

# Growing Closer

## Week 3: Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- June 16, 2024

This week I remembered and was struck by a Father's Day story. A pastor told this story about a congregant he had, a middle-aged woman. She was telling stories about her family's Sunday rituals. And on this particular Sunday she said, "Well, the ritual goes like this. Our family—my husband and my three children—go to church together, and then we all go to lunch together. Then we visit my father in a nursing home. He's older and getting somewhat sick, so we go and visit him. And as you can imagine, it's absolutely the high point of my father's week. He would shave close on Sunday. He'd get all dressed up and he'd always meet the family in the lobby because it's Sunday, and he was going to meet with his family."

As the years went by, his health degraded, and he was getting to the point where he was getting lost regularly in the nursing home. Then there were situations where he couldn't even remember the names of his grandchildren or recognize them. But he was always there on Sunday.

His daughter was perplexed and didn't understand the isolated factor of his memory. So, she said, "Daddy, I know it's sorrowful to hear that you're losing your memory; you can't remember the grandchildren's names, but you always remember Sunday. You're always here to wait for us. So, how do you know what day of the week it is?"

And he grabbed his daughter's hand and he held it and looked into her eyes and said, "Honey, I wait for you every day."

I love that story because it says a lot about the tender, loving relationship this daddy had with his daughter. He never knew which day it was. He was out there every day waiting for her. He waits for her every day.

It says something about the loving relationship we have with God our Father. Now He's not feeble and He's not feeble-minded. But He wants us to call Him "Father", and he longs for us to have a conversation with Him—a regular conversation with Him.

Know this to be true: that it glorifies God when we speak with Him. It honors the works of God when we listen in our prayer time. *Honey, I wait for you every day to talk with me.*

Here's why. Because when we pray, it is the fulfillment of God's work for all of mankind. Prayer is a completion of what He has been up to and His ambition in the history of humanity. If you do a survey of the Bible narrative, the meta-narrative that's taking place in the Bible from beginning to end, it's about God sovereignly controlling the plot line so that men and women can enjoy a relationship with Him.

Jesus' title is like a logo for His cause: Jesus, Immanuel—"God with us." For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to come and die and be raised again because it was the only way that whoever believed in Him could have and enjoy a relationship with Him.

Here's the thing: God Almighty, the maker of all the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1 and 2, misses having a walk in the garden with you. This is the plot line of the history of humans.

We're in a series right now called *Growing Closer*. And it's the idea that we're growing closer in our relationship with God. And God has done everything He can do. So, we need to do what we can do to grow closer. The disciplines help us know God for who He is and enjoy Him.

So, this week we're going to talk about prayer. And there's a lot to be said on prayer. There are chapters on prayer I read, there are books on prayer I read, and I was overwhelmed. And I thought, *If God just told me what to pray...* And then there's literally a passage in the Bible where the disciples say to Jesus, "Jesus, teach us how to pray." And I thought maybe we could start there. We'll just do the Lord's Prayer. We'll look at the one in Matthew 6:9-15. I mean, this is the only time God tells us through Jesus, *This is how you pray*. Sixty-six words, and it has the potential to ignite and define our relationship with God. It's a powerful prayer. And it is written both to be memorized and repeated verbatim, but it's also to be a template for other prayers—an outline. Do this in every prayer, if you wouldn't mind.

Here's the template. It goes like this:

- 1) I adore You.
- 2) I surrender to You.
- 3) I need You.

The depth of the meaning of this prayer will change your life because it defines who God is and His desire to have the kind of relationship He has with us.

We don't have much time. We'll take a close look, but a brief look, at this passage.

## 1. I Adore You

The first part is “I adore You.” And there are three reasons we are to adore Him, and the first has to do with our relationship. The first words of the prayer go like this: “Our Father.” In the older testament, the way people related to God was through Israel, through the tabernacle, and later, through the temple. But it was always through a priest. You couldn’t have this kind of relationship with God. It’s only less than a dozen times, I think, that the word “Father” is used in a personal way in the older Testament. It’s used almost exclusively to relate to God being the father of all of Israel.

And then in the New Testament, everything changes, because Jesus changes everything—Immanuel, God with us. And we have a whole new understanding of our relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In the Sermon on the Mount alone, those three chapters in Matthew, He uses the word “father” in a personal way seventeen times. In the four gospels “father” is used in a personal way over seventy times. Something radically changes. A paradigm shift takes place in the newer testament. This is that paradigm shift. Look at the focus on the paternal relationship we have now.

### Galatians 4:4-7

**But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters. <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons and daughters, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Daddy!” <sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son and a daughter, and if a son and a daughter, then an heir of God through Christ.**

In Galatians 4 it says, “But when the fullness of time had come”---the plan that God was working out---that’s the whole point---“God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters. And because you are sons and daughters, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into

your hearts and souls, so now they cry out, ‘*Abba*, Daddy!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son and a daughter, and if a son and a daughter, then an heir”—you’re a descendant—“of God through Christ.”

This passage is remarkable. It says there that the Spirit causes our spirit to call out to God. It says, “*Abba*”, and that word—when you hear little Hebrew kids running around in Israel, they’re saying, “*Abba, Abba!*” It means “daddy”—not “father.” It is a word that is exclusively able to be used by the child. In other words, it’s like John Stott, a scholar, said. You couldn’t go to someone’s front door and say, “Is your *abba* home?” You could say, “Is your father home?” And that child, and only that child, could say, “My daddy’s home.” But you can’t call that person “Daddy.” Only the son or daughter could. It’s an exclusive term. It’s about intimacy.

And if you could just think about this, ponder this, try it out just to see if it works. Try this out. Start your prayer with “Heavenly Dad, I want to talk to you about some things on my mind.” “Dear Heavenly Daddy, I’m scared about work. Here’s what is going on.”

This is amazing and something that’s beyond our ability to grasp, in many respects. My brothers and sisters in Christ, my fellow-heirs, children of God, the omnipotent, all-powerful God of the universe says, *Just call me “Father.”* It is so difficult to understand the depth of this. There are so few temporal illustrations of what this looks like. The closest thing I could come to is this. What would it be like to grow up as the small child in the Oval Office? I don’t think it’s really happened except for one time—I know, one time in my life. The president has to be young enough. When John F. Kennedy was president his son and daughter ran around dancing in the Oval Office.



They're playing with toys under his desk. What in the world? They're the only two humans that experienced that. There are no other children, there are no other adults who have a toy box in the throne room of the United States of America. That's their privilege. Amen?



That's what we get to have, is the point. And we get to adore God, because He says, *Call me Father*.

The second reason we adore Him is because it says "who dwells in the heavens." That's literally what it says—"dwells in the heavens." And the plural is important because it's telling us in this short phrase that God is both outside all of creation, past the expansion of the furthest-out galaxies; and at the same time He is ever-present, right here, right now. He's in this very room. It



is in the incomparability of the glory of God and the imminence, the locality, the intimacy of God—all of that in the phrase “who art in heaven.”

We worship Him also and adore Him because of His nature “hallowed be Thy name.”

“Thy name” is an expression in the Old and New Testament both to mean the person, the character, the activities, their name—We pray in Jesus’ name.

And what does it say about that? His name is hallowed, holy, set apart, not just from the vile, but from the common. It’s the only adjective and attribute of God that is used three times in the Bible; that God is Jehovah and is holy, holy, holy. And because it’s almost impossible for us to imagine that kind of holiness, God helps us by giving us a picture of something that’s physical. In the Old Testament it is the Ark of the Covenant. It’s the presence of God. And the Ark of the Covenant is so separate from the common that you can’t even be in a room with it. It’s contained in a room called “the holy of holies.” You can’t touch it. You can’t look inside it. If you look inside it, apparently your skin melts right off your skull. You’ve seen the movie, but did you know this—that the movie’s based on a true story of an Old Testament event where people got cocky with the holiness of God and they were eviscerated? That’s the holiness of the name of God.

## 2. I Surrender to You

So, we’re to worship Him, to adore Him, because He lets us call Him Father and because He indwells the heavens and is holy. And now the next section is that we’re to surrender to Him. The second part of the prayer is “I surrender to You.” That’s where it says, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” But the first part, “Thy kingdom come,” is a value statement. It’s the hope and the dream and the plan of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and His nation Israel. “Thy kingdom come ...” It is the culmination of everything that God has been working for. It is the hope of every saint. And this is the kingdom of God: that God’s chosen descendant of Abraham would come and bless all nations and all people groups by ruling over them on this earth. That’s the kingdom of God. It is the single big idea of John the Baptist and his preaching. The kingdom of God—“Thy kingdom come ...”

Today when a Jewish family is enjoying the Passover meal there’s a part of that ritual where they send the youngest child out looking all over the house to see if Elijah is there, because when Elijah comes, “Thy kingdom” comes.

The last paragraph, the last promise in the Bible, the last red letters you'll ever read, are in the Book of Revelation. It's the last paragraph, where Jesus promises "Yes, I am coming." And the people respond by saying, "Come, Lord Jesus." That's the kingdom of God—"Thy kingdom come." That's the desire. And it means praying that God would heal everything, both physically and spiritually. When you pray "Thy kingdom come," you're praying against disease and hunger and injustice. When you pray, "Thy kingdom come," you are praying for peace and justice prevailing over all mankind. "Thy kingdom come" is a value. It is the desire.

And how does that apply? That's how it starts. You need to see it that way, because when you look at it that way, you say, *What does it look like in the world? What does it look like in my life?* That's why the next phrase is, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is both apocalyptic and very personal. It is talking about all of creation—"Thy will be done"—and, in my personal life, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

So, when you're looking at this and trying to apply it to your life individually, it's starting with "Thy kingdom come"—that Christ is a king and that He has a right to rule. And that right to rule is the ultimate end of all things. Everything is a means to Christ ruling, the King of kings ruling all creation. And so, everything is a means to that end. "Thy will be done"—in everything in my experience—all of my talents, my education, the various careers I've had, all of my stuff—my mate, or no mate, with a child or children, or no children. My experiences—the good experiences, the bad experiences, evil experiences—all of those can be used with my choices to show "Thy will be done." All of those are opportunities to show all the heavenlies that I live on earth as I would in heaven.

The kingdom of God—"Thy kingdom come"—it's like the box top on a puzzle that shows you all the pieces and how they all fit together somewhere somehow. It's the end, and all your life with its choices is the means to that. That's what it means. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

So, now we're going to start moving into prayer requests when we talk to our Father the King. But also, before we do that, I want you to notice this. We're at fifty percent of this prayer, and at fifty percent we haven't mentioned one thing about us and our needs. And I think it's strategic. I think Jesus is saying, *Here—let's start here. Let's plunge ourselves into the nature of God and what He's like and the intimacy that we get to enjoy. And let our soul and our spirit just*



*overflow, be overwhelmed, by who God is, first and foremost.* Then we can go on and talk about our requests that Jehovah, the Most Holy—His name is Holy—He’s in the heavens, everywhere and right here. He’s a sovereign King—“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.” And here’s the strange part: we start the prayer with “Our Father.” You can call Him “my heavenly Father.” It’s not just “our Father”; it’s “my Father.” And you can spend a lifetime just trying to understand this, because it takes that long. But enjoy that. Because this radical shift in the Bible between the older and newer testaments—if you see God as transcendent, which is hopeful, it makes this so much more difficult.

And in Hebrews—even in the New Testament—it says, “It’s a terrible thing to fall into the hands of a loving God. Our God is a consuming fire.” In the Old Testament, Jehovah shows up several times, but at Mount Sinai, for example, He tells Moses, *You’ve got to build a fence all around Mount Sinai, because someone or even a goat could get loose and get too close, and my holiness will evaporate them.* And then here in the New Testament, “My Spirit is filled with the Son’s Spirit, that calls out, ‘Abba, Daddy.’”

### 3. I Need You

And with that in mind, now we can find out, *Well, I adore You, I surrender to You; now I need You.* This is how we pray for us. We can approach this glorious God who is also our heavenly Father, and we can depend upon Him in four ways.

The first way is—I just put “stuff.” “Give us this day our daily bread.” What does that mean? Well, it means our daily bread. It means to ask God for your grocery list. What are you looking for? Food and shelter and transportation—the little stuff. G. Campbell Morgan, kind of a famous preacher in the 1920s, was preaching on this passage. And afterwards a woman came up to him and said, “Now I’m supposed to just talk to God about everything that’s on my heart?”

He said, “Yes, like you would with your own father.”

And she said, “But even the little things? How could God be concerned about the little things in my life?”

And G. Campbell Morgan said, “What makes you think your big things are big to God?”

With God there’s nothing too small to be ignored or overlooked, and there’s nothing too big that God would be overwhelmed and say, *Oh, no!*

So, Jesus put it this way: “Ask, seek, knock ... let’s talk about your needs.” He’s a good father. He’ll answer. And if it will hurt you, He’ll say no. And if it doesn’t, He might very well say yes.

The point is that we’re supposed to turn our lives into a series, a long-running series, of God stories where we just keep telling and asking God for various things, and then He provides for those. And you think, *How did that happen?* We ask for healing. We ask God for wisdom. We ask God for character change. We ask God for a house or a car or for whatever. Why not? He’s running the entire universe. Sometimes He gives you the desires of your heart. And then you pray for those desires, and then He answers them.

When we were looking for our house (it’s a two-hour story, and there are twelve God stories in there), but we said, “We want a one-story house that’s white stone on at least three sides with a sidewalk on kind of a small street.” Do you know where I live? Do you want to guess? Well, it’s a one-story house with three sides white stone with a sidewalk out front on a quiet street. Oh, I forgot to mention, and a big backyard. We’ve got that too.

And God may think, *Well, I don’t care. Sure, yeah.* He’s a good father.

Now some of you might be thinking that you can pray and that God would provide for you a close parking place at the hospital. And you show up and it’s there. And then on the other hand, you pray that your son would be released from the ICU and that doesn’t happen. I can’t answer that question—not here, not today, maybe not ever. But the spirit of this part of this prayer is, Just ask. Just ask. *I’ll give you bread if you just ask for it.*

The next thing to pray for that we need from Him is forgiveness. “Forgive us our trespasses ...” Jill Briscoe tells a great story about when she was in Africa. (She’s an author and speaker.) And she met with one of the pastors in Africa and he told her about a vision that he had. And the vision was that he was climbing up this steep mountain and found out that mountain was Calvary itself. He saw the three crosses at the top. And then behind him he saw that Jesus was following him, but Jesus was stumbling and staggering and even sometimes crawling. So, he goes back down to help Jesus and says, “What’s happening?” And Jesus says that He is carrying this heavy load on His back. And so, the pastor says, “Are you carrying the load of the sins of the whole world on your back?” And Jesus said, “No. Just yours.”

“Forgive us our sins” is an invitation of a need that we have to talk to God about a daily twenty-four-hour review. It’s an opportunity, as soon as possible, to have a spiritual inventory—

what you did that you shouldn't have done and what you didn't do but should have. And you can take responsibility for it right now. Do something about that. "Forgive us our trespasses."

And it's not just that. It's also so that we can have harmony, which is the third thing—that we need to ask for help. It says, "... as we." "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." *Keep us forgiven with You so we can keep forgiving everywhere else.*

Augustine called this "the terrible petition" because it's saying, *Lord, I want you to have Your standard of forgiving me what my standard is for forgiving other people.* Ouch!

And the reason I think this is part of this prayer is because the only way we can hold onto unforgiveness and hold onto a grudge is if we're self-righteous and proud. The only way we can hold onto it is when something within our souls looks down on someone else and says, *I could never do that. I would never do that. And so, that doesn't get to be forgiven, but I do for these other things.*

And this wakes us up to an insidious sin of pride that says, *Hey, Lord, You forgive my trespasses as I forgive other people's trespasses. I'm going to need you, Lord, to help me with that.* That sounds like a real need prayer, doesn't it?

So, we're praying for God to help us in our needs: with our stuff, forgiveness, for harmony with other people, and then, finally, for our survival. It says, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

There are kind of two aspects of survival. The first one is temptation, and that one's on me. That's praying, *Oh, dear God, You've got to protect me from myself.* Right? Have you ever prayed that? No? Surely you've prayed, *Protect me from myself.* You're crying out to God, saying, *Look, when the temptation comes my way, could You take away my desire? Or, The desire is here; could You take away the opportunity? Stop this temptation from happening.*

Here's how it sounds like when we're praying to be delivered from temptation, which we prayed for our children when they were in college, and still for college students today, besides just saying, "Lord, catch them doing bad." But besides that prayer, we prayed, "Lord God, help them become bored or even repulsed by the party life that's all around them. Please, dear God, show them what the full experience of pleasure island looks like and the consequences, when boys are turned into donkeys. Let them see the Saturday morning after the Friday night that is always celebrated. Let them see some Saturday morning so that they can see the cost of temptation."

That's what it means to pray to be delivered from temptation. It's asking God, "Call me out. Be loud in my soul when I'm flirting with temptation, when I'm playing with it, when I'm inviting it." I prayed that this month. I could see myself in a temptation, and I thought, *Why am I dancing with the devil here?* "Deliver me from temptation."

Dancing with the devil ... that reminds me of the second part of it. "But deliver us from evil ..." That's an acknowledgment that there's a spiritual war going on all around us; that there is a personal evil that is out to destroy anything and everything that's beautiful. And the demonic world doesn't show up to us with chains and say, *Hey, you ought to try these out. I think you're going to like them.* It shows up with a box of chocolates, with flowers and cologne, and says, *You're going to love this.* And we follow those.

And those are the ones that lead to addictions. Sure, there are chemical addictions, but chemical addictions are the same as all the addictions. They start like this. *Oh, it was really working, until it didn't. And then it owned me. I owned it, there was something in the middle, and now I do what I'm told.*

And it can be wealth or popularity, it can be our physical health, our appearance. It always starts well. But if we don't see it as a temptation, or a means of enslavement, we can find ourselves being naïve. Satan is a roaring lion looking for an opportunity to devour us and take us down.

So, you pray this, for anyone and everyone you love. "Deliver them from temptation and deliver them from evil." And you pray it for yourself, Jesus said.

#### **4. I'm Listening to You**

That's the outline for the Lord's Prayer: I adore You, I surrender to You, I need You. I'm going to add this fourth thing: I'm listening to You. I'm listening.

It's great to end a prayer in silence. Ask the Lord, "Speak to me." I learned this from someone—it's very common for me to turn my palms up like I'm going to receive something. And I'll just pray. I'm trying to be still and know that He is God. "Lord, give me a word. You speak to Your saints throughout all history. Give me a word. Your Spirit lives inside of me. Give me a thought, an action." It's great to have a pen and paper around. Sometimes He may say, "You need to write this person." "You should call someone"—and there's a face in your mind. This is mine: "You have twenty-four hours to apologize. You have twenty-four hours to make

this right.” “You should get out your checkbook and let this person know that I’m hearing their prayers and you’re the answer to their prayers.”

Listen. God is speaking. He wants to talk to you.

Let me conclude with a great quote from Dallas Willard. He says that prayer is “talking to God about what you’re doing together.” Isn’t that simple? It’s talking to God about what you’re doing. “Thy will be done”—*I’m just going to do whatever You tell me to do, so if we’re going to do this together, why don’t we just talk about it?*

It’s talking to God about what you’re doing together, and that’s why Jesus just says, “Ask, seek, knock.” Did you know the Father is waiting for us every day? Start a conversation. He is heavenly, everywhere and right here. He is holy, holy, holy. He’s a sovereign king, His kingdom come, His will be done.

And let me leave this with you. And He’s your father. You have to see this as an unconditional, loving father relationship. And then you’ll have a prayer life that never stops.

When Tim Keller is talking about this part, he says, “No matter how powerful your father is, no matter how wealthy your father is, no matter how dangerous your father is—when he’s your father, he’s the only person that at 3:00 am in the morning you can say, ‘Hey, Dad, can you get me a glass of water,’ and he’ll do it.”

He goes on and says, “Even if his wife says at 3:00 am, ‘Hey, can you get me some water,’ he’s likely to say, ‘You know, I think you got this.’ But when you’re the son or daughter, He’s a good, good Father, and He’ll do this.”

And this is Jesus’ lesson when He says to pray this way. He says to have the audacity to pray that the fulfillment of God’s plan was to make you His son, to adopt you as His daughter and make you one of His heirs. That’s how we pray.

And know this about this particular prayer. Jesus didn’t just tell us to pray this; He prayed this prayer. I don’t know if there’s a world religion that’s even remotely like Christianity. But the Christian story is that God becomes a fragile human being, a carbon-based biped. And He is sent to need daily bread. He lives that life, and He finds himself praying to the Father. And then, when He’s fulfilling His Father’s desires, He’s tempted. In the Garden of Gethsemane He prays this prayer. Listen to it. In the Garden of Gethsemane He’s knows what’s next. He’s being required by the Father to go to the cross and be separated for the first time in all of eternity past, present, and future, from the triune nature of God. And He doesn’t want to do that. It costs too

much; it's too painful. And He says, "Would you let this cup pass?" The cost is too high. He's being tempted in His physical body. He's being turned over to Satan. And He prays this prayer: "My Father who is in the heavens, holy, holy, holy is Your name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, right now in my life as it would be in heaven." He prays for strength, and He fulfills his destiny. He prayed this prayer. What religion has that as its story?

So, here's what we're going to do for our homework. We have five weeks left. We started last week with fifteen minutes of reading our Bibles purposefully, and maybe a two-a-day—thirty minutes a day. Let's do the same for prayer. Let's add fifteen minutes of prayer, talking to God. Use this outline. Use this template. Take a post-it note with the four points on it—He had four points: I adore You, I submit to You, I need You, I'm listening to You. Put that post-it note everywhere, but put it in your car. Turn your radio off. Don't make a phone call. Make a phone call to God. And then just work the outline. Maybe you could get lost in the conversation. That would be great. Find a time or find a new time to pray.

*I wait for you every day, says Jehovah God, your heavenly dad.*

I thought it would be absolutely appropriate if we prayed this prayer as a church together. Why don't we do that? Let's stand together and pray The Lord's Prayer together. (It will be up on the screens.) If you want, if you have somebody close to you, you can hold hands with them, even if they're a brother or a sister in Christ. Okay, ready? Here we go.

*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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

*For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.*

We continue to pray. Jesus was continuing His teaching on praying and He said, "Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be answered."

*Come on, let's talk.* "Everyone who asks receives, everyone who searches will find, and everyone who knocks, that door will be opened to them."

Could I ask you something on Father's Day? You fathers, if your little son asked you for a loaf of bread, would you give him a rock? No. Could I ask you fathers, if your daughter asked you for a fish, would you give her a snake? No. "And if you fathers, who are evil, know what is good for your little girl or your little boy, how much more will the Father in heaven give good things to those who just ask?" He's waiting for you every day, our dad in heaven.

*Holy is Your name. You are like no other. Our hope is that Your kingdom would come and that You would look at this earth and You would see it surrendered to You like all of heaven is. And until that day comes, will You change my heart and transform my mind, that I would do Your will in this life, as if I was in my eternal home?*

*I know You forgive me, Lord. I'd ask that You help me experience that full forgiveness and that I would be overflowing in that forgiveness and would forgive others abundantly the way You do.*

*Could You make all Your dreams come true in my life, for Your glory, not for mine? Make me sick of the shallow things that are here. Make me thirsty for the eternal. Save me, God Almighty, from myself, and protect me from the demonic world that surrounds me. Open my eyes to that. You are the King of the universe, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we are so overwhelmed with gratitude that we could call You "Father" because of the work of the Son and the Spirit that lives within us that calls out, "Abba, Daddy."*

*And we pray this now in the holy and obedient name of Jesus the Christ. And all God's people said, Amen.*

*Happy Father's Day, God!*