

Historical Commentary

(The 7th Sunday of Trinitytide - Year C)



The Liturgy Letter

Historical Commentary on Luke 11:1-13

Selections from Church Fathers, John Calvin, and The Heidelberg Catechism

Cyril of Alexandria: For the Savior said, “When you pray, say, ‘Our Father.’ ” And another of the holy Evangelists adds, “who art in heaven.” ... He gives his own glory to us. He raises slaves to the dignity of freedom. He crowns the human condition with such honor as surpasses the power of nature. He brings to pass what was spoken of old by the voice of the psalmist: “I said, you are gods, and all of you children of the Most High.” He rescues us from the measure of slavery, giving us by his grace what we did not possess by nature, and permits us to call God “Father,” as being admitted to the rank of sons. We received this, together with all our other privileges, from him. One of these privileges is the dignity of freedom, a gift peculiarly befitting those who have been called to be sons.

He commands us, therefore, to take boldness and say in our prayers, “Our Father.” We, who are children of earth and slaves and subject by the law of nature to him who created us, call him who is in heaven “Father.” Most fittingly, he enables those who pray to understand this also. Since we call God “Father” and have been counted worthy of such a distinguished honor, we must lead holy and thoroughly blameless lives. We must behave as is pleasing to our Father and not think or say anything unworthy or unfit for the freedom that has been bestowed on us...

The Savior of all very wisely grants us to call God “Father,” that we, knowing well that we are sons of God, may behave in a manner worthy of him who has honored us. He will then receive the supplications that we offer in Christ.

What, therefore, is the meaning of “hallowed be your name”?...

When it is our settled conviction and belief that he who by nature is God over all is Holy of the Holies, we confess his glory and supreme majesty. We then receive his fear into our mind and lead upright and blameless lives. By this we become holy ourselves, and we may be able to be near unto the holy God... The prayer is, therefore, “May your name be kept holy in us, in our minds and wills.” This is the significance of the word *hallowed*. If a person says, “Our Father, hallowed be your name,” he is not requesting any addition to be made to God’s holiness. He rather asks that he may possess such a mind and faith to feel that his name is honorable and holy. The act is the source of life and the cause of every blessing.

Why then did he command the saints to say to God the Father in heaven, “Your will be done; as in heaven, so on earth?” ... This petition is worthy of the saints and full of all praise...

We request that power may be given to those on earth to do the will of God and imitate the conduct practiced above in heaven by the holy angels...

Augustine: “Your kingdom come.” To whom do we address this petition? Will the kingdom of God not come unless we ask for it? That kingdom will exist after the end of the world. God has a kingdom forever. He is never without a kingdom, for all creation is subject to him. Then for what kingdom do we wish? It is written in the Gospel, “Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” See, that is the kingdom of which we speak when we say, “Thy kingdom come.” May that kingdom come within us and may we be found within that kingdom. That is our petition. Of course it will come. How will that benefit you if it finds you at the left hand? In this petition, you also wish a blessing on yourself. It is on your own behalf that you pray. In this petition, this is what you desire and long for, namely, that you may so live as to have a share in the kingdom that will be given to all the saints. When you say, “Thy kingdom come,” you pray for yourself, because you pray that you may lead a good life. May we partake of your kingdom. May the kingdom that is to come to your saints and your righteous ones also come to us.

Ephrem the Syrian: “Give us our constant bread of the day.” Look, he has said, “Seek the kingdom of God, and these things over and above will be given to you as well.” He said “of the day” to teach us poverty in relation to the things of the world. It is sufficient for only our need, or else when we are anxious for a time, we might withdraw from intimacy with God. This bread of the day indicates necessity. He does not just give us only bread but also clothing and other things, as he said, “Your Father knows what your needs are before you ask him.”

John Cassian: “Give us this day our supersubstantial bread.” Another Evangelist uses the term *daily*. The first expression indicates that this bread has a noble and substantial character by which its exalted splendor and holiness surpass all substances and all creatures.

With “daily” the Evangelist shows that without this bread we cannot live a spiritual life for even a day. When he says “this day,” he shows that the bread must be eaten each day. It will not be enough to have eaten yesterday unless we eat similarly today. May our daily poverty encourage us to pour out this prayer at all times, for there is no day on which it is unnecessary for us to eat this bread to strengthen the heart of the person within us.

“Daily” can also be understood as referring to our present life. That is, “give us this bread while we linger in this present world.” We know that in the time to come you will give it to whoever deserves it, but we ask that you give it to us today. He who has not received it in this life will not be able to partake of it in that next life.

Tertullian: Divine Wisdom arranged the order of this prayer with exquisite choice. After the matters that pertain to heaven—that is, after the name of God, the will of God and the kingdom of God—it should make a place for a petition for our earthly needs too! Our Lord taught us, “Seek first the kingdom, and then these things shall be given you besides.” We should rather understand “give us this day our daily bread” in a spiritual sense. For Christ is “our bread,” because Christ is life, and the life is bread. “I am,” he said, “the bread of life.” Shortly before this he said, “The bread is the word of the living God who has come down from heaven.” Then, because his body is considered to be in the bread, he said, “This is my body.” When we ask for our daily bread, we are asking to live forever in Christ and to be inseparably united with his body.

Cyril of Alexandria: He requires his disciples to be gentle and slow to anger, so that they may be able to say blamelessly in their prayers, “Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted unto us.” ... He first commands them to ask forgiveness of the sins they commit and then to confess that they entirely forgive others. If I may say so, they ask God to imitate the patience that they practice. The same gentleness that they show to their fellow servants, they pray that they may receive in equal measure from God, who gives justly, and knows how to show mercy to everyone...

Tertullian: To complete the prayer which was so well arranged, Christ added that we should pray not only that our sins be forgiven but also that we should completely shun them. “Lead us not into temptation,” that is, do not allow us to be led by the tempter. God forbid that our Lord should seem to be the tempter, as if he were not aware of one’s faith or were eager to upset it! That weakness and spitefulness belongs to the devil. Even in the case of Abraham, God ordered the sacrifice of his son not to tempt his faith but to prove it. He did this to set an example for his commandment that he was later to teach that no one should hold his loved ones dearer than God. Christ himself was tempted by the devil and pointed out the subtle director of the temptation. He confirms this passage by his words to his apostles later when he says, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” They were tempted to desert their Lord because they had indulged in sleep instead of prayer. The phrase that balances and interprets “lead us not into temptation” is “but deliver us from evil.”

Ambrose: You see that he who woke his friend at midnight demanding three loaves of bread and, persisting in his intention to receive, finds that his requests are not denied. What are those three loaves if not the nourishment of the heavenly mystery? If you love the Lord your God, you will be able to deserve this not only for yourself but also for others. Then who is a greater friend to us than he who surrendered his own body for us?

Bede: If we look into the words of our Lord and Savior that he encourages us to ask God our Father after the example of an earthly parent, we quickly recognize what is the righteousness that can open for us the way to the heavenly kingdom. “Which one of you,” he says, “if his son asks his father for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent in place of the fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will hand him a scorpion?” This is truly a clear comparison, easy for all hearers to understand. Any human, mortal, weak and still burdened with sinful flesh, does not refuse to give the good things

which he possesses, although they are earthly and weak, to the children whom he loves. Our heavenly Father, even more than this man, lavishes the good things of heaven, which do not perish, on those who ask of him and are endowed with fear and love of him.

Augustine: Of those three things that the apostle commends, faith is either signified by the fish, because of the water of baptism, or because it remains unharmed by the waves of this world. The Serpent is opposed to it, because it craftily and deceitfully persuaded man not to believe in God. The egg symbolizes hope, because the chick is not yet alive but will be; it is not yet seen but is hoped. “Hope that is seen is not hope.” The scorpion is opposed to hope, because whoever hopes for eternal life forgets the things that are behind and reaches out to those that are before. It is dangerous for him to look backward, and he is on guard against the rear of the scorpion, which has a poisoned dart in its tail. Bread symbolizes love, because “the greatest of these is love,” and among foods, bread certainly surpasses all others in value. The stone is opposed to it because the stone hearted cast out love. It may be that these gifts signify something more appropriate, yet he who knows how to give good gifts to his children urges us to ask, seek and knock.

Cyril of Alexandria: We sometimes come near to our bounteous God offering him petitions for various objects according to each one’s pleasure. Sometimes we pray without discernment or any careful examination of what truly is to our advantage, and if granted by God would prove a blessing or would be to our injury if we received it. Rather, by the inconsiderate impulse of our fancy, we fall into desires full of ruin that thrust the souls of those that entertain them into the snare of death and the meshes of hell. When we ask of God anything of this kind, we will by no means receive it. On the contrary, we offer a petition suitable only for ridicule. Why will we not receive it? Is the God of all weary of bestowing gifts on us? By no means. “Why then,” someone may say, “will he not give, since he is bounteous in giving?”...

When he says, “You who are evil,” he means “you whose mind is capable of being influenced by evil and not uniformly inclined to good like the God of all.” “You know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give a good spirit to them that ask him?” By a “good spirit” he means “spiritual grace.” This is good in every way. If a person receives it, he will become most blessed and worthy of admiration.

John Calvin: Nothing is more advantageous to us than such instruction. Though this is the most important exercise of piety, yet in forming our prayers, and regulating our wishes, all our senses fail us. No man will pray aright, unless his lips and heart shall be directed by the Heavenly Master. For that purpose he has laid down this rule, by which we must frame our prayers, if we desire to have them accounted lawful and approved by God. It was not the intention of the Son of God, (as we have already said), to prescribe the words which we must use, so as not to leave us at liberty to depart from the form which he has dictated. His intention rather was, to guide and restrain our wishes, that they might not go beyond those limits and hence we infer, that the rule which he has given us for praying aright relates not to the words, but to the things themselves.

This form of prayer consists, as I have said, of six petitions. The first three, it ought to be known, relate to the glory of God, without any regard to ourselves; and the remaining three relate to those things which are necessary for our salvation. As the law of God is divided into two tables, of which the former contains the duties of piety, and the latter the duties of charity, so in prayer Christ enjoins us to consider and seek the glory of God, and, at the same time, permits us to consult our own interests. Let us therefore know, that we shall be in a state of mind for praying in a right manner, if we not only are in earnest about ourselves and our own advantage, but assign the first place to the glory of God: for it would be altogether preposterous to mind only what belongs to ourselves, and to disregard the kingdom of God, which is of far greater importance.

Whenever we engage in prayer, there are two things to be considered, both that we may have access to God, and that we may rely on Him with full and unshaken confidence: his fatherly love toward us, and his boundless power. Let us therefore entertain no doubt, that God is willing to receive us graciously, that he is ready to listen to our prayers, — in a word, that of Himself he is disposed to aid us. Father is the appellation given to him; and under this title Christ supplies us with sufficiently copious materials for confidence. But as it is only the half of our reliance that is founded on the goodness of God, in the next clause, who art in heaven, he gives us a lofty idea of the power of God. When the Scripture says, that God is in heaven, the meaning is, that all things are subject to his dominions, — that the world, and everything in it, is held by his hand, — that his power is everywhere diffused, — that all things are arranged by his providence. David says, “He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh at them,” ([Psalm 2:4](#)); and again, “Our God is in heaven: he hath done whatever he hath pleased,” ([Psalm 115:3](#)).

When God is said to be in heaven, we must not suppose that he dwells only there; but, on the contrary, must hold what is said in another passage, that “the heavens of heavens do not contain him,” ([2 Chronicles 2:6](#)). This mode of expression separates him from the rank of creatures, and reminds us that, when we think of him, we ought not to form any low or earthly conceptions: for he is higher than the whole world. We have now ascertained the design of Christ. In the commencement of the prayer, he desired his own people to rest their confidence on the goodness and power of God; because, unless our prayers are founded on faith, they will be of no advantage. Now, as it would be the folly and madness of presumption, to call God our Father, except on the ground that, through our union to the body of Christ, we are acknowledged as his children, we conclude, that there is no other way of praying aright, but by approaching God with reliance on the Mediator.

May thy name be sanctified This makes still more manifest what I have said, that in the first three petitions we ought to lose sight of ourselves, and seek the glory of God: not that it is separated from our salvation, but that the majesty of God ought to be greatly preferred by us to every other object of solicitude. It is of unspeakable advantage to us that God reigns, and that he receives the honor which is due to him: but no man has a sufficiently earnest desire to promote the glory of God, unless (so to speak) he forgets himself, and raises his mind to seek God’s exalted greatness. There is a close connection and resemblance between those three petitions. The sanctification of the name of God is always connected with his kingdom; and the most important part of his kingdom lies in his

will being done. Whoever considers how cold and negligent we are in desiring the greatest of those blessings for which we are here commanded to pray, will acknowledge that nothing here is superfluous, but that it is proper that the three petitions should be thus distinguished.

To sanctify the name of God means nothing else, than to give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, so that men may never think or speak of him but with the deepest veneration. The opposite of this is the profanation of the name of God, which takes place, when men either speak disrespectfully of the divine majesty, or at least without that reverence which they ought to feel. Now, the glory, by which it is sanctified, flows and results from the acknowledgments made by men as to the wisdom, goodness, righteousness, power, and all the other attributes of God. For holiness always dwells, and permanently remains, in God: but men obscure it by their malice and depravity, or dishonor and pollute it by sacrilegious contempt. The substance of this petition is, that the glory of God may shine in the world, and may be duly acknowledged by men. But religion is in its highest purity and rigour, when men believe, that whatever proceeds from God is right and proper, full of righteousness and wisdom: for the consequence is, that they embrace his word with the obedience of faith, and approve of all his ordinances and works. That faith which we yield to the word of God is, so to speak, our subscription, by which we “set to our seal that God is faithful,” ([John 3:33](#);) as the highest dishonor that can be done to him is unbelief and contempt of his word.

We must first attend to the definition of the kingdom of God. He is said to reign among men, when they voluntarily devote and submit themselves to be governed by him, placing their flesh under the yoke, and renouncing their desires. Such is the corruption of the nature, that all our affections are so many soldiers of Satan, who oppose the justice of God, and consequently obstruct or disturb his reign. By this prayer we ask, that he may remove all hindrances, and may bring all men under his dominion, and may lead them to meditate on the heavenly life.

This is done partly by the preaching of the word, and partly by the secret power of the Spirit. It is his will to govern men by his word: but as the bare voice, if the inward power of the Spirit be not added, does not pierce the hearts of men, both must be joined together, in order that the kingdom of God may be established. We therefore pray that God would exert his power, both by the Word and by the Spirit, that the whole world may willingly submit to him.

There is still another way in which God reigns; and that is, when he overthrows his enemies, and compels them, with Satan their head, to yield a reluctant subjection to his authority, “till they all be made his footstools” ([Hebrews 10:13](#).) The substance of this prayer is, that God would enlighten the world by the light of his Word, – would form the hearts of men, by the influences of his Spirit, to obey his justice, and would restore to order, by the gracious exercise of his power, all the disorder that exists in the world. Now, he commences his reign by subduing the desires of our flesh. Again, as the kingdom of God is continually growing and advancing to the end of the world, we must pray every day that

it may come: for to whatever extent iniquity abounds in the world, to such an extent the kingdom of God, which brings along with it perfect righteousness, is not yet come.

May thy will be done Although the will of God, viewed in itself, is one and simple, it is presented to us in Scripture under a twofold aspect. It is said, that the will of God is done, when he executes the secret counsels of his providence, however obstinately men may strive to oppose him. But here we are commanded to pray that, in another sense, his will may be done, – that all creatures may obey him, without opposition, and without reluctance. This appears more clearly from the comparison, as in heaven, For, as He has the angels constantly ready to execute his commands, (and hence they are said to do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word, [Psalm 103:20](#),) so we desire that all men may have their will formed to such harmony with the righteousness of God, that they may freely bend in whatever direction he shall appoint. It is, no doubt, a holy desire, when we bow to the will of God, and acquiesce in his appointments. But this prayer implies something more. It is a prayer, that God may remove all the obstinacy of men, which rises in unceasing rebellion against him, and may render them gentle and submissive, that they may not wish or desire any thing but what pleases him, and meets his approbation.

But it may be objected: Ought we to ask from God what, he declares, will never exist to the end of the world? I reply: When we pray that the earth may become obedient to the will of God, it is not necessary that we should look particularly at every individual. It is enough for us to declare, by such a prayer as this, that we hate and regret whatever we perceive to be contrary to the will of God, and long for its utter destruction, not only that it may be the rule of all our affections, but that we may yield ourselves without reserve, and with all cheerfulness, to its fulfillment.

Give us today our daily bread Of the form of prayer which Christ has prescribed to us this may be called, as I have said, the Second Table. I have adopted this mode of dividing it for the sake of instruction. The precepts which relate to the proper manner of worshipping God are contained in the First Table of the law, and those which relate to the duties of charity in the Second. Again, in this prayer, – “I have formerly divided it thus, in order to instruct more familiarly.” our Lord first instructs us to seek the glory of God, and then points out, in the second part, what we ought to ask for ourselves. But it must be observed, that the prayers which we offer for our salvation, or for our own advantage, ought to have this for their ultimate object: for we must not be so exclusively occupied with what is advantageous to ourselves, as to omit, in any instance, to give the first place to the glory of God. When we pray, therefore, we must never turn away our eyes from that object.

The meaning is now obvious. We are first commanded to pray, that God would protect and cherish the life which he has given to us in the world, and, as we need many supports, that he would supply us with everything that he knows to be needful. Now, as the kindness of God flows in uninterrupted succession to feed us, the bread which he bestows is called ἐπιούσιος, that is, continual: for so it may be rendered. This word suggests to us such a petition as the following: “O Lord, since our life needs every day new supplies, may it

please thee to grant them to us without interruption.” The adverb today, as I said a little ago, is added to restrain our excessive desire, and to teach us, that we depend every moment on the kindness of God, and ought to be content with that portion which he gives us, to use a common expression, “from day to day.”

But here an objection may be urged. It is certain, that Christ has given a rule for prayer, which belongs equally to all the godly. Now, some of their number are rich men, who have their yearly produce laid up in store. Why does he command them to ask what they have at home, and to ask every day those things of which they have an abundant supply for a year? The reply is easy. These words remind us that, unless God feed us daily, the largest accumulation of the necessaries of life will be of no avail. Though we may have abundance of corn, and wine, and everything else, unless they are watered by the secret blessing of God, they will suddenly vanish, or we will be deprived of the use of them, or they will lose their natural power to support us, so that we shall famish in the midst of plenty. There is therefore no reason to wonder, if Christ invites the rich and poor indiscriminately to apply to their Heavenly Father for the supply of their wants. No man will sincerely offer such a prayer as this, unless he has learned, by the example of the Apostle Paul, “to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer need,” ([Philippians 4:12](#),) to endure patiently his poverty or his humble condition, and not to be intoxicated by a false confidence in his abundance.

We ought always, therefore, to begin with the forgiveness of sins: for the first hope of being heard by God beams upon us, when we obtain his favor; and there is no way in which he is “pacified toward us,” ([Ezekiel 16:63](#),) but by freely pardoning our sins. Christ has included in two petitions all that related to the eternal salvation of the soul, and to the spiritual life: for these are the two leading points of the divine covenant, in which all our salvation consists. He offers to us a free reconciliation by “not imputing our sins,” ([2 Corinthians 5:19](#),) and promises the Spirit, to engrave the righteousness of the law on our hearts. We are commanded to ask both, and the prayer for obtaining the forgiveness of sins is placed first.

In Matthew, sins are called debts, because they expose us to condemnation at the tribunal of God, and make us debtors; nay more, they alienate us entirely from God, so that there is no hope of obtaining peace and favor except by pardon. And so is fulfilled what Paul tells us, that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” ([Romans 3:23](#),) “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God,” ([Romans 3:19](#).)

For, though the righteousness of God shines, to some extent, in the saints, yet, so long as they are surrounded by the flesh, they lie under the burden of sins. None will be found so pure as not to need the mercy of God, and if we wish to partake of it, we must feel our wretchedness. Those who dream of attaining such perfection in this world, as to be free from every spot and blemish, not only renounce their sins, but renounce Christ himself, from whose Church they banish themselves. For, when he commands all his disciples to betake themselves to him daily for the forgiveness of sins, every one, who thinks that he has no need of such a remedy, is struck out of the number of the disciples.

The word temptation is often used generally for any kind of trial. In this sense God is said to have tempted Abraham, ([Genesis 22:1](#),) when he tried his faith. We are tempted both by adversity and by prosperity: because each of them is an occasion of bringing to light feelings which were formerly concealed. But here it denotes inward temptation, which may be fitly called the scourge of the devil, for exciting our lust. It would be foolish to ask, that God would keep us free from every thing which makes trial of our faith. All wicked emotions, which excite us to sin, are included under the name of temptation. Though it is not impossible that we may feel such pricks in our minds, (for, during the whole course of our life, we have a constant warfare with the flesh,) yet we ask that the Lord would not cause us to be thrown down, or suffer us to be overwhelmed, by temptations

Heidelberg Catechism on The Lord's Prayer:

Lord's Day 45

Q & A 116

Q. Why do Christians need to pray?

A. Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us.¹

And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking God for them.²

1 [Ps. 50:14-15](#); [116:12-19](#); [1 Thess. 5:16-18](#)

2 [Matt. 7:7-8](#); [Luke 11:9-13](#)

Q & A 117

Q. What is the kind of prayer that pleases God and that he listens to?

A. First, we must pray from the heart to no other than the one true God, revealed to us in his Word,

asking for everything God has commanded us to ask for.¹

Second, we must fully recognize our need and misery, so that we humble ourselves in God's majestic presence.²

Third, we must rest on this unshakable foundation:

even though we do not deserve it,

God will surely listen to our prayer because of Christ our Lord.

That is what God promised us in his Word.³

1 [Ps. 145:18-20](#); [John 4:22-24](#); [Rom. 8:26-27](#); [James 1:5](#); [1 John 5:14-15](#)

2 [2 Chron. 7:14](#); [Ps. 2:11](#); [34:18](#); [62:8](#); [Isa. 66:2](#); [Rev. 4](#)

3 [Dan. 9:17-19](#); [Matt. 7:8](#); [John 14:13-14](#); [16:23](#); [Rom. 10:13](#); [James 1:6](#)

Q & A 118

Q. What did God command us to pray for?

A. Everything we need, spiritually and physically,¹
as embraced in the prayer
Christ our Lord himself taught us.

1 [James 1:17](#); [Matt. 6:33](#)

Q & A 119

Q. What is this prayer?

A. Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.*

For the kingdom

and the power

and the glory are yours forever.

Amen.^{1**}

1 [Matt. 6:9-13](#); [Luke 11:2-4](#)

*This text of the Lord's Prayer is from the New Revised Standard Version in keeping with the use of the NRSV throughout this edition of the catechism. Most biblical scholars will agree that it is an accurate translation of the Greek text and carries virtually the same meaning as the more traditional text of the Lord's Prayer

**Earlier and better manuscripts of Matthew 6 omit the words "For the kingdom and ... Amen."

Lord's Day 46

Q & A 120

Q. Why did Christ command us
to call God "our Father"?

A. To awaken in us

at the very beginning of our prayer

what should be basic to our prayer—

a childlike reverence and trust

that through Christ God has become our Father,

and that just as our parents do not refuse us

the things of this life,

even less will God our Father refuse to give us

what we ask in faith.¹

1 [Matt. 7:9-11](#); [Luke 11:11-13](#)

Q & A 121

Q. Why the words
“in heaven”?

A. These words teach us
not to think of God’s heavenly majesty
as something earthly,¹
and to expect everything
needed for body and soul
from God’s almighty power.²

1 [Jer. 23:23-24](#); [Acts 17:24-25](#)

2 [Matt. 6:25-34](#); [Rom. 8:31-32](#)

Lord’s Day 47

Q & A 122

Q. What does the first petition mean?

A. “Hallowed be your name” means:
Help us to truly know you,¹
to honor, glorify, and praise you
for all your works
and for all that shines forth from them:
your almighty power, wisdom, kindness,
justice, mercy, and truth.²

And it means,

Help us to direct all our living—
what we think, say, and do—
so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us
but always honored and praised.³

1 [Jer. 9:23-24](#); [31:33-34](#); [Matt. 16:17](#); [John 17:3](#)

2 [Ex. 34:5-8](#); [Ps. 145](#); [Jer. 32:16-20](#); [Luke 1:46-55, 68-75](#); [Rom. 11:33-36](#)

3 [Ps. 115:1](#); [Matt. 5:16](#)

Lord’s Day 48

Q & A 123

Q. What does the second petition mean?

A. “Your kingdom come” means:
Rule us by your Word and Spirit in such a way
that more and more we submit to you.¹
Preserve your church and make it grow.²
Destroy the devil’s work;
destroy every force which revolts against you
and every conspiracy against your holy Word.³
Do this until your kingdom fully comes,
when you will be
all in all.⁴

1 [Ps. 119:5, 105](#); [143:10](#); [Matt. 6:33](#)

2 [Ps. 122:6-9](#); [Matt. 16:18](#); [Acts 2:42-47](#)

3 [Rom. 16:20](#); [1 John 3:8](#)

4 [Rom. 8:22-23](#); [1 Cor. 15:28](#); [Rev. 22:17, 20](#)

Lord's Day 49

Q & A 124

Q. What does the third petition mean?

A. "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" means:

Help us and all people

to reject our own wills

and to obey your will without any back talk.

Your will alone is good.¹

Help us one and all to carry out the work we are called to,²

as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.³

1 [Matt. 7:21](#); [16:24-26](#); [Luke 22:42](#); [Rom. 12:1-2](#); [Tit. 2:11-12](#)

2 [1 Cor. 7:17-24](#); [Eph. 6:5-9](#)

3 [Ps. 103:20-21](#)

Lord's Day 50

Q & A 125

Q. What does the fourth petition mean?

A. "Give us this day our daily bread" means:

Do take care of all our physical needs¹

so that we come to know

that you are the only source of everything good,²

and that neither our work and worry

nor your gifts

can do us any good without your blessing.³

And so help us to give up our trust in creatures

and trust in you alone.⁴

1 [Ps. 104:27-30](#); [145:15-16](#); [Matt. 6:25-34](#)

2 [Acts 14:17](#); [17:25](#); [James 1:17](#)

3 [Deut. 8:3](#); [Ps. 37:16](#); [127:1-2](#); [1 Cor. 15:58](#)

4 [Ps. 55:22](#); [62](#); [146](#); [Jer. 17:5-8](#); [Heb. 13:5-6](#)

Lord's Day 51

Q & A 126

Q. What does the fifth petition mean?

A. "Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors" means:

Because of Christ's blood,

do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are,

any of the sins we do

or the evil that constantly clings to us.¹

Forgive us just as we are fully determined,

as evidence of your grace in us,

to forgive our neighbors.²

1 [Ps. 51:1-7](#); [143:2](#); [Rom. 8:1](#); [1 John 2:1-2](#) 2 [Matt. 6:14-15](#); [18:21-35](#)

Lord's Day 52

Q & A 127

Q. What does the sixth petition mean?

A. "And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one" means:

By ourselves we are too weak
to hold our own even for a moment.¹

And our sworn enemies—
the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh—⁴
never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord,
uphold us and make us strong
with the strength of your Holy Spirit,
so that we may not go down to defeat
in this spiritual struggle,⁵
but may firmly resist our enemies
until we finally win the complete victory.⁶

1 [Ps. 103:14-16](#); [John 15:1-5](#)

2 [2 Cor. 11:14](#); [Eph. 6:10-13](#); [1 Pet. 5:8](#) 3 [John 15:18-21](#)

4 [Rom. 7:23](#); [Gal. 5:17](#)

5 [Matt. 10:19-20](#); [26:41](#); [Mark 13:33](#); [Rom. 5:3-5](#)

6 [1 Cor. 10:13](#); [1 Thess. 3:13](#); [5:23](#)

Q & A 128

Q. What does your conclusion to this prayer mean?

A. For the kingdom
and the power
and the glory are yours forever" means:

We have made all these petitions of you
because, as our all-powerful king,
you are both willing and able
to give us all that is good;¹
and because your holy name,
and not we ourselves,
should receive all the praise, forever.²

1 [Rom. 10:11-13](#); [2 Pet. 2:9](#) 2 [Ps. 115:1](#); [John 14:13](#)

Q & A 129

Q. What does that little word "Amen" express?

A. "Amen" means:

This shall truly and surely be!
It is even more sure
that God listens to my prayer
than that I really desire
what I pray for.

1 [Isa. 65:24](#); [2 Cor. 1:20](#); [2 Tim. 2:13](#)

