

## **“THE LORD’S PRAYER” SEPTEMBER 2008**

Nearly everyone has an opinion about the subject of prayer. Some are serious about it and others are humorous. Benjamin Franklin included prayer as one of the many topics of practical wisdom in his famous Poor Richard’s Almanack. Franklin offered these words of advice, “Work as if you were to live a hundred years. Pray as if you were to die tomorrow.” Mark Twain, another sage of American common sense, penned this observation, “I don’t know of a single foreign product that enters this country untaxed, except the answer to prayer.”

When we read in The New Testament, we find that prayer was one of the central themes in the ministry of Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke, the disciples say to Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” (Luke 11:1) Apparently, John the Baptist had taken the time to teach his followers about prayer. Jesus’ disciples were eager for their Master to do the same for them.

Jesus replies to their request by teaching them what we call The Lord’s Prayer. The words to this special prayer are found in both Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. The Lord’s Prayer is used throughout the worldwide Christian Church. The version that we have historically used in the Presbyterian Church is:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

If you are from another denomination, you might notice some slight differences in wording.

The Lord’s Prayer has always been at the heart of the Christian spiritual life. In fact, early believers were instructed to pray this prayer three times a day. The Lord’s Prayer has helped countless believers to approach God in their moments of individual quiet devotion. It has also been used as part of public worship services. As Christians from different denominations gather together, they sense a spiritual bond when The Lord’s Prayer is lifted up in unison.

You’re invited to a class that I will begin to teach on The Lord’s Prayer. We will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in Classroom 4 of Smead Hall. This class will begin on Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. It will not be necessary to purchase a book for this class. If on your own, however, you would like to read more about The Lord’s Prayer, you could order William Carl’s The Lord’s Prayer for Today at your local bookstore. See you on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

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