

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-14)

Learning Goals: Students will be encouraged to move beyond rote repetition of the Lord's Prayer to applying it to their daily lives in practical ways.

Opening Question: How do you pray? (posture, spoken/sung, spontaneous/written, use scripture, out loud or silent, in public/private, etc.)

Prayer

Discuss Question on board.

"Our"

- We were created for community (to reflect the nature of God - Father, Son, Spirit).
- Called called as a community to be his people (Israel)
- God is going to save us as a community (Jesus returning for the church)
- We were meant to pray this prayer together. We need each other. When one of us can't find the faith to pray, the community will pray for them.

"Father"

- Jesus is using the term "Abba" which is a term of closeness and intimacy.
- To speak of God's "Fatherhood" is to speak of our:
 1. Relationship to God (our sonship/daughtership)
 2. Relationship to others - we are family (brothers and sisters)
 3. Status as heirs (we are no longer slaves)
 4. Intimacy with the Father
 5. Identity as God's beloved ("You are my beloved child with whom I am well-pleased")

"who art in heaven,"

- Heaven is literally translated "the heavens" and has three layers of meaning:
 1. the atmosphere around us (air we breathe) - The closeness of our God (as close to us as the air we are breathing)
 2. everything that we see in the night sky (sun, moon, stars, planets, galaxies, etc.) - The vastness of God (God will not fit into our little box and be our little personal god, God is God of all the heavens)
 3. the very throne room of God - is to acknowledge that God is transcendent; completely other, separate, holy, different; that we know something about God, but God is beyond our ability to comprehend; as such, God should be feared, honored, and worshipped

"Hallowed be thy Name."

- To "hallow" God's name means to keep it holy (unique, distinct, sacred, set apart)
- By extension, if we carry the name of Jesus, the way we live our lives reflect the holiness (or lack thereof) of this Jesus we follow - remember the chair analogy

"Thy kingdom come . . . On earth as it is in heaven."

- When we pray for the kingdom to come, we are praying for four things:
 1. For Jesus to return to bring the new heaven and the new earth - the Kingdom of God
 2. For God's kingdom in our hearts - that we want God to sit on the throne in our heart
 3. For the Kingdom to break out in history - in the world in which we live (eliminate oppression, feed hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, freedom for the slave, etc.)
 4. For the Kingdom to break out in the church - that the church will be a foretaste of heaven

- It is a call to conversion - to exchange our citizenship in the world for the Kingdom of God

“Thy will be done . . . On earth as it is in heaven.”

- Praying for God’s will means that we let go of our need for clarity about the future and embrace a radical trust in the God who holds the future.
- Praying for God’s will involves letting go of our fantasies (the perfect job, house, spouse, children, body, church, etc.) and embracing the reality of the ones we have as gifts from God.
- Praying for God’s will mean letting go of all my plans for the future and my regrets of the past and learning to live in the present moment, receiving it as a gift from God.
- Praying for God’s will ultimately means surrendering control of my life to God (just as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane). It’s not about who gets there way - me or God, but about the way God is forming into the image of Jesus.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

- This portion of the prayer teaches us that there is a connection between the physical and the spiritual; it is to acknowledge that we are integrated, whole beings; when one part suffers, everything suffers; when one area is out of balance, everything is out of balance.
- To pray for “bread” helps us distinguish between wants and needs
- To pray for bread *daily* is to remind us of our dependence on God
- To pray “Give us this day our daily bread” is to pray a simultaneous “Thank You” and “I’m Sorry”
 - it is to thank God for God’s continual care and provision in your life
 - it is to pray for forgiveness for the fact that there are so many in our world that go without their daily bread and we have not done more to address that.

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

- There is a vertical dimension and a horizontal dimension to forgiveness (we need to be forgiven by God and we need to show that forgiveness to others.)
- There are different ways that we translate the Greek word ὀφειλήματα (*opheilēmata*)
 1. “Sin” - missing the mark, falling short of expectations (receiving God’s forgiveness for not living up to God’s expectations & forgiving those who have not lived up to your expectations for them)
 2. “Wrong” - forgiving the hurt we’ve caused or the hurt that has been inflicted on us by others.
 3. “Trespass” - forgiving others for violating boundaries (physical, emotional, mental) or trespassing on our time and energy
 4. “Debt” - releasing someone from owing us or releasing a grudge

“And lead us not into temptation,”

- Temptation is not the same as sin
- Life cycle of temptation: enticed by our own evil desire, seed of temptation planted in our heart/mind, we nourish it by continuing to think about it, it gives birth to sin, sin grows into death

“But deliver us from evil.”

- Bible teaches a 4-layered approach to evil, understood as concentric circles moving inward
 - Cosmic evil - Satan is a real power and a real force in the world (spiritual warfare is real)
 - Systemic evil - corporate evil in our world (seen in the “ism’s” - racism, sexism, classism, etc.)

- Personal evil - individual acts of evil (murder, rape, abuse, neglect, apathy, unfaithfulness, etc.)
- Internal evil - we each have evil in our hearts and need to be delivered from it first
- Like a rock thrown into a lake ripples outward, we need to begin by addressing the inner-most circle (the evil in each of our hearts) and allow it to move outward from there.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.”

- Jesus is the rightful king - his kingdom has no borders because it covers all creation (this confronts our desire to build up our own little kingdoms in the world)
- Jesus was there at creation and all things were created through him (this confronts our constant desire for more and more power and influence over others)
- Glory comes from Hebrew word *kevod* (meaning weighty or substantial) - Jesus is the most substantial, weighty, life-changing person/event in all of history and everything else pales in comparison to him (this confronts our desire for recognition and glory because we realize that the glory this world offers is here today and gone tomorrow)

“Amen.”

- It is a Hebrew word that we do not translate.
- Means: “truly, surely, so be it” or “I totally agree,” “Yes, this is true,” “May it most certainly be as you say!” or “Make it so!”
- If we are seriously going to say “Amen,” it means that we are saying “I really want this to be true in my life. I really want to follow Jesus. I want to make this prayer a reality in my life.”
- To pray “Amen” is to stop praying with our lips and to start praying with our life.

Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Abba
- Hallow
- Amen
- To pray “give us our daily bread” is to simultaneously pray what other two prayers?