

The Lord's Prayer

by Clayton Dougan

Clayton Dougan emphasizes the relational aspect of prayer through the Lord's Prayer, highlighting our identity as children of God and the importance of trusting Him as our Father.

Duration: 35:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:9

Topics: "Lord's Prayer", "Relationship with God", "Prayer"

Description

Clayton Dougan emphasizes the relational aspect of prayer as taught in the Lord's Prayer, particularly focusing on the phrase 'Our Father who is in heaven.' He explains that this relationship signifies belonging to a family of believers and highlights the importance of reverence, reliance, repentance, and reconciliation in our prayers. Dougan encourages the congregation to understand God as a loving Father who desires a personal relationship with each of us, offering guidance, discipline, and comfort. He stresses that knowing God as our Father transforms our lives and empowers us to live in accordance with His will.

Transcript

Thank you so much and good morning everybody. It really is a tremendous privilege to be back at Westminster Bible Chapel. I say this honestly, but I kind of look upon this place as my sort of second spiritual home.

I know that a lot of people in this church pray for us and our ministry and we've had so many rich and precious times of fellowship in the past. It's just a delight to be back today. The last time I spoke in this church, as a matter of fact, to be quite honest, Duncan, there was nobody in the place, hardly.

And maybe that says a lot about the ministry, but... No, what was happening is that John Kemp was a huge help to me and we were in this place for a period of time and I recorded six DVDs that went to Africa to be used in a Bible school in Northern Uganda to help train pastors from Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda. And John and I had a terrific time together putting all that in place. And I just wanted to tell you, it's one of the things that we get involved in in serving the Lord, but the Lord really blessed that venture and I've had all kinds of emails back from Africa talking about how God used those CDs to bless the lives of many of those young pastors who were in training and the series was on prayer.

And it's just something God used. So I just wanted you to know, thank you for allowing us to use the building to do that. It was a huge help to us.

And so that just gives you a little idea of some of the things that we get involved in. I would like you to turn your Bibles this morning to Matthew's Gospel and chapter 6, please. Matthew's Gospel and chapter 6. And the message today is coming from a part of what we call the Lord's Prayer.

Now, let me just say by way of introduction that the Lord's Prayer is a wonderful prayer and there's nothing wrong with us repeating it as such. Nothing wrong with doing that. But that's not why the Lord Jesus gave us this wonderful prayer.

He gave us what we call the Lord's Prayer as a sort of pattern as to what prayer ought to be all about. And for example, let's just read it through together and I'll point out some things with you. What we're going to home in on this morning is the very first phrase of the Lord's Prayer where it says, Let's read it verse number 9. Jesus says, Pray then in this way, Our Father who is in heaven, That tells me there is relationship involved.

Hallowed be your name. That tells me we must come to God with a spirit of reverence. Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That is something that we must recognize as to the purpose of God for our planet. Verse 11 says, Give us this day our daily bread.

That tells me we pray with a spirit of reliance upon God. And forgive us our debts. That means we come to God with a spirit of repentance.

And then it says, As we forgive our debtors. That means that that repentance leads us towards reconciliation. And then it says, And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

That tells me that in my praying, I'm telling God I'm willing to relinquish everything that is evil and grieving to the Holy Spirit. And then it says, For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

That tells me that the one I'm praying to is the one who reigns and who will reign one day in the purposes of God. So all of these things are involved in this tremendous prayer that we call the Lord's Prayer. So we're coming this morning then, ladies and gentlemen, to talk about the first phrase of the prayer, Our Father Who is in Heaven.

Now let me tell you just something, just another little word of introduction. I am one of those people who believes passionately that every word of God's Word, the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, as it was originally given in the original languages, is God-breathed. Every word of it is inspired.

That means when you come to Matthew's Gospel, for example, and you begin at verse 1, and you read the first 17 verses, and you're just reading what's called the genealogy of Jesus, and it's telling us who begat who, and who begat who, and so it goes right down a whole list. That whole list of begets and begets and so on is just as inspired as any other part of the Word of God. And it's important we remember that.

Now, why do I tell you that? Well, in the very first verse of Matthew, because the Word of God says, the record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Why does He

mention David first? He does so for a very simple reason, that the whole of Matthew's Gospel is showing us looking at Jesus as the King. It's looking at Jesus as the Sovereign, as the King.

And as you go through Matthew's Gospel, you find particularly when you get to the later chapters, that Matthew's got a lot to say about Jesus as the One who is going to come, and He's going to reign upon this earth one day. He's going to set up His Kingdom. And Matthew is concentrating on that aspect of who Jesus is.

And in that context, people, as we come to think of who Jesus is, and this wonderful fact that He gives us what we call the Sermon on the Mount in which the Lord's Prayer is included, we find that the Lord Jesus is giving us something. He's raising the whole of life onto a whole new level. Some people look at the Sermon on the Mount and they think, well, that's impossible to live like that.

And they're absolutely right. It is. Absolutely impossible.

And the only way it becomes possible for you and me is by coming into relationship with Almighty God through Jesus Christ the Messiah, the Son of God. And in coming into relationship with Him, we then become filled with the Holy Spirit. God comes to live on the inside of us by His Spirit and gives us the resources to do what otherwise is totally impossible.

And we need to see that that is the kind of relationship into which God wants us to be brought into relationship with Himself. So when we come to think of the Lord's Prayer, our Father, who is in heaven, our Father, it is relational. Please, I just pray today that you will go from this place really excited about that fact.

Our Father. That says to me two things. Number one, it says there is a family involved.

It is our Father, not just my Father. It is our Father. And when you come to Christ, when you come to Christ, people, and you come to know Jesus personally, you come to know Jesus personally as your own Savior, you become part of a family.

You become part of a group of people that is totally unique upon this planet. There is no group of people like that, like this group of people. And there should be a few amens to that one, because that is absolutely right.

That is why the Bible calls us a peculiar people. A group of people called the Body of Christ. And when you become part of the Body of Christ, you are in a unique relationship.

You are in the family of God. It is a tremendous thing. Our Father.

Now, Dr. G.I. Packer says of this, he says that a Christian is one, very simply, a Christian is one who has God as his or her Father. It is as simple as that. That is what being a Christian is.

Knowing God as your Father. Coming into that relationship in this wonderful family called the people of God. When the New Testament describes the family of God in Galatians 3, for example, verse 26, it says we are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

We are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. John 1 tells us, as many as received Him, that is Christ, to them He gave the authority, the power, the right, to become the children of God. That means on receiving Christ personally, that individual is given all that he or she needs to be able to live as a child

of God.

To live a new quality of life. A quality of life, ladies and gentlemen, that is absolutely impossible apart from knowing Jesus. Absolutely impossible.

And maybe you are here today and you are struggling. Maybe you are here today and you wonder what life is all about. I want to say to you today, I want you to come to a new understanding of what it means to be in a relationship with Almighty God.

Coming to know Him personally as your Heavenly Father. It is a relationship. I want you to know too, if you go over to the book of Galatians in the New Testament, you find that Paul says something very wonderful there about this family.

In Galatians 4, he talks about Jesus coming at the proper time. Verse 5, that we might receive the adoption as sons. That we might receive the adoption as sons.

Normally when we think of somebody being adopted, we think of a baby being adopted, being received into a family. When the Bible talks about adoption, it's something that happens in adulthood. It's something that happens down the road a bit where the individual, the child, receives adoption.

They are declared publicly. They are inaugurated, if you like, into all the rights of the family. And that's what Paul is saying here.

Dr. Packer again tells us, when he talks, he goes into a lot of theological stuff, and he talks about justification, we're made right with God, and so on, and all that good stuff. But he makes this wonderful point that it goes from there and it gets better all the time. And it gets higher and higher all the time until we come to this wonderful place of receiving adoption.

That means all the rights of the family of God. Hallelujah! All the rights of the family of God become ours as we know Jesus as our Savior. It's all by God's wonderful grace.

God's love for us. And if you go back to the book of Romans, it tells us there in chapter 8 about some of those rights to the family of God. And down about verse number 15, it says, we have not received the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption.

We have received it as sons by which we cry out, Abba, Father. We'll come to that in a moment. The Spirit, when we are doing that, you see, when we are in that relationship with God, what's happening is the Holy Spirit Himself is testifying, is bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Now that is an awesome thing. I want to tell you this morning, if you were standing with us in this church and you were able to join in worship, and you were able to say and your whole heart was overflowing, and you were saying, Father, we adore You, what was happening people? The Holy Spirit in you was witnessing that you are a child of God. I want to tell you, if you are not a child of God, you would not want to do that.

Amen? It would mean nothing. It would be empty. It would be dead religiosity.

But when you know the witness of the Spirit of God in your heart, you want to worship. You want to say, Abba, Father. Praise God.

And then Paul says in that Romans 8 passage, he says, and if we are children, then we are heirs also. Heirs of God. Fellow heirs with Christ Jesus.

If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him. My simple point is this people, listen to me. If you are a child of God, and God is your Heavenly Father, and you have received that Spirit of Adoption, you are part of the family, all the rights of the family are yours, you are in the will people.

Amen? You are in the will. Now God's got a lot of children. And usually the more children they are, the less each kid gets when the will is divided up, right? In God's will, every child, millions of them, they all get it all.

They all get it all. That's amazing. Because in God's way of thinking, He doesn't work by division, He works by multiplication all the time.

You are in the will people. And all the glory of God is for you. Now listen to me folks, when that is real in your heart and mine, and we go through life with that relationship with God, I want to tell you, your life is going to take on a whole new meaning.

Do you get what I'm saying when I say, it raises the whole thing onto a whole new level? You begin to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. You begin to live with this wonderful fact that Jesus is literally living on the inside of you by His Spirit. That is what changes everything.

That is what gives it all new meaning. Praise the Lord. So, it's relational.

We are in the family. But of course, that goes without saying, being in the family means we have a Father. We have a Father.

To give you a little picture of what, a reminder of what fatherhood is all about, because I often meet people in the course of my ministry, and you talk to them about the fatherhood of God, and God being their Father, and they have virtually no understanding of what fatherhood means. Some people hate their father. Some people can't stand the very thought of the guy.

Some people have never known their father. They have very little idea of what a father is all about in experience. But I think it's true to say, as Dr. Packer also has said in one of his books, every one of us has an idea in our minds as to what we would like fatherhood to be.

Amen? We all have an idea, a thought in our mind, as to what we feel fatherhood should be like. I want to tell you, God is able to be and wants to be all of that and more to you today. God wants to bring you into a relationship with Himself where you will experience perfect fatherhood in your relationship with Him.

In 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul is talking about these new Christians that he had been thrilled to bring to faith in Christ. And he talks about the fact that he ministers to them, first of all, with the gentleness of a nursing mother. We've seen a little bit about that this morning already.

No man can be a mother. No woman can be a father. They're wired differently.

There is a gentleness. God has given them a specific role. There is a gentleness and a tenderness about a woman in a child's life that a man does not have.

But then when it comes to the role of the father, Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2, he says to them, you are witnesses and so is God how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behave towards you believers.

Just as you know how we were exhorting, encouraging and imploring each of you as a father would his own children. In other words, the relationship between the father and the child is a very personal thing.

Sometimes it means exhorting. I was just thinking this morning when something Duncan, I think it was, said. I remember times when with all his parents, you know what this means.

You're talking to your kid and you know you are being ignored. And you grab the little one and you say, turn around and look at me. Look at me.

Are you listening? Look at me. And there are always times when there is that pointed word of exhortation. Dear friend this morning, maybe God, your father, heavenly father, wants to invite you and he's saying to you this morning, listen, I don't know what's going on.

I know what's going on in your life. Look at me. Look at me, God's saying.

Get focused on me. I've got something to say to you. I want you to hear me.

I want to exhort. I want to encourage. I want to build you up.

And people listen to it. I was just thinking about this the other day. I remember our younger son, Tim.

Every night when he went to bed as a little guy, I used to love putting him to bed at night because every night this thing, he said, what shall we do tomorrow? Every night, same thing. What shall we do tomorrow? And after he'd been to school, the first day at school, he went to bed at night. He said, what shall we do tomorrow? We said, he'd go to school tomorrow again.

Again, he said? He'd got all his education in one day. But the thing about that little guy that I used to love, he used to get into bed and he would put his arms up just like this for a hug. These are wonderful moments for a dad.

He wants you today, wherever you're at, to say, I need a hug. You are loved, people. You are loved by Almighty God.

Whatever's going on today, you are loved with an everlasting love. And He wants to bring you into that kind of relationship where sometimes you're just going to need a hug. There will be times when God will deal severely and you'll have words of exhortation.

Other times He will encourage you. But He'll be all of that in your life. It's a relationship, people.

It's a relationship. The fatherhood of God is so wonderful. Sometimes we need disciplining.

I heard something this past week and it's true and I couldn't believe it. Somebody who was professing to be a Christian said that God had told him this is a married man God had told him he was going to win the lottery so he was making no provision for his retirement to the extent that his wife was having to make her own arrangements. Now that, people, is immaturity in the extreme.

That guy needs disciplining. I don't know what his pastor is teaching him. He's not in this church, by the way.

I don't know what his pastor is teaching him, but they ain't teaching him much, that's for sure. Sometimes God has to get our attention, folks. God has to say, your number one thing as a Christian in your life is

your relationship with Me.

And I want to tell you, people, when you're in relationship with God, He will stop at nothing to make you like His Son, Jesus. He'll stop at nothing to make that happen. Sometimes it's discipline.

Sometimes it's encouragement. Sometimes it's just a hug that we need from God. But not only that, but it's not only relational, it's realistic.

Our Father. Our Father. Relational.

Realistic. Who is? Who is? Amen? Now, what are we talking about here? Who? Who are we talking about? I want you to know, people, that the New Testament God, the God we read about in Matthew's Gospel and throughout the New Testament, is the same God that we read about in the Old Testament. And if you go back to the book of Exodus, you remember in Exodus chapter 3, God revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush.

You'll remember the story maybe. And at that time, this was a new experience. God was revealing Himself in a new way to His people.

And God revealed Himself to Moses as the One who said, I am who I am. I am who I am. The One who always was.

The One who is without beginning, without end. The everlasting Father. And God revealed Himself like this to Moses.

The great, eternal, unchanging God. And we can think of Moses. We can think of Gideon.

We can think of Samuel. We can think of King David. We can think of Solomon.

We can go on and on and on. These great men. Esther, Ruth.

These great men and women of God in the Old Testament who proved who God is. The Almighty God. And I want to tell you this morning, the next time you read these stories, I want you to think of this.

That is the God who is in your life right now if you're a believer in Jesus. The very same God. The I Am.

The Eternal God is the One who is in your life right now. The same God. Unchanging.

Psalms number 9 tells us, Those who know Your name will put their trust in You. For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You. Ladies and gentlemen, this morning, it would be a wonderful thing if God just drew near to you in a new way today and reminded you and showed you again, this is the God whom you can trust.

This is your God. The Eternal, Unchanging, All-Powerful God. And sometimes, Frank and I were driving over here today and we're talking about times in our lives when things are going on and you haven't a clue what's happening.

You don't know why it's happening. I've had times in my life when I'm saying to God, the Lord tells me that He's able to make all things work together for good in my life. And there are times in my life when I've got to say, Lord, I haven't got a clue what this is all about right now.

I don't know what's going on right now, but Lord, I just have to trust You. I just have to trust You. And God is saying to us in this relationship with Him, that's partly what it's all about.

And the ability to trust comes when we begin to understand who God is. Ladies and gentlemen, the trouble with most of us is our God is too small. We try to rationalize God all the time.

You cannot do that. You cannot put God in a box. You cannot put God in your mind, in the smallness of your mind.

We cannot do that with God. He is totally other than we are. The Almighty God.

But at the same time, He is the One who is not only personal, Who is, but He is available. He is right now. Hallelujah.

He is available to you every moment. We read in Romans a moment ago that phrase, Abba, Father. Some of us as Christians these days, we get the idea, you know, we've heard the expression that Abba means my own dear Daddy and that that sometimes for some of us becomes an excuse for over familiarity with God.

There are two things combined in our relationship with God, folks. Number one is that simple childlike trust. I need a hug.

Abba. But there's Father. I had a wonderful father.

I loved him dearly. But I knew how far I could go with him. I knew how far I could go.

I held him in respect. There was a respect. Do you know what I want to tell you people? I just love to be in the presence of God.

I love Him with all my heart. But I want to say this, men and women, if God's presence came on this place today, I don't care who you are, you would be on your face on the floor. When the great revival happened in Lewis, in the western Hebrides of Scotland in the 1940s, there was a meeting one time and Christians were met for prayer and the presence of God came upon that meeting and there was a literal fragrance in the meeting.

A literal fragrance. So much so that when people met, folk who had been at the prayer meeting were saying, I like your aftershave. Not aftershave lotion.

It was a fragrance, a literal fragrance of the presence of God that came. A friend of mine, his assistant pastor in his church became a Christian at that time and told the story how that his brother, who is still not a Christian, but every time he talks about that time, he speaks in hushed tones. The presence of God is so powerful, so real.

But in that relationship, people, there's this combination with that father-child relationship but also with an intelligent, confident relationship. Praise God. But the last thing I want to say to you is this.

Not only is it relational and realistic, but it's radical. He is our Father who is in heaven. Who is in heaven.

Praise God. That's his position today. The Almighty God who is in heaven.

I love the verses at the beginning of 1 John. 1 John, it talks about our relationship. It says our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Men and women, I want to tell you today our friend James Cameron, whose ever bones were in the ossuary that he discovered recently, they were not. Whoever Jesus it may have been, it wasn't Jesus, the Son of God. Amen? Whatever other Jesus it may have been, it wasn't the Son of God.

Jesus, the Son of God, is raised from the dead and today is in heaven at God's right hand. And the man who wrote these words was an eyewitness. Listen to me.

Listen to what he says. What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the Word of Life. John is saying, you can imagine, he was absolutely overwhelmed with it.

He's saying what I'm talking about now, I saw it with my own eyes. Do you ever get frustrated with somebody who won't believe you when you're telling them something? And you say, listen, I saw it. I saw it with my own eyes.

Listen people, the Gospel records were written by eyewitnesses. They were written by eyewitnesses. They saw Him raised from the dead.

He said He was alive. Amen? It's not a box of bones somewhere. The real grave of Jesus is empty.

He's not there anymore. He is risen. And He's at God's right hand today.

And that Jesus who died for you and me on a cross and rose from the dead, who paid the debt of my sin totally on that cross and rose from the dead, He did it so that I could come and call God my Father. Sorry, I've upset somebody. And John says, the life was manifested.

We have seen and testified and proclaimed to you the eternal life which was with the Father was manifested unto us. What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Ladies and gentlemen, this morning, it's a radical thing this. Hallelujah! I just love this. Your relationship with Almighty God is the most radical thing that you will ever think about.

This is life changing. This is life transforming. This is what gives men and women the hope that they need for the future.

Amen? In the sweet by and by. That's not pie in the sky when you die, people. This is radical reality.

Jesus rose from the dead. He's coming again. And by the way, I'm not looking for Antichrist coming.

I'm looking for Jesus coming. And He's coming to take me home. Amen? I'm not going through the great tribulation.

You can if you like, but I'm not. I won't be here. I'm not going to be here, men and women.

I'm going to be gone. Amen? And Jesus is coming to reign upon this earth. And if you're in the will, people, you're going to enjoy it.

You're going to be part of it all. Hallelujah. Oh, dear friends this morning, as we conclude this message, is He your Father? Can you say today, Father, Abba, Father? It's all relationship, people.

And God is inviting you. If that's not real for you, He's inviting you to come to Him today. He's inviting you to come and say, Lord, I want this relationship.

I don't want to be me here repeating the Lord's Prayer and you there on the outside of my life. I want you, Lord, to be living on the inside of me so that I know I'm indwelt by your Spirit and your Spirit is witnessing with my Spirit that I really am a child of God. And people, that's where we come to real assurance as well because we see the life-changing work of God's Spirit that we are being changed.

And we know that that's not ourselves that's doing it. Amen? It's God's Spirit within us. And God's inviting you today.

If that's not your relationship with Him, He's inviting you to come today. And maybe you're a Christian this morning. You haven't been walking with the Lord like you should.

And your Heavenly Father is taking you by the head and He's turning you around and He says, Look at me. I need to talk to you. I've got things to say to you.

I want to draw near again. I'm going to suggest this morning because maybe there's somebody here and you would like to come to that relationship. We're going to be singing a hymn in a moment.

As we do that, if you would like to talk with me afterwards or with one of the elders of this church, as we sing the hymn, you come and sit down in the front here. Just come. Sit down here just to show that you really mean business with God today.

You really want to know Him. You really want His love in your life. You really want that relationship that only He can give you.

You come. We'd be thrilled to pray with you. God bless you.

Let's just pray briefly together. Almighty God, what a wonderful privilege it is to come into Your presence and address You as our Father. Lord, please, we pray.

Grant that for everyone in this room that relationship will be meaningful, powerful, precious, full of hope. Lord, please, today, have Your way in our lives. Bless Your Word and bring glory and praise to Your name.

Amen.

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