

June 20, 2010 Father's Day Lord's Prayer

## THE UMBRELLA OF OUR FAITH

Happy Father's Day to all the dads out there. In May we celebrate Mother's Day and in June we celebrate Father's Day. In September we celebrate Grandparent's Day therefore honoring those who are dear to us and who have taught us many things and those who have been a big influence in our lives. I think Mother's Day gets more press and more cards are sent on that day, but we father's enjoy our day. We remember fathers past and present. In 1983 on Father's Day I preached my first sermon at the Buffalo and Dawson Churches. Father's Day was always moving day for pastors but in our conference it has changed. The US Open Golf is always played on Father's Day weekend and many who win honor their dads past and present for their support in the golfing arena. So though Father's Day may not take on the magnitude of Mother's Day, and not many ladies went to Jarrod's for presents, dad will be blessed in many ways today. And this morning we honor our Father in heaven, who brought us into this world, who knit us together in our mother's womb, who gave us the gifts we need.

This morning we have already prayed the Lord's Prayer but I want to use it once again, but I want to use the one found in our hymnal on page 898. It's slightly different. **READ WITH CONGREGATION**

**“Our Father”** we begin to pray reminding us who God is. Years ago people were afraid to say the name of God. That’s why the Hebrew people came up with the name Yahweh. His name was so holy that the fear they had was such that they didn’t dare utter his name. When Moses went up to speak to God no one else wanted to go in fear that either hearing God’s voice or seeing him would bring disaster in their lives. But today we hear his name often. We hear it in praise, but we also hear it in ways that offends his followers. We hear his name sung like we have already done today. We hear his name mocked at times, and at times we rejoice in saying his name and acknowledging his wonderful power. This is our Father’s World, the good, the bad, the ugly. “This is my Father’s World” the hymn goes, “O let me ne’er forget that though the wrong seems so strong, God is the ruler yet. This is my Father’s world, why should my heart be sad? The Lord is King, let the heaven’s ring! God reigns; let the earth be glad!” Folks that was written in 1901 and look at our Father’s world today. But hear this! He is our Father in whom we can trust.

First of all God is **the Father who sees all**. He doesn’t need X-ray vision. He sees all....and everything any place at any time. Can you understand that? I’m afraid not. You see he can see way down the road farther than any of us can see. He sees the dangers on certain roads we might travel, the perils that are just around the bend and he tries to direct our paths if we would let him. He’s the Good

Shepherd who leads the way taking the danger out of our trip. He tries to lead us in paths of righteousness. But you and I know at times we want to do it our way, not his way, and sometimes we get lost along the way. And sometimes we want to hide from God. But you can't. You can try. You can put on various disguises, change the color of your hair, grow a beard, shave your head, get all those tattoos, go through surgery, but you are still the same person God created. He doesn't need to look at your outside. He knows your heart. Adam and Eve tried their best to hide from God after they ate from the forbidden tree. They hid in the bushes, but God found them. Jonah tried to hide from God as he slept in the bottom of the boat running away from God's commission to preach his word. While the storms were raging outside and the crew was getting panicky Jonah slept. But God knew he was there so through a couple of convincing increases in wave heights and thunderstorms and massive winds, the sailors decided it was time for Jonah to take a dip and they tossed him overboard. When they did that, the storms stopped and a giant fish caught Jonah, perhaps in mid air, where he stayed for 3 days. God knew exactly where he was. Jonah prayed while God was the chauffeur getting the big fish to Nineveh where he kind of shoots him onto the seashore. Jonah didn't have to ask where he was... he knew. God is amazing.

Then there is Joseph who his brothers tried to kill because they were jealous of his multi-colored coat. They put him in a hole, but then sold him to a bunch of

hairy men who took him to Egypt. Did God know where he was and what he was doing? You bet. God could see it all. And God blessed him until the time was right when Joseph would be number two. He saved the people of Egypt and he saved the called out people known as the Hebrew nation.

Second, God the **Father knows all**. Isn't scary knowing God knows what is on your mind? Right now he knows what you are thinking. Are you thinking about lunch? Are you thinking about what you are going to do after worship? Are you thinking I hope Dick's sermon is short? Ah yes, God knows what you are thinking. He even knows what you are going to say before you even say it. He knows which road you are going to take as you travel along lives highway. I mean, he knows it all. That is why he had a plan of salvation when Adam and Eve fell into sin. He knew what it would take to restore people to a relationship with him. He tried different ways like sending Noah and starting over again. But he realized the problem wasn't with just the people of that time, it was a heart problem.

Mankind's heart was bent on sinning. So though he began again with Noah and his family sin once again raised its ugly head and God knew that it would take more than this. Then there was the great deliver Moses and the Law of God. But that failed and then it was all downhill from there as prophet after prophet failed to convince the people of God's love and that repentance was in order if one wanted to be blessed by God. And so it all happened until God sent his own son to die that

all might have life. He opened the gates of heaven so that all who would believe in his son could have eternal life. So God sees all and knows all.

Then we have this....**God the Father forgives all.** Isn't that what we hear in the Lord's Prayer? "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." In another part of Scripture we learn that God doesn't remember our confessed sins. Now he doesn't have a bad memory. What he does is not let those confessed things get in the way of our relationship with him. He washes our heart clean through the blood of his son that died on Calvary. Sin separates us from God. Confession brings us back in a right relationship with God. It all comes through the power of the cross when Jesus died for us. Let me read from John's Letter about this subject. He writes, *"So if we say we have fellowship with God, but we continue living in darkness, we are liars and do not follow the truth. But if we live in the light, as God is in the light, we can share fellowship with each other. Then the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin. If we say we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done, if we say we have not sinned we make God a liar and we do not accept God's teachings."*

Powerful words for us today. That's why each week the Lord's Prayer is prayed after most pastoral prayers because it reminds us who God is and what he

does. He sees all...he knows all...he forgives all. But there is one more thing that God does. **He invites us to have a relationship with him.**

Look around this morning and you see that we are getting ready to take the VBS's on a voyage in order for them to know God. We can shout "All aboard" as we cast off into the seas of life thinking about the grace and goodness of God. It might even get a little scary when the waves hit high and the wind becomes strong. We might be afraid the boat will fall apart or the sails will break. But we will learn God is with us always and we can trust in his promises. Many of you have had such adventures at VBS and in your own lives. Sometimes the seas are choppy, but you can count on our God. "Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God. Through it all, through it all, I've learned to depend upon God's word." That sure is a nice little chorus of assurance that God is watching over us.

When you read God's word from beginning to end you find how much our Father in Heaven loves us. Through the ages, and through his word, there have always been times when God's people didn't listen to his word, but they were always invited to turn around and turn toward God and receive his forgiveness and walk a clean life. In the Gospels we read story after story of Jesus inviting people to change their lives. Some are easy to see, others are implied. The religious leaders brought a woman caught in adultery to him to see if he would order them

to stone her because that was the Law. Jesus saw the crowd surrounding the near naked woman and himself and he saw the stones in their hands, maybe even boulders, ready to doll out their punishment when the words “she is guilty” were heard. “So Jesus, what do you say? Is she guilty or not?” And Jesus looks down and says some remarkable words as he writes in the sand, maybe for the woman to see in order to release her fears as he writes the word “Agape,” meaning, God’s love, and says, “You

Without sin can cast the first stone.” And all eyes were upon the religious leaders, but no stones were thrown. Then one by one you could hear stones falling, not as they were flung in the woman’s direction, but as they fell to the ground. Maybe those stones made a circle around her. And Jesus looks up at the woman still afraid and waiting for punishment and says, “Woman, where are your accusers? Have they gone? Then hear these words of grace that are encircling you. Go and sin no more.” End of story, but beginning of the change of that woman.

Or we can remember the man who went out on a limb to see Jesus as he came to town. For years he cheated the people. But this day when Jesus came along the route where others had gathered it was at the base of the tree that Zacchaeus clung that Jesus stopped. He looked up at him with a smile and said, “Come down from there before you fall and break something. Come down and let’s go to your house for lunch I got things to discuss with you my friend.” And a

shocked Zacchaeus almost fell out of the tree but Jesus caught him and they walked to his home. This dreaded tax collector and sinner walked past others who were throwing sarcastic remarks his way and maybe even threw a few pebbles, or maybe a few juicy tomatoes at him as they walked. Perhaps they booed him, and maybe asked Jesus if he knew who he was walking with. But Jesus told him not to mind what was happening. And during dinner Jesus invited him to change his way of doing things. Zacchaeus accepted his invitation and to prove he was serious he promised to give back to those he cheated 4 times that which he had taken from them. Zach was one happy camper that day. He went out on a limb but Jesus caught him in the nick of time from falling to the bottom of the pit into the devil's clutches forever.

Jesus invited the rich young ruler to follow him. He came to Jesus to find eternal life but his wealth was in the way. Jesus said sell it all and come join his band and don't worry about tomorrow. Just trust in God, trust in me. You know the commandments to love God with all you have. I invite you to come and put that trust into action by being a disciple of mine. But he couldn't say yes to Jesus and leave his future in his hands. He lacked faith...he lacked trust so he walked away not finding what he came looking for.

I want to remind you that God never will twist your arm, nor will he make it difficult for you to follow him. He just invites. He has tears in his eyes as those he

invites turn to another way. But to those who accept his invitation he dolls out his promises, promises that you can stand on forever. All he does is extend his hand and invites you to come to him just as you are. Billy Graham always closed his crusades with a special hymn of invitation. The reason are the words..... “Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come. Just as I am and waiting not, to rid my soul of one dark blot, to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God I come...Just as I am, though tossed about, with many a conflict, many a doubt, fighting’s and fears within, without, O Lamb of God I come...Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind, yea, all I need in thee to find, O Lamb of God I come. Just as I am thou wilt receive, will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God I come... Just as I am, thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down; now, to be thine, yea thine alone O Lamb of God I come, I come.”

God doesn’t ask you to clean up before he can dress you up. He doesn’t tell you to wash up before he scrubs you up. He doesn’t ask you to change your ways before he transforms your life. He just invites you to come just as you are so that he can begin to make you a vessel that he is proud of...so that he can transform your life and give it a new meaning....that’s the invitation he gives.

On this Father's Day we give thanks to our Father in heaven and hallowed be  
his name.