

Happy New Year! Are we doing okay? If you have your Bibles, turn to Luke, chapter 18. I'll read a text before that, but if you'll start with me there, that will be great. I have a tough task today. I'll tell you why it's tough. It's tough probably in a way you might not think. I need to talk with us about prayer and what prayer is and how we're to interact with God in prayer, but here's the issue with that, and I'll just be really frank.

Really, if you're talking to a group of men and women with church backgrounds or people who actually come to church consistently, prayer is an interesting animal because I don't think there will be a "Eureka!" moment for you today. I don't think at some point you're going to go, "What do you mean? I should be talking to God?" I think, by and large, we know that, and most of us actually even know how to do that. It's not really complex. The Bible has really set us free from a lot of formalities in it, and it's just interacting with God. Really, the *how* when it comes to prayer can be found very, very easily.

Here's where things get weird. Although we know we should and although we know how, if we're honest (and I know this is church; this isn't a place for that) almost all of us would say, "As a believer in Christ, as a person who believes in God, as someone who knows they should pray and knows how to pray, I find my prayer life in many ways lacking." How many of you would admit to that? You would go, "I don't pray as I know I ought"?

Here's how historically this works. Here's the dance you and I get into. I address where I see we fall short of God's commands about it. I'm like, "You're being lazy in prayer. You lack zeal in prayer. You lack seriousness about prayer." That is kind of a drive-by guilt. What you do is guilt turns into motivation, so you say, "I *am* lazy in prayer. I *do* lack zeal, but no longer shall I!" We leave here, and whatever meal is next after this, you are the most eloquent, drawn-out pray-er ever. You get struck from the list of "You get to pray at meals."

Maybe, if you're "Type A," when you get in your bed tonight, you pray some more. You just lie in bed and you're thanking God for everybody, because guilt has led to motivation. Maybe, if you're super "Type A," you built a grid out, and you know on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays here's where you're praying. On Tuesday and Thursday, here's where you're going to pray. You've built it all out, and you begin to research prayer, but by and large, guilt can sustain motivation for only so long. Guilt leads to motivation, but ultimately leads to discouragement.

I come back around again, and you're like, "I am! I do stink! I am awful! Never again..." You and I get in this dance where I'm constantly trying to point out our shortcomings when it comes to the topic of prayer, and we already know we're falling short. You just readily agreed in front of thousands of strangers that you know, I know, we all know, so this puts us in a weird spot with one another, doesn't it?

Here's what I thought we could do: we could not talk about us at all. Really, if you ever want to make sure what you believe about God is correct, don't start with you. Don't start with me, because we're all jacked up. If you start at what's crooked and you try to get to what's straight, you're always going to get off. Really, the best thing we could do, instead of talking about where we lack in prayer, is to really look at how God views prayer, and then hopefully from a "Godward" perspective, we might be more encouraged to engage the living God in an invitation that would baffle and blow the mind if we considered it.

Before we get into that, I just have two simple truths (a warm blanket to the soul). Then we're going to actually pray. Crazy! For now, though, let me tell you the two big, very simple obstacles to why we don't pray. First is *an unhealthy fear of God*. Notice I said *unhealthy* fear of God, because fear of God is actually a good thing, biblically speaking. The Bible wants you to have kind of a healthy fear, a healthy reverence for God. God is massive.

Several times in my life, I've been in a situation or been in a setting where I found myself a bit nervous. Regardless of what I could bench or how far I could run or how flexible I was or how much spinach I ate, I just felt like I was a bit nervous. Things could go really badly for me. I got to hike the Andes one time with a group of friends. There was a cliff on this side and sheer rock (a drop-off) on this side, and it was starting to snow. We were going straight uphill. I felt small. I felt fragile. I got nervous.

I've been in the open sea once, and things started kicking up, and I felt small. I didn't think, "I'm a good swimmer." I didn't think that. I thought, "Uh-oh!" I was nervous. Not terrified, but nervous. Here's something to always keep in mind. If what is created has the ability to terrify us, how much more then should the One who created what has been created that terrifies us terrify us?

God is not cuddly. He's not cute. There is no dust involved. God hates sin. He hates it. He doesn't tolerate it. He hates it. If you think God doesn't hate sin, you need only look at the severity of the cross and the reality of hell to get a picture of how God views and sees sin. It is outward and blatant rebellion against his holy name. He has no patience for it.

Whenever we get near the holiness of God, there should be a little check in us, but terror over time for the saint (not for everybody, but for those who have put their trust in Christ), his holy justice will be buffered by

his holy love. You get this spectacular juxtaposition of a God who is holy in his justice, but is also holy in his love for those he has called according to his purposes.

We, always in awe, grow more and more confident in his love toward us, and that makes us run toward him in prayer. To simplify this a little bit more, most of us don't pray because we don't think God likes us. We don't tend to hang out with people who don't like us. Do you set up that meal and say, "Hey, I notice when I'm around you a gag reflex goes off. There's something about me that really bothers you. What are you doing on New Year's?"

We don't do that. We avoid people we know we bother, don't we? If we know we bother someone, we kind of avoid them. Why would you want to get near people who the sight of you bothers them? We avoid those people. The more you believe God is disappointed in you, the more in your mind that God is on his throne waiting for you to grow up, the more in your head you envision God is a bit frustrated that he paid this whole Jesus thing all for you...

The more you believe God is disappointed, frustrated, or angry toward you, the more you will not run toward him. You will run from him. A lot of us don't pray because we feel like God is disappointed in us. We fail to believe what the gospel says about us in Christ. That's the first obstacle.

Secondly, *we just don't think we need him*. So many of us are functional atheists with decent theology in our heads and horrible theology in practice. We don't think we need him. That happens because of two reasons. For one, we operate under the illusion of control. I have said probably a million times over the last decade that there isn't anyone in this room whose life can't be ripped to shreds with a phone call today.

In fact, just as a kind of picture of what I'm saying, right after the 9:00 service this morning here in Flower Mound, a young woman who was here had a text right as we entered into Communion and had to rush out of the room. She texted me after she left. She had a family member who was in a horrible accident, and they're down at the hospital now hoping he pulls through. That's what I'm talking about. We're fragile, far more fragile than we think we are. What happens is we feel like we're in control. We feel like we have things in order, that we can handle whatever the world throws us, so why do we need to pray?

The other thing we do is we feel like we're far holier than we actually are. The way you can feel holy by your own action and not by the holiness granted to you in Jesus Christ is to make your sins not serious sins, to be out of tune with your own heart, what you're thinking, what you're feeling, and what you're sensing, to decrease the seriousness of your sins and increase the seriousness of other people's sins, so you get into

this crazy level of wickedness that despite the fact you have no relationship with God, you are simultaneously self-righteous toward others.

Why would you pray? Why do you need to pray? You're awesome. You're your own functional savior. If God loves you, he'll shred that in time. My encouragement would be that you wouldn't wait. You wouldn't wait to find out you're human. You wouldn't wait to find out, as the great theologian Sting said, how fragile we are, because when the illusion of control dries up, people hit their knees. Oh, that you wouldn't wait until that moment and that you would understand where to go in that moment where the illusion of control vanishes.

Those are our two big obstacles. You say, "Well, I don't want to talk about it. That's depressing." Why don't you pray? Because you think you're your own God. Why don't you pray? Because you don't understand the gospel. Who wants to dwell on that? That's depressing. What I'd rather do is just look at God. Some simple truths and a warm blanket.

1. *As believers in Christ, we have been invited into the presence of God.* Look right at me. We are not unwanted houseguests. Are you tracking with me? We're just coming off the holiday, and during the holidays you can have some people stay just a little too long. You can have some people who didn't quite get the hint as you started to clean up. "I'm cleaning here. This means it's over! I left the room for an hour and came back and you're still here." That's not where you and I find ourselves before a holy God.

We have been invited in. Let me show you this in Isaiah, chapter 55. After a whole slew of chapters on the holy justice of God, we begin to see the holy love of God. This is Isaiah 55:1-3. Here's what it says. **"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine..."** That would have been a symbol of joy. **"Come, buy wine and milk..."** Milk is a symbol of strength. **"Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."**

Simultaneously, you're going to be invited as children of God into the presence of God, and he's going to remove any and all excuse you would be able to tell yourself that you wouldn't be welcome. "There's no way I can pay for that. There's no way I've lived well enough to experience that, to be given joy by God, to be given strength by God. I can't pay for that." Yeah. That's why he's invited those who didn't have any money. **"...he who has no money, come, buy and eat!"**

How am I supposed to buy if I don't have any money? Because he said in the verse it's been paid for. Someone else paid for this bread. "Are you thirsty? Are you hungry? Do you need strength? Do you need joy? Then get in here." This kind of rides right along with Jesus' invitation, **"Come...all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest [for your souls]."** Get in here. Come.

He actually tries to expose us here. **"Why do you spend your money...?"** By the way, that you don't have. **"...for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me..."** Pay attention. Hone in. Dial in, you ADD-havin' fools. **"Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David."**

Two things are happening here. One, we're tying the Davidic line that goes to who? Jesus Christ. "My eternal covenant through Abraham unto David to see Jesus born in Bethlehem; life, death, and resurrection." That's the covenant. Then he lays out there **"...my...sure love..."** I showed David. Here's why this is important. David had a bit of a moral quandary in his life, didn't he? Let's run through it.

David was a bit lazy at times. We find out that at a time when kings should be out at war, David didn't go. He stayed at the house, and he stayed at the house because he was peeping over at Uriah's house watching his wife take a bath. Then he committed adultery and actually got his general's wife pregnant, so he had to solve that, so he has Uriah murdered.

Look at me. His list beats yours, correct? Does anybody else trump that in here? Just know if you confess, I have to turn you in. Despite this, what happened to God's covenant love? It was sure. This invitation to come into the presence of God is sure throughout Scriptures, and it doesn't matter how you've come in here today. The invitation is there. "Come on. Get in here. Are you thirsty? Do you need joy? Do you need strength? Come on."

We have been invited into the presence of God. We are not unwanted guests. Not only that, Jesus, as he begins to teach how we are to interact with the Father, lays down some groundwork of the type of love I don't even extend to my children. Let me show you what I mean. Let's look at this. Luke 18 starting in verse 1.

"And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, "Give me justice against my adversary." For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, "Though I neither fear God nor respect man..."'"
At least this brother is self-aware.

"...yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?'" Do

you hear what happens in this text? This kind of opened up for me once I had children. Not only have we been invited into his presence, not only has he said, "Come on," but he said, "While you're here, bother me. Pester me. Keep asking me."

We have the exact opposite rule in my house: when we answer you, we've answered you. Has anyone else been given by God a group of lawyers for children? I mean, are you serious?

"No."

"Can I say something, Dad?"

"Sure."

"I don't want to do it, but how about we do it like this? I know I'm just supposed to hear your answer." It's like, the more you ask the more hardened my heart grows.

"Can I go?"

"No."

"Can I go?"

"No."

"Can I go?"

"No."

"Can I go?"

"No. Not only no now, but never. You will never go again!" That's kind of how I'm built. "Is that the sixth time you've asked me? Throw your bed out front and catch it on fire." That's kind of where I go, but God just went the opposite. Did you see that? "Bother me. Pester me." The heart of God in this text is he never grows weary from hearing from you even if you're saying the same thing over and over again, asking for the same thing over and over again.

Jesus, in this parable, is saying, "God delights in that. He loves that. Like an unjust judge would even respond to that, your God who is not unjust will hear from his elect." From there, I could go to Luke 11. I could go to all these other texts, but you've been invited in. We are not unwanted guests. We cannot wear out our welcome. It's impossible.

2. *God hears us.* The God of the universe, he hears us. Don't go too fast on that. Not just hears us at a surface level. He hears us. Let me read you a few of these. Second Chronicles 7:14-15. I'm not going to apply this to the United States, but I think the text is amazing. **"...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."** Look at verse 15, because it's important.

"Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place." In that place. What place? That place where God's people have humbled themselves before him. That place where we have been repentant. That place where we have sought the forgiveness of sins. On that place, God hears, and he responds. His eyes are there. His ears are there.

Tuesday night for us is a huge night in the life of our church. Why? Because this is what we're going to do. We're going to corporately gather and cry out, "We can't! All we want to see happen, all we desire, all we would love to see you do in our midst, in our city, in this place, you and you alone can do. Our scheming cannot. Our creativity cannot. Our leadership cannot. You and you alone, God, can transform the hearts of people and stir up a passion for you in the city. Please, God, do what we cannot and use us."

The Bible just says God's eyes and ears are attentive to that kind of place. That's why for all that will go on this year with Group Connect and Group Life and preaching and singing and all of that, the most important thing we'll do is gather as the covenant community on Tuesday night, and we'll just cry out to God. Again, I just don't think there's anything more important that we do. The Bible just says God hears us when we find ourselves in that posture, in that place, seeking the forgiveness of sins, lowering ourselves, and asking God to move.

My hope is that you'd make it a priority to be there. I completely understand if you can't, but this is why it's such a big deal. Because God hears. His eyes look toward us. His ear is attentive to a covenant community whose heart is in this place. Another verse (Psalm 6, verse 9) says, **"The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord accepts my prayer."** Psalm 34, verse 15. Note this is Psalm 34, because here in a second we're going to read Psalm 35, and there is something that sticks out I think will help your heart. It helps mine. Psalm 34:15: **"The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry."**

God has invited us into his presence, we cannot overstay our welcome, and he hears from us. It's a warm blanket to the soul for mine and I believe for yours to look back on history and even look back through the Scriptures and find other people have struggled to believe this, because there will be seasons where it's hard to believe God hears us. Let me give you a couple of texts.

In Habakkuk, chapter 1, starting in verse 2, the prophet Habakkuk says, **"O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?"** Has anybody ever been there? "How long am I going to cry out and you not hear me?" Have you ever felt like your prayers were just hitting the ceiling? Have you ever felt a bit crazy just sitting at your table by yourself early in the morning just talking to yourself? Yeah. Psalm 35.

Remember, in Psalm 34, not even early in Psalm 34 (like Psalm 34, verse 15), "Your eyes are on me. Your ears are attentive to my cry."

Here's Psalm 35. Again, I love David. Schizophrenic, but I love this brother. I'm drawn to him, because I've been there. **"You have seen, O Lord; be not silent! O Lord, be not far from me! Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication, for my cause, my God and my Lord!"** Do you hear? Like, "Hey! Wake up! Can you not see this? Are you not looking at this? When are you going to wake up and do something about that?" Have you ever been there? I mean, this is a chapter after, "You watch me. You see what goes on. My trust is in you."

"Are you going to wake up and do something about this? Are you serious right now, Lord? I've called out to you, 'My Lord and my God.' You're watching this and you're not going to vindicate me at all?" I've prayed this exact prayer. A different language, but the same prayer. "I mean, are you going to stop this madness? Are you going to intervene? How could you not intervene right here? How could you not step in and be God in all your 'Godness'?" If you have your Bibles, let's go to Psalm 13 starting in verse 1. This is more of the same.

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed over him,' lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken."

David, the author of this psalm, is no stranger to darkness, difficulty, depression, and despair. His son rapes his daughter. His son leads a rebellion against him that ousts him from his throne. A rebellion in his own kingdom, some from his own friends and family, launches out and removes him from his throne. You hear this prayer. This is not a chipper set of verses. "Will you forsake me forever? If you don't light up my

eyes, I'll sleep the sleep of death. Are you really going to give me over to my enemies? Will you really let me be destroyed? Is this my life?"

Verses 5 and 6 give us hope for what to do when we're in verses 1 through 4, because verses 1 through 4 will eventually come for all of us. Verses 5 and 6 give us hope in the midst of verses 1 through 4. Look at verse 5. **"But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me."** You have three pieces here in verses 5 and 6 that are going to help us in verses 1 through 4. When we're living in verses 1 through 4, we had better be also operating in verses 5 and 6.

The first thing he says in verse 5 is, "I'm going to trust in your steadfast love. I'm going to put my trust in this fact: you love me. You saved me. You opened up my heart to you. I didn't save me. I didn't rescue me. You rescued me, so your love for me is steadfast in the person and work of Jesus Christ." We will all too quickly join the people of Israel being rescued out of slavery from Egypt who, toward the Promised Land, began to grumble that God saved them out of slavery only to destroy them in the wilderness. We will very quickly feel, "You've abandoned me. You will destroy me."

David says, "In the midst of all this, will you forsake me forever? I'm going to trust in your steadfast love." Several months ago, Lauren and I were listening to a sermon by a man named Tim Keller. He pastors a Presbyterian church up in Manhattan. A brilliant man. Probably the most insightful man I've ever read or listened to. He said, "God will answer all of our prayers exactly like we would answer our prayers if we knew all he knew." I just thought that was profound. God loves us. We trust in his steadfast love. David is saying this *before* the cross. We get the privilege of saying it *after* the cross.

We have this public portrayal of God's seriousness about redeeming and rescuing us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. "I will trust in his steadfast love." Then he moves on. "I will rejoice in the God of my salvation." Regardless of what befalls me and regardless of what befalls those around me, here's what can never be taken from me: my eternity and future are so secure in Jesus Christ that even the most horrific of sorrows here and now (and those are legitimate) will one day in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God seem like light and momentary afflictions.

I've been around enough suffering to have a hard time getting my mind around that, getting my mind around some of the most gut-wrenching "Dear, Lord" moments, that that's light and momentary, but since I've been saved, redeemed, and purchased by the blood of the Lamb there is no sorrow that will befall me or those around me that will not in the light of the future kingdom be made to look light and momentary.

He throws in this last line here that he will sing because the Lord has dealt bountifully with him. Singing is an interesting animal. I like to watch you sing sometimes if I get to position myself in the room where I can see. There is something spiritual about singing to the Lord, because the Lord actually has commanded you to do it. "Sing to me." He's not asking you to sing because *he* needs it, so he must be asking you to sing because *you* need it.

What happens in singing to the Lord is pride gets exposed. Why do you think men don't like to sing? Because they are more proud. I know we don't, because when we kill the music and get quieter, so do you. You get weaker as we get quieter. Why? Because you don't understand the Lord has asked you to make a joyful noise. It doesn't have to be good; it just has to be joyful. Yeah. Sing. Why? Because there will be moments living through verses 1 through 4 where what we'll need is to gather as the covenant community of faith and make much of the Lord by singing unto the Lord.

There is something that happens when we gather and worship that encourages the soul and is used by the Holy Spirit to push us toward that next gathering of the saints where he'll once again refresh our souls and send us back out into a broken and dying world. That's why the Bible says, "Don't neglect this. Don't neglect the gathering. Don't do it, because it's dangerous for your soul."

You need to hear that, because it's January and a lot of you are back. We know how attendance patterns go. We knew we'd get blown up this morning and turn away from all of our services this weekend. It's January. It's very similar to the gym. Spiritual health year for you. No. It needs to be spiritual *life* for you. Don't neglect the gathering of the saints. There is something that happens when we sit under the Word and we sing unto him the praises due his name.

When you're living through verses 1 through 4, you'd better understand verses 5 and 6. They are food for the soul in verses 1 through 4. No one talks to you as much as you do. No one. No one talks to you more than you do. I have to wonder what you're saying to yourself all the time. Have you ever paid attention to your internal dialogue? What do you say to you about God? What do you say to you about you? In seasons of verses 1 through 4, part of verses 5 and 6 is preaching the gospel to ourselves.

I love that David is a brother who talks to himself. He'll even say, "**Why are you downcast, O my soul? [...]** **Put your hope in God...**" What is he doing? He's preaching to himself. He's talking to himself. He's not letting his internal dialogue drive the direction of his life, but rather he's driving the direction of his internal dialogue. "Put your hope in God. I will trust in his unfailing love. I will rejoice in the God of my salvation." When? "At the same time I'm saying, 'How long, O Lord? Will you forsake me forever?'"

It's a warm blanket to my soul to know in that moment where I feel like it's just hitting the ceiling, in that moment where I feel like it's just me, my brothers and sisters before me have been there and have preached the gospel and have said to themselves, "No. He hears us. No. He has invited us in. No. He has asked us to bother him. No. He delights in our prayer. He delights in our trust. Push all the more in the further he feels away. He is not far away from any of us."

With the two great errors in you and in me of either believing we don't need God or, ultimately, believing what we've covered so far today isn't true, that he does not invite us and that we are not welcomed and that, ultimately, he does not hear us, really, the best medicine for all of us is to get a picture of God that shows him to be as mighty, glorious, and powerful as he is, and that we might feel a little small under that weight. It's a good thing to feel small.

I know our culture goes the opposite way with it, but it is a beautiful, good thing to feel small. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to spend some time praying, but before that, I want the Word of God to minister to your heart some. If you have your Bibles, let's go to Job 38. Don't be nervous. This is post-suffering Job. This is God answering Job. Don't get nervous.

Let's just head to Job, chapter 38. I'm going to give you three or four minutes to read Job 38 through chapter 40, verse 5. You're not all going to finish it. Don't panic. Just slowly read. By the time I come back up, you'll get the rhythm. I want you to read this as we prepare our hearts to begin to pray. Job 38 through chapter 40, verse 4. I'll see you in just a few minutes.

I know you're not done reading. Some of you might be, but you should have been able to kind of get the established rhythm of this text. "Where were you when I...? Tell me. Surely, you know." You have this immense God who, in these few chapters and then on to the end of Job, makes this kind of poignant statement that he and he alone knows all these things, from hanging the stars to where the mountain goats give birth, that he reigns and rules over all of that, and this is the God (this scary, terrifying God) who has invited us into his presence and said with the power that he governs all of this, he hears you, is for you, loves you, and gives to you what you need even if it feels like what you want isn't given to you.

With this in view, what I want us to do now is simply spend some time praying. In Luke, chapter 11 (you don't need to turn there) the disciples come to Jesus and say, "Teach us how to pray like John taught his disciples how to pray." This is the condensed version of what's called *the Lord's Prayer*. Jesus says, **"Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."**

What we're going to do is kind of pray through this over the next few moments. Then we're going to celebrate the Table, and we'll leave here being, hopefully, motivated not by guilt but rather a desire to take advantage of this unbelievable invitation. We're going to just start with this prayer: "Father, hallowed be thy name." I want to give you just a few moments here to hallow the name of God. That just means to praise God, to make much of God.

How has he blessed you? What are the mercies he's poured upon you? This is not the time to concentrate on deficiencies or what you'd like or hard stuff. This is, "Praise your name for these things." You can pray with your spouse, pray with your friend, or just in your mind pray unto the Lord, but for the next few moments, let's just hallow the name of God. Let's pray. Let's hallow his name.

The next part of the prayer is "**Your kingdom come.**" To flesh this out for you in this little line of prayer here in these few moments, "**Your kingdom come**" is a laying down of what you wrestle with, a laying down of your desires, a laying down of your wisdom and knowledge, a laying down of what's controlling you, what's burdening you.

"**Your kingdom come.**" We've already read in Job how the expanse of God is so different than our smallness, so "**Your kingdom come**" is about laying down what controls us, laying down what's dominating our hearts, dominating our mind's space, and controlling our lives. Let's pray for the next few moments, "**Your kingdom come.**"

In no accident, it moves from your kingdom; not mine and your will; not mine into, "**Give us this day our daily bread.**" It's no accident that "**Give us this day our daily bread**" follows "**Your kingdom come.**" Now is that time we make our needs known to the Lord. What is it that you need? More than likely, most of us aren't in for material want as much as probably there are other needs (daily bread, sustenance). Maybe it's that we're in a dark place spiritually. Maybe our hearts have grown cold toward the Lord.

Maybe this "**Give us this day our daily bread**" is asking the Lord for mercy, sustenance, what you need today to be all that you would be for his name and his renown. Let's pray, "**Give us this day our daily bread.**" Cry out to where you need the Lord to move in your heart, where you need him to sustain you, fuel you, and ignite a passion in you.

The last part we'll pray together is "**...lead us not into temptation.**" Are you struggling with addiction? Prone to depression? Prone to anger or lust? This is our opportunity to say, "Help us, Lord. Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from evil." This is the part where we cry out, "Save us from us." Let's pray for just a few moments here, "**...lead us not into temptation.**"

Father, we thank you that you hear us, that we cannot overstay our welcome, that you are not a God who can be pestered or who tells your children to shush their mouths. You are a Father who delights in the cries of his children, who knows the voices of his children, and who turns an attentive eye and attentive ears to those who cry out to you. I thank you there was nothing thought, nothing uttered, nothing laid before you, God, that you did not hear and that you will not in your good, sovereign will respond to.

We thank you and we praise you corporately that you hear us. We thank you that you have invited us in, and because of Christ, you delight in us. We ask for forgiveness for where we have thought we didn't need you. We, again, ask for forgiveness that we didn't believe the gospel was true enough to come into the holy places with boldness. It's through your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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