**Sermon – Sunday 27th July 2025 – Trinity 6 (Yr C)**

**May I speak in the name of the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

I expect we have all been in a situation when we have seen someone do something that we wished we could do, and we pluck up the courage to ask the person to show us how to do it.

This can be a range of activities and there is often no age restriction when we ask someone to help us do something: -

* When we were small it might be to learn to ride a bicycle.
* Or when we are a little older to drive.
* Or how do solve a particularly tricky maths problem that has been set as homework.
* Or how to work out how to put the flat pack furniture together.

We learn best from others and we hopefully all know the value of a good teacher when we were or are at school that can inspire a love of a particular subject in us.

Equally we know the damage that a bad teacher or a bad example can set.

In our Gospel the disciples as a question of Jesus: -

“Lord, teach us to pray”

They had been aware of Jesus praying and as we know he would often take himself away to a quiet place to pray and commune with his Father.

The disciples wanted to learn how to pray and to have the ability to speak to God in the way that Jesus was and they were struggling with the words or what we would call the structure or format of prayer.

Jesus answered them with the words that we now recognise as The Lord’s Prayer – “Our Father”, although it is not a prayer that Jesus himself would have prayed – he was without sin so would not have needed to ask for foregiveness.

This is a prayer that is said daily as part of services throughout the world and is recognisable, whatever the language.

A couple of weeks ago I took a funeral for a family from Sri Lanka and at points in the service Tamil was spoken including during the prayers and despite not understanding the language it was clear when the Pastor leading the prayers invited everyone to pray the prayer – a universal prayer.

When I visited the Holy Land in 1997, one of the churches that we visited was the Church of the Pater Noster on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. It is believed to be the site where Jesus taught the disciples this prayer – Pater Noster means “Our Father”.

One of the beautiful features of this Church are the mosaics of the Lord’s Prayer in virtually every known language that are on the walls of the Church – the poster in front of the altar shows examples of the individual mosaics.

The prayer has become central to a life of prayer and many of us will remember saying as part of our school assemblies each day.

What does this prayer teach us about God and what does it mean when we pray it, either alone or as part of an act of worship?

If we look at the various sections of the prayer, we can gain an understanding of what Jesus was saying to the disciples and how we, too, should pray.

As with all verses in the Bible we need to look at the context in which Jesus was speaking and the verses in the passage as recounted in Matthew’s Gospel Chapter 6, speak of piety in our worship i.e. not making a big show of our religious observance.

He was focussing on quality of our prayer rather than quantity or length although there is nothing wrong with long prayer meetings as long as the focus is on God.

Jesus was focused on sincerity of heart, secrecy if the door is shut, simple language and serenity of mind – an attitude or approach to prayer that all of us could benefit from.

So, what do the sections of the prayer say to us?

Time precludes us from a detailed analysis of each phrase or section – if you wish to look at the prayer in more detail, I do have some notes from a series of thoughts that I gave a few years ago that I am happy to copy for you – but a few reflections are: -

*“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come”*

Recognition that God is our Father and we can have that relationship through his Son, Jesus Christ.

One question that people often ask is why “Our” not “My”, especially when we are praying on our own. Answer is that when we pray we are united with all those throughout the world who are praying at that moment as well.

Hallowed be thy Name – praise to God for who God is.

Thy kingdom come – both in the here and now and in the time to come, both physically but also within each of our hearts.

*“Thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread”*

The focus of this part of the prayer is to enable us to bring our wills into harmony with God’s will, which may be difficult.

It is difficult sometimes to relate what is happening in our lives as being the will of God and we can at times wonder why God is not answering our prayers in the way that we wish.

Jesus alludes to this challenge in the second part of our Gospel when he talks about how people respond to requests at a human level and only look to give good things.

So it is with God.

God knows what we need – not what we want – and the prayer is focussing on lining these two aspects up in unison.

Give us our daily bread – the clear request for our needs to be met – daily bread covers all our needs, not just food.

Daily – day in question, necessary for survival, for the coming day.

Focus on asking daily – not making a long shopping list looking far into the future.

“Us” not “me” – corporate prayer, asking for the needs of the world.

*“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”.*

We ask for forgiveness for our sins and we know that divine remission of sins is conditioned by a right attitude of heart towards God – repentance, confession and faith.

If we forgive someone, we must mean it – Jesus warns against insincerity in prayers of forgiveness.

We know that events and things can be forgiven and are not eternal, unbreakable as set out in some other religions.

We pray the prayer daily as we need forgiveness daily.

*“And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil”*

We will never get to the point where we are free of temptations or trials – part of being human.

We can look around us and see the many different ways in which we can be tempted to act or do or say the wrong thing.

Asking for God’s protection and deliverance from such trials daily.

*“For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen”*

Known as the Doxology.

Gives a hint of the Trinity – Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen – we agree.

As we look at this prayer we can see three distinct aspects of God: -

The Holiness of God – hinted at by the focus on our transgressions against others and against God.

The Grace of God – God’s grace makes forgiveness possible – we are forgiven

The Justice of God – having been declared forgiven, we must also act justly; having been loved by God, we must love others.

As we can see, Jesus, in answering the disciples’ question, “Lord, teach us to pray” gave a framework that over the centuries has become a recognisable prayer that is prayed daily by Christians throughout the world, in their own language, collectively and individually.

It unites us as believers and reminds us of your need for forgiveness, for our daily bread and deliverance from temptation.

As you continue your own Christian journeys, may you receive comfort as you pray this prayer to a loving all knowing God, who only wants the best for each one of us.

**Amen.**