

# Lord's Prayer Bible Studies

## Learning to Pray

Study 1	Our Father
Study 2	Hallowed Be Your Name
Study 3	Your Kingdom Come
Study 4	Your Will Be Done
Study 5	Give Us Today Our Daily Bread
Study 6	Forgive Us Our Debts
Study 7	Lead Us Not Into Temptation
Study 8	Deliver Us from the Evil One

## Lord's Prayer Bible Study – Our Father

1. When are you most motivated to pray? What de-motivates you?
2. How do you usually address God when you pray? *Dear God? Dear Lord? Almighty God?* (Other people in your group might be able to tell you!) How does Jesus teach us to address God in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9)?
3. What is significant about addressing God as Father? Look at Matt 6:8, Matt 7:9-11, Galatians 4:4-7. How does this motivate us to pray?
4. What's the significance of heaven according to Matt 21:24-25 and Matt 23:22?
5. If God is *in heaven*, then what does that say about him?
6. Read Psalm 115. How does the God of Heaven compare to the gods of this world?
7. What motivation to prayer can we find from the fact that we have a Father in Heaven?
8. Spend some time calling on God as your Father in heaven. Call on him to exercise his care and power for specific things in your life.

**(Leaders Notes can be found on Waitara Anglican Website)**

## **Lord's prayer Bible study: Hallowed by your name**

1. Share your full name with the group. Do you know how you got that name? Does the meaning of your name have any bearing on your everyday behavior? When people hear your name mentioned, what positive connections would you like them to make?
2. What expectations of God do the names "Father" and "Jesus" reveal? See Luke 11.11-13, Hebrews 12:7-9, Matthew 1:21 – make sure to check the NIV Footnote!
3. Have a read of Psalms 8 and 145. Why is God's name to be seen as majestic (Psalm 8)? Why ought it be praised (Psalm 145)?
4. Staying with Psalm 145, what does it look like to honour God with our speech?
5. Brainstorm some simple ways to honour God in your everyday conversations.
6. Read over Ezekiel 20:30-44. How did Israel bring God's name into disrepute?  
What are the different stages of God's response?
7. When might you be easily tempted to bring God's name dishonor by your actions?
8. How is God's name brought into disrepute in our wider society?  
What is your first response when you see or hear God being dishonoured?  
What might a helpful Christian response be?
9. Practically speaking, what needs to happen if more people are to hallow God's name?
10. Pray that God's name might be hallowed in our media, classrooms, governments and workplaces. Pray that more people might recognize God's true nature and learn to trust, love and honour him

## **Studies on the Lord's Prayer – Your Kingdom Come**

1. What do you think the best form of government is?
2. Read Psalm 47. What kind of government is God leading? How extensive is his realm? How does he use his authority?
3. What different reactions might people have when they hear God is a King? How might we respond to those who have a negative reaction?
4. Read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10. How was God's rule demonstrated in Zacchaeus' life?
5. What do you think the parables in Matthew 13:31-33 teach us about God's Kingdom? When might we need to be reassured by these images?
6. Read Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, and 47-50. How will the nature of God's kingdom change between now and when Jesus returns?
7. What does the Future look like for those who belong to the Kingdom?
8. Finally, read the two parables in Matthew 13:44-45. How does our response to God's Kingdom compare to that of the man and the merchant? What might we need to do to make God's Kingdom a priority?
9. Thank God that he is a kind and gracious King. Seek his forgiveness for those times we fail to submit to him. Pray that God will come to rule in the lives of people you know. Pray that those living under God's rule will increase and spread throughout the world. Ask God to grant us patience as we wait for his Kingdom to be revealed. Thank him that the future Kingdom will be glorious.

## Learning to Pray – “Your will be done”

What’s one of the hardest skills/habits you’ve had to learn? What was difficult about it?

Read Psalm 33:10-11, and James 4:13-17. What is the difference between God’s plans and human plans, between what God wills and what we desire? How do these verses mold our approach to the future?

What do the following verses say about what God desires for us? 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Ephesians 5:17-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, James 1:19-21.

As we look at churches today, where do we need to learn to obey God’s will? What about in your own life?

Read the story of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26:36-46. Was obedience to God’s will coming easily for Jesus? What comfort can we draw from his experience?

Carefully compare Jesus’ prayers in vs 39 and 42. What differences do you see? How might you explain these differences?

What does Jesus instruct the disciples to do in v 41? How successful were the disciples in completing this task? What particular temptation might Jesus be warning them about (Hint – 26:31-35)? What happened to Peter in the end (Hint – 26:69ff)? How might things have turned out differently for Peter?

“I just keep on slipping and sinning against God! What can I do?” Based on what we’ve seen in the study, what basic advice can we give for this common complaint?

Pray that God’s will might be done in your own life, and in the world more generally.

## Learning to Pray - “Give us today our daily bread”

1. When you say your prayers (not the Lord’s Prayer) do you ever ask for food? What things do you mostly ask for yourself? What other things do you pray about regularly?
2. Read Psalm 104 section by section. Talk about what each section is saying about God and our relationship to him.
  - a. 104:1-9
  - b. 104:10-18
  - c. 104:19-23
  - d. 104:27-30
3. How can we still say God sends the rain in this scientific age? How can we gain a real sense of depending on God for food, health, abilities and for life itself? Why is saying grace at meals helpful?
4. Read Exodus 16:11-20. What did the daily provision of manna teach the people of Israel? Does this help us understand why Jesus teaches us to ask for our “daily” bread? What does this mean to you?
5. If we trust God to provide for the future how will this affect the way we live and serve God? How does this influence our giving?
6. What does Jesus mean by “bread”? What sort of things can we ask for in prayer? (See also Philippians 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:7) How does the fact that we come to God as “Our Father” and the promises of Matthew 6:8, 32-33 and 7:7-11 encourage you in prayer?
7. Read Matthew 6:25-34. What sort of trust do these words challenge us to have? What priorities do they set for our lives and for our prayers? Note also where the request for bread comes in the order of requests in the Lord’s Prayer. What does this teach us?
8. Why does Jesus use the words “our” and “us” in this prayer rather than “my” and “me”? How should this shape our prayers?

## Learning to Pray – Forgive us our debts

Have you ever been surprised by a bill or an invoice?

Read the first part of the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18:21-27). How serious is the servant's situation? What elements of the story convey this seriousness?

To what extent do people recognize their debts before God? Is this something you have thought about recently?

Read Psalm 103. How does David (who wrote the Psalm) describe God's actions towards our sin/debt? What did David know about having a debt before God? (Hint: Psalm 51)

According to the following passages, how is it that God can forgive our sinfulness? Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 9:27-28.

Read the next part of the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18:28-35). How does the debt owed to the servant compare with the debt that he himself owed? What adjectives would you use to describe the servant's behavior?

"Forgiveness just means that you can go about doing whatever you want." How does the second half of the parable challenge this statement?

Do you find it easy to forgive others? What's at stake if we withhold forgiveness from those who seek it from us?

Memorise Luke 6:36. Pray that God might help you put it into practice.

## Learning to Pray - Lead us not into temptation

1. What would the average person think of as temptations?
2. When you say the words “Lead us not into temptation” what do you think of?
3. Read 1 Peter 5:8-9. What is the warning here? How is the devil like a lion? Do you think we say these words in the Lord’s Prayer too casually?
4. Read Psalm 73. What temptation did the writer face? Do you ever feel like he did? What situations or thoughts might cause people to doubt God?
5. Read Matthew 5:21-6:1. What temptations might we face to fall short of God’s will?
6. Read Matthew 6:19-21 and Ephesians 5:5. In what ways are we tempted to be greedy? How serious is this?
7. Read James 1:13. If God never leads people into temptation why do we pray, “Lead us not into temptation”? (Note that the word translated ‘temptation’ also means ‘test’ or ‘trial’.) How does God test people and why (see Genesis 22:1; Deuteronomy 8:2)?
8. Read James 1:2-4. If trials are good for us why should we pray not to be lead into them?
9. Putting all of this together, what do you think this request means?



## **Learning to Pray: Deliver us from the evil one**

Have you ever had to restrain someone or something that was a danger to others?

What elements in this world need to be restrained?

What things do we learn about Satan and his helpers from the following? John 8:44; Ephesians 2:1-2; Ephesians 6:10-12; 1 Peter 5:8-9.

Read Matthew 8:28-31. What clues does the text give us as to what the demons are trying to achieve?

Looking at our own culture, in what ways are people being destroyed by Satan today?

What do the demons know about their future (v29)? See also Revelation 20:7-10.

Read Matthew 8:32-34. What does this tell us about evil's limitations?

When faced with the reality of the evil in the world today, what hope and confidence does the story in Matthew 8:28-34 give us?

How often have you prayed "deliver us from evil"? Name some evils in the world and pray for God's deliverance right now.

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### Leaders Notes

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## Lord's Prayer Bible Study – Our Father

1. When are you most motivated to pray? What de-motivates you?
2. How do you usually address God when you pray? *Dear God? Dear Lord? Almighty God?* (Other people in your group might be able to tell you!) How does Jesus teach us to address God in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9)?

*A question for people to realize their own habits and perhaps be challenged to sharpened up their prayers a little. Christian prayer is to "Our Father", and not simply to "God". Of course, prayers offered simply to "God" are not illegitimate (the old Anglican prayer book has prayers addressed to "Almighty God"), but if we never pray to God as "Father", then we've failed to realize something important about who God is and what our relationship is actually like with him.*

3. What is significant about addressing God as Father? Look at Matt 6.8, Matt 7.9-11, Galatians 4:4-7. How does this motivate us to pray?

*The Matthew verses indicate that God is a caring Father who is seeking to meet our needs. You may like to contrast this with some of the bad models of fatherhood that we see in the world today. The Galatians passage says that this relationship is provided by Christ: He shares his own "sonship" with us. The motivation here is that we have a Father who loves us and is interested in us and wants to provide for us. Why wouldn't we want to bring things before him?*

4. What's the significance of heaven according to Matt 21:24-25 and Matt 23:22?

*This might not be obvious straight away. These passages indicate that Heaven is a place of authority and power. If John's baptism came from Heaven (Matt 21), then the Jews were duty bound to accept it. Heaven is the place where God's throne room is (Matt 23). In short if something is from Heaven or in Heaven, then it has authority and power.*

5. If God is *in heaven*, then what does that say about him?

*That he is powerful! He has the power to answer our prayers, he has the authority to intervene in our circumstances.*

*People may ask "but isn't God everywhere?" Well, yes, he is everywhere by his Holy Spirit, but God the Father and God the Son are in Heaven. This is where a little bit of Trinitarian theology is useful. God is three distinct persons: The Father is in heaven, the Son is at his right hand, and the Spirit is who is operating throughout the world. But because they all dwell within in each other, God the Father and Son are also present where the Spirit is. So both things are true: The Father is in Heaven, but he is also present with us by His Spirit.*

6. Read Psalm 115. How does the God of Heaven compare to the gods of this world?

*Note especially verses 2-7.*

7. What motivation to prayer can we find from the fact that we have a Father in Heaven?

*He is interested in hearing from us, and he has the power to provide for us.*

8. Spend some time calling on God as your Father in Heaven. Call on him to exercise his care and power for specific things in your life.

## Lord's prayer Bible study: Hallowed by your name

1. Share your full name with the group. Do you know how you got that name? Does the meaning of your name have any bearing on your everyday behavior? When people hear your name mentioned, what positive connections would you like them to make?

*You will have to be strict here, this could blow out a bit as we all love talking about ourselves! Some may be tempted to be a bit shy when answering the final question here; try and help people to be positive about themselves!*

2. What expectations of God do the names "Father" and "Jesus" reveal? See Luke 11.11-13, Hebrews 12:7-9, Matthew 1:21 – make sure to check the NIV Footnote!

*From Luke: the Father cares for us and supplies us with good things.  
Hebrews: he also disciplines us, but this for our good and because he loves us!  
Matthew: Like the Father Jesus name also brings with it an expectation: he will save us! Note the NIV footnote, 'Jesus' is a version of the name 'Joshua' meaning "The Lord saves".*

3. Have a read of Psalms 8 and 145. Why is God's name to be seen as majestic (Psalm 8)? Why ought it be praised (Psalm 145)?

*If you realize you are running out of time, just choose one Psalm  
Psalm 8: we note the the LORD's name is majestic because of the wonder of what he has created  
Psalm 145: his name is to be praised because of his acts, because of his faithfulness, because he cares and because he provides.*

4. Staying with Psalm 145, what does it look like to honour God with our speech?

*We can honour God by praising him, giving the glory for what he has done. By telling younger generations about him (v4)*

5. Brainstorm some simple ways to honour God in your everyday conversations.

*Following on from the Psalm, we can take the plunge and give God credit for what he has done, things which people might ordinarily put down to 'luck', or 'nature'.*

6. Read over Ezekiel 20:30-44. How did Israel bring God's name into disrepute? What are the different stages of God's response?

*If you are running short, just look at Ez 20:39, or skip this question altogether. The Israelites profaned God's name by worshipping Idols instead of the one true God. This Idol worship involved the sacrifice of children in the fire (v31) – a practice associated with the pagan God Molech. The idea here is to see that we can bring dishonor to God's name by our behavior as God's people. Note God brings judgment when this happened (v35), but the judgment doesn't last for ever and he shows mercy to Israel despite their history of bringing God's name into disrepute (v41).*

7. When might you be easily tempted to bring God's name dishonor by your actions?

*If people are game, try and encourage specific personal responses*

8. How is God's name brought into disrepute in our wider society?  
What is your first response when you see or hear God being dishonoured?  
What might a helpful Christian response be?

*The focus here is on our response when God's name is dishonoured. Try not to get carried away listing all the times when God is disrespected in our society. Note that it's God's role to avenge his name (Rom 12, also note in Ezekiel 20 it's God who acts to defend his name), our job is to see people persuaded of God's honour, which will only happen if people are converted and the Holy Spirit uses our efforts to change them. Hence we need to do exactly what Jesus is suggesting in the Lord's prayer: we need to pray that God might hallow his own name!*

9. Practically speaking, what needs to happen if more people are to hallow God's name?

*People need to come to Christ! Only then will they be in a position to honour God's name.*

10. Pray that God's name might be hallowed in our media, classrooms, governments and workplaces. Pray that more people might recognize God's true nature and learn to trust, love and honour him

## Studies on the Lord's Prayer – Your Kingdom Come

### 1. What do you think the best form of government is?

*A question to get people thinking about the idea of rulers and subjects. Speak about the pros and cons of the various form you come up with.*

### 2. Read Psalm 47. What kind of government is God leading? How extensive is his realm? How does he use his authority?

*God is leading a monarchy – a kingdom – where he has control over the entire world (v2-7). He is above other earthly leaders (v3-8). He uses his authority to benefit his people (v4).*

### 3. What different reactions might people have when they hear God is a King? How might we respond to those who have a negative reaction?

*Some might be repelled by the idea, especially as we love the idea of democracy and the rule of the people. Also, history is replete with lone dictators who have been nasty people. On the other hand, some people think the idea of an absolute monarch has a certain appealing efficiency about it.*

*When we look at God's rule, we see that he is fair and just. Perhaps point people to Psalm 9:7-9. Here we see that God is fair in his judgments, and seeks to uphold the innocent and condemn the guilty. This is what you want a King to do!*

### 4. Read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10. How was God's rule demonstrated in Zacchaeus' life?

*Zacchaeus met God (in the person of Jesus), and his response was to repent. God started to rule his desires, replacing greed with generosity. This is an example of God's Kingdom coming to bear on the life of an individual.*

### 5. What do you think the parables in Matthew 13:31-33 teach us about God's Kingdom? When might we need to be reassured by these images?

*The Kingdom grows and grows, even if at first you cant see anything. In this world, God's rule might be hard to see. But rest assured it's there, and one day its presence will surprise everyone.*

### 6. Read Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, and 47-50. How will the nature of God's Kingdom change between now and when Jesus returns? What are some appropriate responses to this news?

*Now: those who allow God's rule in their lives live alongside those who don't, therefore God's Kingdom will be hard to see. But when Jesus returns, he will separate out the members from his kingdom from those who are outsiders. This ought to lead us to pray that people might find the Kingdom. It also means that we ourselves ought to ensure that we belong to this Kingdom and are not in any danger of forsaking it.*

### 7. What does the Future look like for those who belong to the Kingdom?

*Note Matt 13:43. The future looks bright! (Yes, pun totally intended)*

### 8. Finally, read the two parables in Matthew 13:44-45. How does our response to God's Kingdom compare to that of the man and the merchant? What might we need to do to make God's Kingdom a priority?

*The man and the merchant recognize just how important the Kingdom is, therefore they make it a priority – they sell everything to have it. Are we as wholehearted when it comes to securing a place within God's Kingdom? Does it mean everything to us?*

*At some point in the study, some may ask "How do we enter the Kingdom of God?" A good verse to lead them to is Mark 1:15. Jesus' instructions here in light of the Kingdom of God are to repent (ie turn back to God as King) and believe the Gospel (ie that Jesus is this King who welcomes back those sinners who were turned away).*

9. Thank God that he is a kind and gracious King. Seek his forgiveness for those times we fail to submit to him. Pray that God will come to rule in the lives of people you know. Pray that those living under God's rule will increase and spread throughout the world. Ask God to grant us patience as we wait for his Kingdom to be revealed. Thank him that the future Kingdom will be glorious.

## Learning to Pray – “Your will be done”

What’s one of the hardest skills/habits you’ve had to learn? What was difficult about it?

*A question to get people thinking about the discipline required to be obedient to God’s will. When we pray “your will be done”, we are asking God to lead us into obedience to his will, as well as asking for his will to be done throughout the world. But the latter doesn’t really happen without many people doing the former.*

Read Psalm 33:10-11, and James 4:13-17. What is the difference between God’s plans and human plans, between what God wills and what we desire? How do these verses mold our approach to the future?

*Human plans can fall apart, while God’s plans remain established. This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t plan things ourselves—God’s regular ordering of the world makes much planning possible—but when things don’t go to plan we should keep in mind that God has things in hand and that he’s working to a purpose. This helps us cope when things go awry in life.*

What do the following verses say about what God desires for us? 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Ephesians 5:17-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, James 1:19-21.

*2 Cor: cheerfulness in financial giving; Eph: sobriety, serving each other in praise, thankfulness towards God; 1 Thess: sexual purity, James: calmness, getting rid of sin (the old word for this is ‘mortification’ – ‘killing-off sin’). Perhaps ask for other examples of God’s will for our lives.*

As we look at churches today, where do we need to learn to obey God’s will? What about in your own life?

*Try not to let this discussion descend into a “our church has so many problems” rant. You might like to ask people to quietly consider their own lives. If people want to share their own personal areas for improvement, then that’s great – but don’t force people.*

Read the story of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane in Matthew 26:36-46. Was obedience to God’s will coming easily for Jesus? What comfort can we draw from his experience?

*No it wasn’t. This is a comfort because like us Jesus struggled with what God wanted him to do. See Heb 4:15.*

Carefully compare Jesus’ prayers in vs 39 and 42. What differences do you see? How might you explain these differences?

*In the first prayer he asks that the cup be taken away, in the second he only asks that God’s will be done. Note also that in the second prayer Jesus doesn’t refer to his own will. He seems to have accepted the fact of what is going to happen next. The act of prayer is strengthening him to be obedient. Note by the end of his time of prayer in Gethsemane he is ready for what’s next (v46).*

What does Jesus instruct the disciples to do in v 41? How successful were the disciples in completing this task? What particular temptation might Jesus be warning them about (Hint – 26:31-35)? What happened to Peter in the end (Hint – 26:69ff)? How might things have turned out differently for Peter?



*He instructs them to watch and pray so they might not fall into temptation. They weren't successful, they fell asleep! The particular temptation is to run away and disown Jesus. Despite his protestations to the contrary, Peter fell in this precise way. Maybe if Peter prayed as Jesus asked, he might have been strengthened to resist this temptation! Prayer makes a difference, it really does!*

**"I just keep on slipping and sinning against God! What can I do?" Based on what we've seen in the study, what basic advice can we give for this common complaint?**

*Star/continue praying for God's help in being obedient! Praying for God's will to be done is a personal as well as global prayer. In fact, praying that we might be able to do God's will is a necessary part of obedience – we cannot obey God without him enabling us. See Heb 13:20-21.*

**Pray that God's will might be done in your own life, and in the world more generally.**

## Learning to Pray - "Give us today our daily bread"

1. When you say your prayers (not the Lord's Prayer) do you ever ask for food? What things do you mostly ask for yourself? What other things do you pray about regularly?

*Have a general discussion about what you pray about and what things you don't pray about.*

2. Read Psalm 104 section by section. Talk about what each section is saying about God and our relationship to him.
  - a. 104:1-9
  - b. 104:10-18
  - c. 104:19-23
  - d. 104:27-30

*Look at how God created everything and provides everything for all his creatures. Question whether we have a sense of depending on him for food, health, abilities and life itself. Do members of the group rejoice in God's goodness and give thanks for the way he provides?*

3. How can we still say God sends the rain in this scientific age? How can we gain a real sense of depending on God for food, health, abilities and for life itself? Why is saying grace at meals helpful?

*Science explains the movement of pressure systems and ocean temperatures that cause rainfall. How can we still say God sends the rain? How do God and natural forces relate together?*

4. Read Exodus 16:11-20. What did the daily provision of manna teach the people of Israel? Does this help us understand why Jesus teaches us to ask for our "daily" bread? What does this mean to you?
5. If we trust God to provide for the future how will this affect the way we live and serve God? How does this influence our giving?

*Talk together about how missionaries or other people you know have had to trust God to provide and share times you have had to trust God for provision for the future.*

6. What does Jesus mean by "bread"? What sort of things can we ask for in prayer? (See also Philippians 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:7) How does the fact that we come to God as "Our Father" and the promises of Matthew 6:8, 32-33 and 7:7-11 encourage you in prayer?

*Refer back to your discussion in Question 1 of the sort of things you pray about. Are there some things that are too trivial to take to God? What does talking to a Heavenly Father mean to the group? Do any of them struggle with the concept of God as Father?*

7. Read Matthew 6:25-34. What sort of trust do these words challenge us to have? What priorities do they set for our lives and for our prayers? Note also where the request for bread comes in the order of requests in the Lord's Prayer. What does this teach us?

*Relate Jesus' instructions in this passage with what we pray about. In the Lord's Prayer the request for bread for ourselves comes after our requests for God's glory and kingdom. What pattern do we follow in our own prayers?*

8. Why does Jesus use the words "our" and "us" in this prayer rather than "my" and "me"? How should this shape our prayers?

## Learning to Pray – Forgive us our debts

Have you ever been surprised by a bill or an invoice?

*A question to get people thinking about what it means to be in debt. Follow up questions: How did you feel? Scared? Angry with yourself? Be sensitive to people who may be real financial hardship.*

Read the first part of the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18:21-27). How serious is the servant's situation? What elements of the story convey this seriousness?

*Very serious! Elements of the text which communicate this include the extraordinary amount that is mentioned. The talent was the biggest unit of money available, and 10,000 talents was the equivalent of a national budget - billions of dollars in today's money. That the servant and his family were to be sold off was almost a lenient punishment!*

To what extent do people recognize their debts before God? Is this something you have thought about recently?

*Some people do – they have a sense of guilt. They might try and pay it off, but they will fall short, such is the enormity of the debt. Others have no idea, and think that it's God who owes them something! As Christians who know forgiveness we might have forgotten about how much God has forgiven us. And there is always the temptation to take his forgiveness for granted, or to start thinking that sin is no big deal. We need to be reminded of the seriousness of our sin.*

Read Psalm 103. How does David (who wrote the Psalm) describe God's actions towards our sin/debt? What did David know about having a debt before God? (Hint: Psalm 51)

*Note verses 11-12. David is using cosmic language to describe how much God has removed our sins/debt. The very dimensions of the universe are employed to describe what God is willing to do! Psalm 51 shows that David knew the depths of his sin; he had a very big debt before God. But the scale of God's removal of sin means to debt is too large!*

According to the following passages, how is it that God can forgive our sinfulness? Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 9:27-28.

*Each verse speaks about how the death of Jesus results in our forgiveness/removal of sins. He pays our debt.*

Read the next part of the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18:28-35). How does the debt owed to the servant compare with the debt that he himself owed? What adjectives would you use to describe the servant's behavior?

*A good Bible translation will explain how much these amounts are worth in the footnotes. The debt of verse 28 ("a few hundred denarii") was only a couple of days' wages. The servant is: hypocritical, cruel, heartless, with a ridiculous sense of entitlement.*

"Forgiveness just means that you can go about doing whatever you want." How does the second half of the parable challenge this statement?

*It shows that Jesus expects the experience of forgiveness to change us; we are to start exhibiting the same grace and mercy that Christ exhibited to us.*

*Some might ask the question as to whether someone needs to be repentant before they receive forgiveness. The second half of the story starts to answer this question. Note that Jesus final words (verse 35) indicate that the servant's heart hadn't really changed, so it would be a fair assumption to say that his original plea for mercy wasn't born out of a genuine sorrow for his sin. Note that the forgiveness is ultimately withdrawn by the King (verse 34), but note also the King was willing to offer it. So it is with us: the offer to forgive must always be there, but in the end it can only be truly granted if it's met with genuine sorrow and repentance.*

**Do you find it easy to forgive others? What's at stake if we withhold forgiveness from those who seek it from us?**

*Be mindful that many people in churches have estranged relationships with former friends and family members. Out of their hurt, many people refuse to forgive. The parable is a challenge for these people, as it says that their own forgiveness is in peril. Tread carefully but truthfully here. People may ask? "But how can I forgive?" Look to the cross, and know that Christ's death is enough to cover anyone's sin, therefore the possibility for anyone to be forgiven is real. "I can forgive them, because God can forgive them and Christ has done enough to cover their sin." Of course, forgiveness doesn't happen until people repent and seek forgiveness (from us and from God), but knowing that it's possible opens the door for us to consider being merciful.*

**Memorise Luke 6.36. Pray that God might help you put it into practice.**

## Learning to Pray - Lead us not into temptation

1. What would the average person think of as temptations?  
*People might think of breaking a diet or buying things.*
2. When you say the words “Lead us not into temptation” what do you think of?  
*Ask if people say the words without thinking that they face temptation. Are they aware of real dangers?*
3. Read 1 Peter 5:8-9. What is the warning here? How is the devil like a lion? Do you think we say these words in the Lord’s Prayer too casually?
4. Read Psalm 73. What temptation did the writer face? Do you ever feel like he did? What situations or thoughts might cause people to doubt God?  
*The writer of the Psalm saw how those who ignored God prospered while he suffered even though he tried to please God (see 73:3-5 and 13-14). This made him doubt God’s goodness. Discuss how people might doubt God’s love, his word, his salvation, or his power to help.*
5. Read Matthew 5:21-6:1. What temptations might we face to fall short of God’s will?  
*If we take Jesus’ teaching seriously we will find that we have many temptations to fall short of God’s will. Discuss the reality of these temptations.*
6. Read Matthew 6:19-21 and Ephesians 5:5. In what ways are we tempted to be greedy? How serious is this?  
*Talk about how wanting more and more is just accepted as normal in our society. Talk about God’s will for us to be generous.*
7. Read James 1:13. If God never leads people into temptation why do we pray, “Lead us not into temptation”? (Note that the word translated ‘temptation’ also means ‘test’ or ‘trial’.) How does God test people and why (see Genesis 22:1; Deuteronomy 8:2)?  
*‘Temptation’ means enticement to do evil. ‘Testing’ is to show if our faith is genuine or to develop our character and make us more mature.*
8. Read James 1:2-4. If trials are good for us why should we pray not to be lead into them?  
*Look at the fact that Jesus prayed to be spared the trial of the cross. It is not wrong to pray not to suffer. Yet Jesus was willing to do God’s will.*
9. Putting all of this together, what do you think this request means?

## Learning to Pray: Deliver us from the evil one

Have you ever had to restrain someone or something that was a danger unto others?

*If people are struggling for ideas, how about escaped animals from the zoo? There was an example of this in the news recently from the nation of Georgia. The idea here is to introduce the concept of restraining evil. Not that animals are evil in and of themselves, but they are dangerous, like the evil described in the Bible*

What elements in this world need to be restrained?

*Groups like the so-called Islamic State, dictators like what we see in North Korea. The greed of some companies.*

What things do we learn about Satan and his helpers from the following?  
John 8:44; Ephesians 2:1-2; Ephesians 6:10-12; 1 Peter 5:8-9.

*Note in these passages how Satan is at work in the hearts of humans, even those who are not obviously demon possessed. John: Satan is a liar at work in the Pharisees; Ephesians: he is a spirit at work in those who are disobedient (ch2), he is a schemer (ch6); 1 Peter: He is like a dangerous animal looking for someone to devour.*

Read Matthew 8:28-31. What clues does the text give us as to what the demons are trying to achieve?

*They have isolated these two men from the rest of society, and brought them to a place of death (among the tombs). When they are expelled from the men, they are still hell-bent on destruction... ruining the lively-hoods of the local people by destroying a pig heard. This is probably why Jesus was asked to leave.*

*The question might be raised as to why Jesus would allow a pig heard to be destroyed. Some thoughts: Jesus is demonstrating that human lives are more precious than animal lives; human life is even more precious than commerce; As a member of the trinity, Jesus is also the creator and so he could have ensured the local residents could have survived in another way with that herd; it's an opportunity to show just how evil the demons were.*

Looking at our own culture, in what ways are people being destroyed by Satan today?

*They believe the lies about greed and sexuality, even lies about other gods and atheism. All this leads not to human flourishing, but to human destruction.*

What do the demons know about their future (v29)? See also Revelation 20:7-10.

*That they exist on borrowed time. There is an appointed time for them to be tortured (see Rev 20), but until then they have some freedom.*

Read Matthew 8:32-34. What does this tell us about evil's limitations?

*The freedom evil has now is limited by the command of God. Think of the story of Job, with Satan seeking permission to test Job, God gives permission but with limits.*

When faced with the reality of the evil in the world today, what hope and confidence does the story in Matthew 8:28-34 give us?

*That evil has an end point (the demons know this), and that in the meantime, Jesus can issue a command and evil will be restrained. Deliver us from evil is not an empty prayer, Jesus can answer such a prayer mightily.*

How often have you prayed “deliver us from the evil one”? Name some evils in the world and pray for God’s deliverance right now.