

## Jesus' Teaching of Prayer

In their time, the disciples experienced that they did not know how to pray. Therefore, the disciples asked Jesus to teach them about praying. In this situation the Lord's Prayer was born.

In this familiar prayer, the Lord of Life appraised the entire life of man. He established priorities for all things. God's glory and His salvation plan rose above everything else. Into this great plan, the redemption of all mankind, the Lord of Life inserted man, also your salvation and mine. Oh great a value He placed on man, every person!

Neither did Jesus forget our temporal needs. How did He speak of them? He did not urge us to gather material things for tomorrow, but rather each day ask for our daily bread. We probably have sufficient learning in this for a lifetime. How easily, even as children of God, priorities turn from eternal to temporal matters. Often we find ourselves asking our Heavenly Father for the needs of temporal life and only after that strengthening for our faith. To the essence of His teachings Jesus yet attaches the exhortation for a forgiving mind. It must not be directed at only our brothers and sisters, but at all our neighbors.

In addition to the Lord's Prayer, almost all of Jesus' teachings about prayers are contained in the Sermon on the Mount. Is not Jesus' teaching to pray in solitude and simplicity the same as the instruction of our Christian doctrine: "Prayer is the humble and sincere speech of the heart with God?" Even with regard to prayer, we feel ourselves unsuccessful and lacking, even selfish. The innermost feelings of our own hearts are often the same as that of the petitioner who had nothing else to say when approaching his Creator than "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Jesus did not teach prayers by word only but also with His life. In the agony of death He prayed to His Father for forgiveness and grace for His crucifiers. Is it not all love beyond measure? We want also, before such a great sight to carry each other's burdens in God's kingdom by remembering one another in our prayers. It seems insignificant beside the example of our Lord and Master, but each of us knows how comforting and warm the petitions of God's children feel. They have power and love and they carry us.

My sister and brother, you do remember the battle of prayer in Gethsemane, which concluded with these words, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt 26:39) Are not all our troubles and distress familiar to the Lord of Life, who entered into enormous trials and sufferings in His own life? It is comforting that we weak and poor have even now such a petitioner, who carries us to the heart of our Heavenly Father even when we are unable or too weary to pray. "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:34)

In God's kingdom, we receive strength from the gospel of grace; we can believe our sins and burdens forgiven in the name and blood of our Lord and Master. We can yet remain in the shelter of the prayers of our High Priest and the other children of God.