

# The All Sufficient Prayer

On a certain occasion during his earthly ministry, the disciples of Jesus Christ asked him to teach them how to pray, “as John also taught his disciples”. Being the perfect teacher that he is, our Lord and Master Jesus Christ immediately taught them a unique and concise prayer that has since then become the model prayer for all Christians. Because of its comprehensive nature, Bible scholars refer to the “Lord’s Prayer” as the “All-Sufficient Prayer”.

The account in the book of Luke chapter 11 verses one to four states: “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.” (Luke 11:1-4; see also Matthew 6:9-13) Let us now go on to explain the meaning of the main points in the prayer in the light of the Scriptures.

Our Father:

The word “father” means “life-giver”. God Almighty is Creator of all living things in the universe, whether in heaven or in earth. (John 20:17; Revelation 4:11) Because He is the Sustainer of life, He is called “the God of the spirits of all flesh”, in Numbers 16:22 and 27:16. In the words of Apostle Paul, in his famous lecture on Mars Hill in Athens, it is in “in him we live, and move, and have our being... For we are also his offspring”. – Acts 17:28; see also Job 34:14,15; Psalm 104:29,30.

Our acceptance of God Almighty as our Father, sets the tone for the subsequent declarations and petitions contained in the prayer. The Bible shows that God Almighty loves us and will always provide us with the best. This human beings cannot do because of their limitations. (Matthew 7:11; Isaiah 64:8) A deep and sincere appreciation of our total dependence on God is vital to His answering our petitions. Jesus Christ stated: “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” -Matthew 7:11.

Hallowed Be Thy Name

The exclusive name which God Almighty took to Himself is Jehovah. (Exodus 6:3) The name should be hallowed, meaning that it should be held in awe or deep reverence, and not be taken in vain. (See Exodus 20:7; Psalm 111:9) Contrary to the law of God, there many people today who go to law courts and swear falsely. God would punish all such ones except they repent. In any case, Christians are not to swear anymore. (Matthew 5:33-37) The Almighty God declared through His servant “for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” (1 Samuel 2:30)

Another aspect of the matter is that we should not do anything that will make people to speak ill of or bring reproach to the name of God and His work. High standards of morality or righteousness are expected from those who have given themselves to the service of God. A life of purity honours the faith and the name of God; an impure life does the reverse. The unbelievers would definitely despise the Christian faith if they do not its effect on the believers.

Jesus Christ stated: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) Moreover Apostle Paul stated: “Thou

therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.” -Romans 2:20-24.

#### The Kingdom:

The next line in the prayer is for the Kingdom of God to come so that the will of God will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. This prayer shows that the petitioner has the understanding that the kingdom of God is the only solution to the problems of this world. It also shows that the petitioner is striving to enter into it.

Bible prophecies show that the Kingdom of God will come in this age. (Isaiah 2:2) This prophecy has fulfilled with the setting up of God's Kingdom Organisation in various parts of the world, of which the God's Kingdom Society (GKS), *the Church of the Living God*, is part and parcel.

(Matthew 24:31, 15,16) The Kingdom will continue to grow as people of goodwill are gathered into it by the power of God until He will bring iniquity to an end and righteousness and peace will cover the earth. The Bible says further: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Daniel 2:44) Since the Kingdom has been set up, we no longer say “Thy Kingdom come” but “They Kingdom has come”.

#### Daily Bread:

The prayer for God to “give us this day our daily bread” should be understood to mean both spiritual and literal bread. The spiritual bread, which is the word of God, is more important. It teaches man what to do so as to get life, which ordinary bread cannot do. (Isaiah 55:1-3; Matthew 16:6-12; etc.) God declared through His servant Moses that he humbled the Jews, and caused them to suffer hunger, and fed them with manna, so that they might “know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live”. (Deuteronomy 8:3; see also Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12) It was to the end that we should be diligent in acquiring the knowledge of God so as to be approved for life that Jesus Christ exhorted us thus: “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.” “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” -John 6:27, 63.

However, literal food is also important as it is needful for daily sustenance. No human being can stay or function for long without food. It was for this reason. God Almighty fed the Jews with manna in the wilderness. (Exodus 16:16-35) Also, Jesus Christ fed 5000 people with bread and there were 12 baskets full that were left over. (John 6:1-14)

It should be noted that the prayer is for us to have our daily bread, that is food enough for today. We should not be greedy by asking or setting our mind on having so much more than we need for our upkeep. This exhortation tallies with the prayer of Agur who prayed God to feed him with food convenient for him.” – Proverbs 30:8.

The prayer for God to give us our daily bread also means that we should be contented with what God has provided for us. “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing

into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” -1 Timothy 6:6-8.

#### Forgiveness:

Continuing the Lord's prayer says "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

(Matthew 6:12) Since it is the duty of every one to obey God, anyone who violates His laws has incurred a debt, which can only be made good by repentance and right conduct. But being a merciful Father, God Almighty, by virtue of His love for man forgives those who show remorse for their sins and repent. But for this quality of forgiveness, no man can remain alive to serve God. David the prophet stated: "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." (Psalms 130:3, 4) Furthermore the Psalmist stated: "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalms 103:8-14)

The second leg of the prayer is that since God is ready and willing to forgive us, then we should also forgive those who wrong us. Jesus Christ gave a parable about the servant whose debt was cancelled despite owing him millions of dollars (some translators say about \$10 million) but would not forgive his debtor but jailed him for owing him only about \$20. (Matthew 18:21-35 particularly 32-35) On being told what his servant had done, his lord was angry and said unto him "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desirest me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." (Matthew 18:32-34) Jesus Christ then said in verse 35: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Still stressing the importance of forgiving each other Jesus Christ said: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." – (Luke 17:3-5)

#### Temptation:

The prayer continues with the request that God should not lead us into temptation. From Bible understanding the phrasing is wrongly translated, because God does not leave people into temptation. God tries tests His people, but He does not tempt man. Apostle James stated: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." – James 1:13-15.

It is the devil who tempts people and so is known as “the tempter”. (Matthew 4:1, 3) The statement, “God did tempt Abraham” in Genesis 22:1 is properly put in Hebrews 11:17 where St. Paul said: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried...” In the words of James the apostle: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. – James 1:12.

While not leading us into temptation, God delivers us from temptation. Apostle Paul in his letter to the Christians at Corinth attests to this: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13) Writing in this vein, St. Peter said: “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” – 2 Peter 2:9; see also Luke 22:31

Deliverance from evil: The next prayer is for God to deliver us from evil. The world is full of evil, troubles or perils. It was for the purpose of saving mankind from the troubles or perils of this world that Jesus Christ came, suffered, died and was raised by the Father.. Apostle Paul said Jesus Christ: “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” -Galatians 1:4.

David the prophet was a man who suffered many afflictions at the instance of the devil. Yet God delivered him from the evils he encountered. He was therefore well placed to make this declaration: “The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.” – Psalms 34:17-19 See also John 10:27-29; 1 Peter 3:10-13

The account of the Lord’s Prayer in the book of Luke stops “at deliver us from evil” But the one of Matthew ends with a doxology: “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” According to authorities this part was added by later writers. It is not part of the inspired text. Adam Clarks commentary has this to say: “The whole of this doxology is rejected by Wetstein, Griesbach, and the most eminent critics. The authorities on which it is rejected may be seen in Griesbach and, Wetstein, particularly in the second edition of Griesbach’s Testament, who is fully of opinion that it never made a part of the sacred text. It is variously written in several MSS., and omitted by most of the fathers, both Greek and Latin.” Another reputable commentator Jamieson Fauset wrote: “If any reliance is to be placed on external evidence, this doxology, we think, can hardly be considered part of the original text. It is wanting in all the most ancient manuscripts; On a review of the evidence, the strong probability, we think, is that it was no part of the original text.”

From the foregoing it could be seen that the prayer, while not going into specifics, covers all a man or woman would ask from God. It is also not selfish as each petitioner is praying not only for himself but for all people of God. Besides, the prayer, in keeping with the words of Jesus Christ, is devoid of repetition.

It is necessary at this stage to recall the charge of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ that a prayer should be a quiet and sober affair. Those who make loud and long prayers are doing so for vainglory or ostentation. – Matthew 6:5-8

A fact that cannot be over-emphasized is that God will certainly answer those who say the Lord’s prayer with faith and understanding by His grace. The Bible says: “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us”. – 1 John 5:14