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**IN THE CHURCH THERE ARE THINGS THAT WE BECOME VERY, VERY FAMILIAR WITH HYMNS - “AMAZING GRACE”, CERTAIN BIBLE PASSAGES – THE 23RD PSALM, COMMUNION WORDING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.** IN MOST CHURCHES AT SOME TIME IN THE SERVICE THE LORD'S PRAYER IS RECITED IN VARIOUS FORMS WITH “FORGIVING OUR DEBTS, OUR SINS, OR OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS , THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US OR WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US”. THERE ARE DIFFERENT ENDINGS TO THE SO CALLED “DOXOLOGY”. THE WORDS ARE INCLUDED IN THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, WHILE IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE THERE IS NO SUCH ENDING DOXOLOGY TO THE LORD'S PRAYER.

FOR SOME THE HISTORY OF THE LORD'S PRAYER, A HYMN OR CHURCH TRADITION IS INTERESTING, BUT THAT IS NOT THE FOCUS THIS MORNING. NO, **THE FOCUS IS ON THE WORDS AND IF THERE IS ANY MEANING OF THESE WORDS OF JESUS HIMSELF!** HAVE WE COME TO A POINT IN OUR SPIRITUAL WALK THAT WE “GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS” AND THE WORDS CARRY NO ATTACHMENT, EMOTIONALLY OR SPIRITUALLY?

**THERE ARE NUMEROUS VERSES BY PAUL AND OTHER WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT EXHORT US TO KEEP OUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS!!!** IN THE NEW TESTAMENT READING PAUL WARNS THE COLOSSIANS “*see to it that nobody enslaves you with philosophy and foolish deception*” OR PUT ANOTHER WAY “*Watch out for people who try to dazzle you with big words and intellectual double-talk. They want to drag you off into endless arguments that never amount to anything.*” NOW IF WE ALL ARE HONEST, WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SUCH CONVERSATION!!!

**I BELIEVE IT IS PART OF OUR HUMAN NATURE WHEN WE BECOME VERY FAMILIAR OR COMFORTABLE WITH SOMETHING OR SOMEONE THAT WE CAN TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.** EXAMPLE, WHEN YOU MARRIED PEOPLE WERE DATING DIDN'T YOU GET ALL “FIXED UP”, MADE SURE YOU WERE ON TIME AND JUST ENJOYED THE COMPANY AND CONVERSATION OF EACH OTHER? AND I WILL BET THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL OF YOU, GOT OR GAVE THAT GOODNIGHT KISS WITH TOUCHING WORDS. IS IT STILL THAT WAY? FROM OBSERVING PEOPLE IN RESTAURANTS AND ELSEWHERE, IT'S MORE OF A SILENT MAJORITY WITH NO WORDS SPOKEN!!! **WHAT HAPPENED? WE HAVE GOTTEN SO USED TO THAT PERSON, THEY ARE JUST THERE. WELL, WE CAN DO THE SAME THING**

**IN CHURCH. WORDS AND EVENTS LIKE COMMUNION, CHRISTMAS, OR EASTER ARE JUST THERE! SOMETHING WE HAVE TO GET THROUGH, SURVIVE UNTIL IT'S OVER.**

PASTOR, *"I'M HERE", BUT ARE WE? ARE WE FOCUSED ON GOD, EXPECTING HIM HERE?* NOW THOUGHTS ARE GOING TO COME AND GO, BUT IF WE LET THOSE THOUGHTS PULL US AWAY FROM WORSHIP AND THE WORD THEN PAUL'S WORDS RING TRUE. WE HAVE BECOME "ENSLAVED BY FOOLISH DECEPTIONS". WE THEN STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF MISSING THAT "VISIT" WITH JESUS THIS MORNING!!! HE IS HERE. **IT IS WHY WE GATHER IN PRAISE AND GRATITUDE, BUT IN EXPECTATION OF HIS PRESENCE. THIS EXPECTATION KEEPS OUR FAITH FRESH AND RENEWED.**

OUR HOPE HAS MEANING – WE ARE JUST BORN, LIVE AND DIE, END OF STORY! THERE IS SO MUCH MORE FOR US AS DISCIPLES TO EXPERIENCE. **GOD NEVER, NEVER LEAVES US NO MATTER HOW DARK IT MAY GET AND YOU CAN READ THOSE PROMISES FROM COVER TO COVER IN OUR LIFE MANUAL – THE BIBLE.**

IN THIS MORNING'S READING FROM LUKE ARE WORDS WE ARE VERY FAMILIAR WITH – **THE LORD'S PRAYER**, THE PERSISTENT FRIEND AND THE CHILD AND FATHER. THE ENTIRE READING **PAINTS A VIVID PICTURE OF PRAYER – THE WHY AND HOW, AS WELL AS THE CHARACTER OF WHO IS ON THE OTHER END OF OUR PRAYERS.** IT IS MY DESIRE FOR ALL OF US TO HAVE A NEW AND FRESH MEANING OF PRAYER, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE LORD'S PRAYER.

A DISCIPLE ASKED JESUS *"Lord teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples"*. JESUS WAS THOUGHT OF AS A RABBI BY MANY PEOPLE AND IT WAS A VERY COMMON PRACTICE FOR RABBIS TO CREATE SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR THEIR FOLLOWERS. KEEP THIS THOUGHT TOO AS WE LOOK AT THE LORD'S PRAYER – **THE PRAYER SUMS UP IN WORDS THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST, NOT UNLIKE THE FACT THE WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS SUMS UP IN ACTION THE MESSAGE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US, AND WE SHOULD NEVER LOSE THE MEANING OF IT!!!**

**"OUR FATHER"** THE OPENING WORDS HAVE MUCH TO SAY TO US. THE WORD **"OUR"** AND FOR THAT FACT ALL THE PRONOUNS IN THE LORD'S PRAYER ARE **PLURAL**. JUST LIKE WHEN JESUS GAVE IT TO HIS DISCIPLES AS A GROUP, **THE PRAYER IS FOR THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, A CORPORATE PRAYER.** NOW THE SECOND WORD, **"FATHER"**, IS THE WHO WE SHOULD ADDRESS THE PRAYER TO. THE THOUGHT ARISES

FOR MANY, A FATHER IMAGE IS NOT A GOOD ONE, BUT GOD, OUR FATHER, HAS BEEN SHOWN TO US THROUGH THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TO ALL OF US. **THE CLEAREST EXAMPLE OF “OUR FATHER” IS THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON, WELCOMING HIS CHILD BACK INTO HIS ARMS AND COVERING HIM WITH HIS LOVE.** ANOTHER THOUGHT ON THESE TWO OPENING WORDS, OUR FATHER, BY ADDRESSING GOD IN THIS MANNER WE ARE NOT ONLY IMPLYING “INTIMACY” BUT TO IMITATE THE SAME RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT JESUS HAD WITH THE FATHER.

**“HALLOWED BE THY NAME”** ARE THE NEXT WORDS IN THE PRAYER. BY “HALLOWING” **WE ARE REVERING OR GLORIFYING THE NAME OF GOD.** BACK IN JESUS' TIME A NAME WAS THE REPRESENTATION OF ENTIRE CHARACTER. IT PRETTY MUCH SAID IT ALL! A QUOTE “GOD SHALL BE GOD...MAN SHALL NOT WHITTLE GOD DOWN TO A MANAGEABLE SIZE AND SHAPE”. WE AS DISCIPLES CANNOT EVER THINK OF GOD IN TERMS WITHOUT LOSING SIGHT OF HIS MAJESTY, WISDOM. AND BE IN AWE OF HIM.

**“THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN”** WHEN WE PRAY THESE WORDS **WE ARE REALLY PRAYING MUCH THE SAME WORDS JESUS USED IN THE GARDEN.** LUKE 22 “*father, if you are willing take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done*” JESUS SHOWED THE KINGDOM, HIS MINISTRY DEFINED IT AND HOW WE SHOULD LIVE OUR LIVES. **WE ARE ASKING GOD TO HELP US TO MODEL OUR LIVES AFTER JESUS IN HUMILITY, SERVANTHOOD, LOVE, AND MAYBE EVEN OCCASIONAL TRIAL.** THERE WAS A SONG PLAYING WHEN I WAS WRITING THIS AND IT REALLY HIT ME. THE SONG WAS “ONE DAY AT A TIME”

HERE ARE SOME OF THE LYRICS...FULL OF MEANING

*I'm only human I'm just a man Help me to believe in what I could be and all that I am Show me the stairway that I have to climb Lord for my sake teach me to take one day at a time. One day at a time sweet Jesus that's all I'm asking from you Give me the strength to do everyday what I have to do Yesterday's gone sweet Jesus and tomorrow may never be mine So for my sake teach me to take one day at a time.*

**LIKE I HAVE SAID ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, OUR FAITH AND LOVE ARE NOT NOUNS, BUT ACTION VERBS.**

**“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”** KINDA FITS IN WITH THE SONG I JUST MENTIONED. **NOT ASKING FOR A YEAR'S SUPPLY, BUT OUR DAILY BREAD.** JESUS IS

TELLING US BY THESE WORDS THAT **WE CAN PRAY FOR DAILY NEEDS**, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL. THESE WORDS ARE SAYING WE **DEPEND ON GOD DAILY** FOR EVERYTHING. WE ARE REMINDED OF JESUS' WORDS EARLIER IN MATTHEW *"Therefore do not worry, saying, shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans pursue all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them"*. **IT IS ALWAYS WELL TO REMEMBER THAT WE WILL GIVE US WHAT WE NEED NOT NECESSARILY WHAT WE WANT.**

**"AND FORGIVE OUR SINS, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US"** HOW HARD IS IT TO SAY THESE WORDS AND MEAN THEM? AFTER ALL WE ARE SAYING "AS WE". **GOD KNOWS IF WE HOLD GRUDGES, ANGER, AND UNFORGIVENESS IT IS NOT GOOD FOR US SPIRITUALLY NOR IT IS GOOD FOR OUR HEALTH IN THE LONG RUN.** GOD'S DESIRE IS FOR US TO **LET IT GO**, AND HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT MONTHS OR YEARS FROM TODAY.

**NEXT SUNDAY IS COMMUNION SUNDAY. IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO LAY THOSE GRUDGES, ANGER, RESENTMENT OR UNFORGIVENESS , RIGHT AT THE TABLE WHERE JESUS IS PRESENT.** AFTER THE SERVICE I'LL PRAY WITH YOU IF THAT IS YOUR DESIRE. WE HAVE TO LET GO. JUST RECALL HOW MANY TIMES JESUS BROUGHT THE SUBJECT UP.

**FORGIVENESS IS MENTIONED OVER 30 TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND OVER 40 TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.** I CAN SAFELY SAY IT MUST BE IMPORTANT TO GOD! WHEN WE ARE DISCIPLES IT IS NOT AN OPTION. SOME OF THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS "FATHER, FORGIVE THEM".

**"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL"** JESUS GIVES CLEAR MEANING TO THESE WORDS. HIS DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS, FACED EVIL, THE DEVIL, HIMSELF AND DELIVERED BY THE WORD OF GOD. IN THE GARDEN FOR A BRIEF MOMENT HE WAS TEMPTED, NOT YIELDING , BUT DOING THE WILL OF THE FATHER. EVEN THOUGH JESUS WENT TO THE CROSS, EVIL DOES REMAIN AND SO DO TEMPTATIONS, BUT JESUS WON THE VICTORY, THAT IS THE MEANING OF THE CROSS. **BY THE POWER OF HIS BLOOD WE CAN OVERCOME EVIL AND TEMPTATION. WE CANNOT BECOME SO HIGH AND MIGHTY THAT WE BELIEVE WE CANNOT BE TEMPTED.** PROVERBS 16:18 *"First pride, then the crash— the bigger the ego, the harder the fall."* WE MUST BE ALERT I PETER 5:8 *"Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and*

would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up. You're not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It's the same with Christians all over the world. So keep a firm grip on the faith." THOSE WORDS SAY IT ALL AND THAT IS WHY WE MUST PRAY THOSE WORDS EACH DAY.

**"FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN."** THIS IS THE ENDING OF THE PRAYER WHERE **WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE KINGDOM OF GOD, ITS POWER, INFLUENCE AND GLORY. OUR FAITH AND HOPE REST ON THIS FACT.**

WE HAVE HOPEFULLY BEEN RENEWED BY LOOKING AT THE WORDS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER. NOW I WOULD BE AMISS IF I DID NOT POINT TO VERSES 9-10. **JESUS IN HIS WORDS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES, THAT INCLUDES US,** IN VERSES 9 THAT FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS, *"It is given, seek and you shall find, and knock and it shall be opened to you"*. JESUS REPEATS IT AGAIN IN VERSE 10. **THESE WORDS GIVE US THE PATH OF PRAYER. THE SIMPLEST STEP IS TO ASK OUR NEEDS. THE NEXT STEP IS SEEKING, NOW THAT MAY BE MORE OF A PROCESS AND INVOLVE SEARCHING, BUT JESUS TELLS US WE WILL FIND IT. THE LAST STEP IS KNOCKING.** JUST AS THE FRIEND IN THE STORY KNOCKED REPEATEDLY WE ARE TO REALIZE THIS MAY TAKE TIME AND REPETITION. **PRAYER CAN BE ANSWERED IMMEDIATELY, OTHER PRAYERS TAKE TIME TO BE ANSWERED. THEN THERE ARE PRAYERS WE MAY NOT SEE AN ANSWER IN OUR LIFE BUT IT WILL COME.**

**THESE THREE STEPS OF PRAYER OF ASK, SEEK, AND KNOCK DEPEND ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS. ASKING CONCERNS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. SEEKING CONCERNS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND KNOCKING CONCERNS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

MAY THESE STEPS BE ALL IN OUR PRAYERS A.S.K , THAT IS ASK, SEEK, AND KNOCK. AMEN.