiving. We should not say our prayers to the Lord, and yet have a heart which is hard and angry, and which therefore He cannot enter. It is as if we were asking the Lord Jesus to be a party to our anger.

What must you do then?

Before you begin speaking with the Lord, or if you forget, then as you come to these words, just stop for a moment and look into yourself and see whether you have some ugly feelings against someone, perhaps against your brother or sister, or a school-friend, or a shopkeeper. If you have, then remember that with the Lord's help, you can remove these terrible feelings which come from hell.

All things from hell are poisons in your mind.

They can only bring you great harm. Would you want poisonous weeds in your garden, or would you keep rusty nails in your corn-flakes? Then why keep nasty things in the mind?



Your mind is very precious.

Jesus wants to fill it with the finest things which will make it healthy and strong,

so make room for Him!

It is true that some people are difficult to get on with. They seem quarrelsome, unreasonable and unpleasant in every way. But why should you copy them, and so be just as unpleasant? Even when you are provoked, you should try to feel free of anger. People who are quarrelsome are usually like that because they are unhappy, and lonely. Sometimes you can help them if you treat them kindly, because most people respond to kindness.

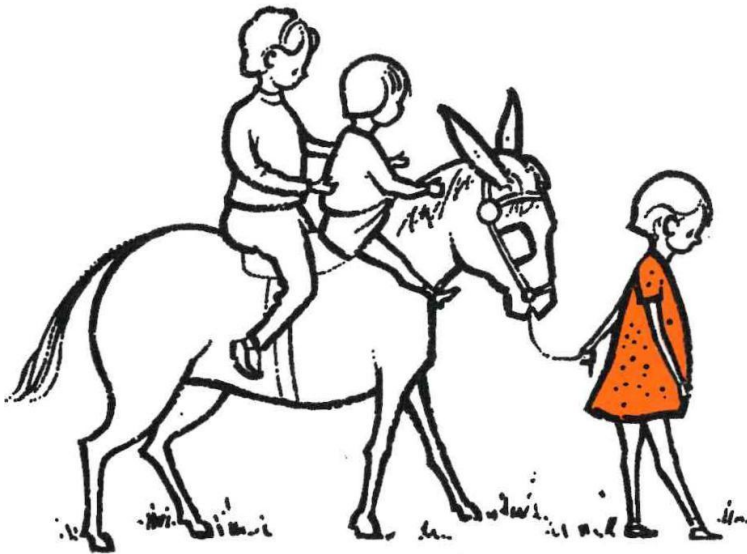
If this is difficult, remember that the Lord had every reason to feel bitter and angry. His disciples forsook Him; Peter denied Him; the Jews accused him falsely and the soldiers crucified Him, but—

He forgave them all.

Therefore, repeat the words, "And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors" only when your heart is free from all those ugly feelings towards others. Only then will the Lord be able to come into your heart, and you will know that all your past mistakes are forgiven.

If all Christians were really sincere when they say these words, no quarrel, no unpleasantness between them, no hatred could last. They would always rise purified and happy at heart, and that is why the Lord Jesus taught us this wonderful prayer.

Will you try?



And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil

At your age, "Temptation" may seem to be a big word, but you have felt something like temptation if ever you had a struggle with yourself. Perhaps you wanted to go out and play, but your mother told you to finish your homework first. Part of you knows what is right, but the other part wants to forget it, and do the opposite. That is roughly what temptation is, although the struggles are much more serious when you grow up, and grown-up people can think of many more excuses for some of the wrong things that they want to do.

Try to remember, then, that—

Temptation is a struggle between good and evil.

What can you learn from such an experience?

- (1) **There are two sides to you :** one which knows what is right, and this is sometimes called your conscience. This is the Lord's side in you. The other side is the selfish side, and this often wants to do what is wrong. This side opposes the Lord.
- (2) **You are free to decide between these two sides,** and if you want, the Lord will give you strength to make the right side win.

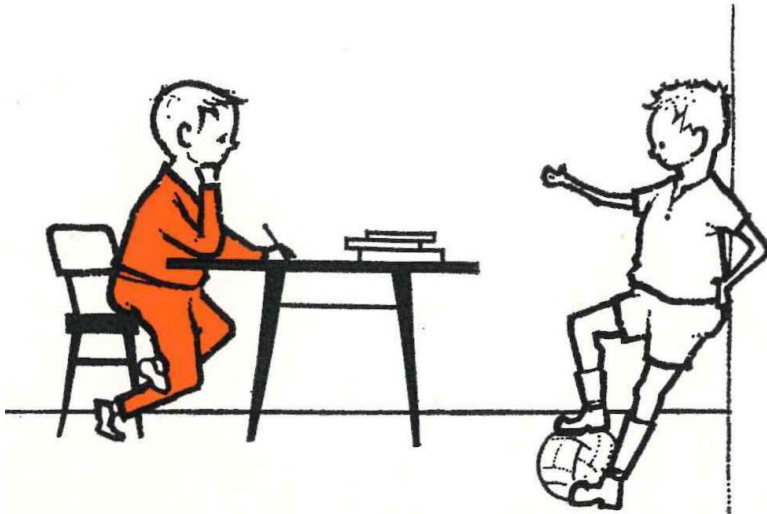
If you ever had a struggle with yourself—and please remember that temptations can only take place inside us, they are not struggles between two people !—then you know that it is not easy to be tempted and to win. That is why we ask the Lord not to let us fall into temptations which would be too hard for us. We have no strength to resist temptations—

Only with the Lord's help can we ever win.

Only He can overcome and remove the evil inclinations which we sometimes feel.

That is how He delivers us from evil.

In the Lord's Prayer we therefore remember that we are weak, unless the Lord helps us and gives us strength.



For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory

At the beginning of the Lord's Prayer you think first of all about the Lord Jesus Christ, who is your heavenly Father.

Then you talk to Him about your needs, and you ask Him to help you to overcome your evils. And so the prayer leads your thoughts back to Jesus, because He alone can give you all that you had asked. He can do it, because **His** is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.

His Kingdom

means the truths and commandments by means of which the Lord rules in our heart. Only then can He be called our King. We must remember, of course, that all truth is from Him, and is His. Even the fact that we can see and understand the writing on this page is part of His kingdom of light and truth within us.

His Power

is what He gives us so that we might be able to obey that truth. Without His power, we could not obey anything. Jesus said—

"Apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15 : 5 "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Me."

Matthew 28 : 18

That is why we pray to Jesus,
because He has all power.

His Glory

is what we obtain when we have obeyed His truth and received His kingdom into our hearts. We become His angels, and share the heavenly glory of love and peace which no evil power can destroy.

The words—Kingdom, Power, and Glory—are like three steps which lead to heaven.

They really show us why we were born—

to reach our true home and dwell with our heavenly Father for ever.

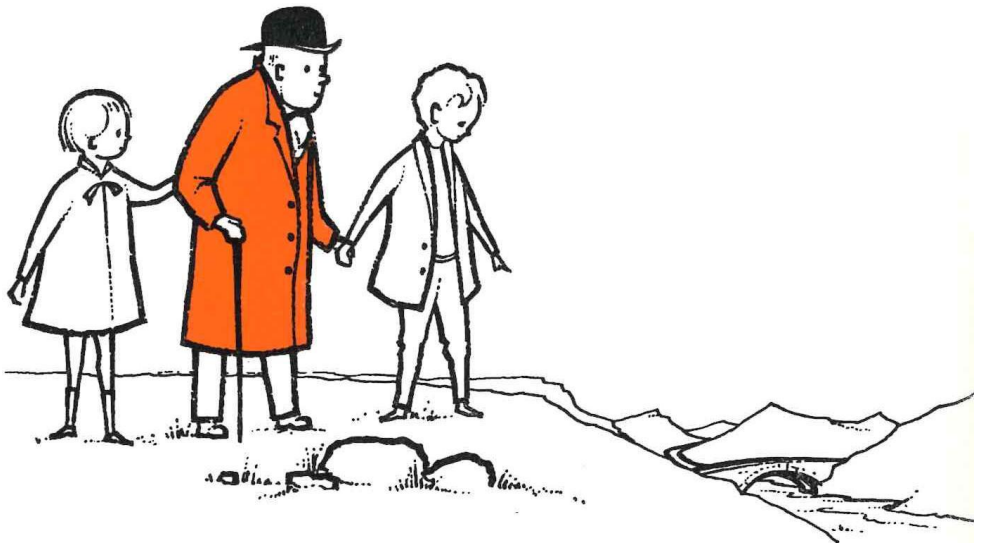
For ever

Have you stopped to think what this means? Two short words, but they speak of—

Eternity and Immortality.

The Lord is teaching us that we are not finished when we die, but continue to live in the spiritual world. Too many people today do not want to think about these things, but there is nothing frightening in death, because whenever we say the Lord's Prayer we should be reminded that God is the one who is "for ever". There is no end to His Kingdom, Power and Glory.

He has overcome evil and death.



You will often hear people—
and even other boys and girls—
making fun of the belief in immortality.
They will say that the simple-minded are only deluding
themselves.

You will have to decide who will teach you—
whether it will be these people who believe nothing,
or whether you will trust and learn from Jesus,
He has told you in no uncertain terms
that you will live after death—

"But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him." Luke 20 : 37-38

"Because I live, you will live also." John 14 : 19

"I am the resurrection and the life." John 11 : 25

Go to the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer and He will give you the conviction to be sure that He is the resurrection and the life.

You will eventually come to love the strength and comfort of those two little words "for ever", because they overcome doubts and fears.

Amen

When we end a prayer, we say this word which comes from the Hebrew word

"AMUNA" which means "TRUTH" or "FAITH".

Never use this word in fun because it is a very holy word which belongs to the Lord who is the Truth. But He allows us to use it so that we may know that every true prayer is heard and answered by Him.

A true prayer is one in which we ask the Lord to lead us and teach us His way—

**TEACH ME, O LORD,
THE WAY OF THY
STATUTES ;
AND I WILL KEEP IT TO
THE END.** Psalm 119 : 33

