

A prayer that encompasses the whole world.
Matthew 6, 5-15



5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans,

for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 “This, then, is how you should pray: “ ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ 14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Firdowsi is certainly one of the most famous Persian poets of all time. However, his keen interest in reviving Persian culture and history always got him into trouble with the Islamic rulers. Therefore, like other poets and thinkers before him, he devised a special way to circumvent the Islamic rulers. It was relatively easy. You just had to make friends with the royal family and say some nice things to the king; and to commit all your works to the king's eternal wealth and wisdom. Firdowsi did that and was able to earn King Machmud's favor. For this reason he enjoyed complete literary freedom. Only in this way could he dedicate his life's work “Schachname” (king's book) to Persian history and literature without even mentioning Islam. What Firdowsi did, can still be done today. "It doesn't matter what you know, but who you know," they say today. Or just simply vitamin B (In German Beziehung means relationship and B stands for Beziehung). Knowing how to play your relationship can do a lot of great things.

The disciples of Jesus already knew about vitamin B. They could see how Jesus spoke to his father constantly and intimately. They also kept seeing that Jesus could accomplish great things with his prayers. "Even the sea had to obey to him!" Maybe the disciples thought that there might be a hot wire to God that can be learnt. Perhaps they could keep close to Jesus and learn whether there is a ritual or a religious formula or anything else so that they, like Jesus, would have access to God's power. You could often see such Games happening with the contemporaries of Jesus and His disciples. Some wanted to pray in public and in many words. This sure looked impressive and the disciples thought that Jesus must surely have something similar up his sleeve! In this manner, and almost bursting with curiosity, one of the disciples asked Jesus once: "Lord teach us to pray!" At that moment they might have done something to find out more. They would have fasted, they would have given their belongings to the poor. Perhaps they would have even tried fulfilling God's commandments correctly or almost correctly. And what does Jesus give them? Something completely different. Jesus bursts their

little bubble of dreams with a few words. You can't fool God. Neither with many words nor with public prayers. So that's the end of the road! God cannot be manipulated! Because God looks into your heart anyway. These words of Jesus were like a stab in the heart. Woe to me if God can see through my prayers ? Woe to me when all my demeanor and piety is simply swept off the table because I just wanted to impress people. I can't even bring my best attempts to be a good man before God. I am lost. Access to God is simply closed. I can forget it! ... We may never come close to God and his power. We must hide from him just like Moses and shrink from him. Or, as the Koran quite logically claims: God has no children. And that's why we can't expect to influence him in any way or have any relationship with him at all. This experience is not only experienced by the disciples of Jesus. Not only by some strict Muslims. This is how it is for each of us! When I have to pray, my prayers are negligent and weak. You cannot reach heaven with them.. And I cannot conquer God with my prayers. I have to give up from the start because I can't make it!

But Jesus doesn't leave us on the ground. Nor does he leave us alone in our godlessness. On the contrary: Jesus wants to establish and confirm our relationship with God. Therefore, in the following Words He opens heavens doors by teaching us to pray: "Our father!" When praying, the eternal God should be our Father! Through Jesus and because he prays for us, we can say: Father! Just as the prodigal son, who was allowed to return, could simply fall into the arms of the father, so we can say: "Father!" This prayer must have given the disciples a shock. And must have blown them over. We may pray without protocols and complicated rituals ... Yes, even with all our mistakes and weak hearts: "Our father!" We can do the same thing as children, always returning to the father "Our Father!" Since Jesus taught us to pray like this, Christianity has prayed like this. To this day, we pray in every Sunday service: "Our Father!" The Lord's Prayer must not be missing in our house devotions and at the bedside. Even when we are buried, the church prays for us into eternity: "Our Father!"

Jesus also takes us from this simple salutation to the other prayer requests and shows how the eternal God comes very close to us: "Your name will be sanctified" and "Your kingdom will come." Luther commented shortly on these words: "God's name is holy in itself; but in this prayer we ask that it also becomes holy and in us. "And" God's Word comes naturally even without our prayer; but in this prayer we ask that it also come to us. "The request that God should also come to me; that it should be in my family, should be in my life and from there to the whole wide world, seems somehow too big and too much! And Jesus says exactly this. It should be so! These prayers, which Jesus teaches us, are neither future dreams nor wishful thinking. No, if Jesus lets us pray like this, then he means that God's name and kingdom are not far from us, but may already be very close to us and to the many. Jesus simply removes the separation between people and God. We can even pray that the living God comes to me personally! All of this is not just a mental game, but firmly anchored in his Word and in his promise.

We will learn what that means in the next request. "Your will be done, as it is in heaven, on earth." We actually have to shy away from fear with this request, because we can clearly see that our will is not on the same wavelength as God's will. Not only that. Satan and our whole existence seem to contradict and fight God's will. What should we say now? Should we stop in the middle of the Lord's Prayer because we can't climb this mountain after all? In the end it becomes clear the Lord's prayer is all about Jesus. He alone lives God's will. He alone is God's will for us. Prayer is from him and is also in him at the same time. Only in Jesus can we say "father". Just because He has stood by our side and He is also God at the same time, we can hope that God's name is sacred to us too. His kingdom is in him ... also among us. Jesus is not afraid of us and lets his prayer embrace our prayer. In the narrowest sense His prayer becomes our prayer! Because this is all so, we can be so intimately and so closely connected to God.

Of course, such prayer lifts the world off its hinges. And as we know it from Jesus, when he unhinges the world, he starts with the smallest part. He does this by taking care of things as simple and practical as "our daily bread." But it shouldn't stop there. Jesus takes us by the hand and leads us to where the soul is sick: "Forgive us for our guilt!" and it shouldn't stop there, because we pass our hand on to our neighbor: "as we forgive those who trespass against us" and because Jesus knows of all our weakness, He lets us pray now and for all future temptations: "And don't lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

The disciples hardly expected all of this when they asked: "Lord teach us to pray" But what they were allowed to experience ---- and we with them --- was and is:
God's kingdom and the power and the glory forever ... Because Jesus says that, it's like this ...
Amen