

AMEN!

28 Dec. 2025

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Aledo

Matthew 6:9-13

As we approach the end of 2025, we have also reached the final week of the Heidelberg Catechism, Week 52. We already saw in our reading of the last three questions and answers that the Catechism is dealing with the final phrases of what is usually called the Lord's Prayer – though it might more appropriately be called the Disciples' prayer as Jesus taught it to his disciples as a model prayer.

This prayer is found in Matthew chapter 6 and Luke 11 in a bit shorter version. [In Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" is in Matthew's gospel account, chapters 5 through 7, he taught his disciples and the crowds all sorts of things about the character and conduct of citizens of God's Kingdom. Much of what he taught in this sermon is an unpacking and deepening of the laws of the Old Testament showing that simply following laws is not what God wants to see in his people. He wants his people to be changed from the inside out so that our obedience, our following comes from our hearts – a response of love and adoration for the **Father** who has **planned our salvation** from before the beginning of time. Love for the **Son** who has **accomplished our salvation** through his perfect obedience in life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection. And love for the **Holy Spirit** who **applies that salvation** as he lives in all those who have trusted Jesus alone for forgiveness, hope and eternal life.

The Lord's Prayer is one aspect of that loving response to God as we express in that prayer worship, total dependence upon him for all we need, and trust in his provision and protection.

Please stand as I read this prayer slowly from Matthew 6, verses 9 through 13. As I read, **contemplate** in your hearts the phrases, **pray** them back to God; **listen** as our Lord speaks to you from his Word. Matthew 6:9-13 –

We will see in the final petition of this prayer how our Savior confirms his **protection**, how we are moved to **praise** him, and how the final word contains a **promise**. Protection, praise and promise.

**Jesus teaches his followers how to come before the Father in prayer, so believers must pray.** We see that in the previous verses of 5, 6 and 7 where Jesus says "**When** you pray...." and also in verse 9 where "pray" is in a more imperative voice.

We mustn't pray with mindless repetition saying the same words over and over. This prayer is a model that teaches us HOW to pray. And so we learn to pray humbly recognizing that God is our Father. He is so completely other from us that his dwelling is described as heaven – even though he is everywhere present, awesome in power and majesty.

We learn to praise God in our prayers, for he is totally worthy of all praise.

We learn to seek and submit to his will in all aspects of life – personal, family, community, church, country, the world at large.

We learn that we are totally dependent upon his gracious provision for all that we need for life.

We learn that only he can truly forgive us for Jesus, our Savior has purchased our forgiveness with his death on the cross satisfying God's justice. And because we are forgiven through trusting Jesus, we must, in turn, forgive those who have sinned against us.

And then we come to the last petition of the prayer where Jesus teaches us about his **protection**, the **praise** that is due him, and his **promise** to hear and respond.

How must we pray?

We must pray for **protection**.

What is the 6<sup>th</sup> petition of the Lord's Prayer? "*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*"

Why do we need this protection? Because we are so weak that we cannot stand in perfect and loving obedience even for a moment! Try it sometime. You will fail! Because the moment you think you are standing you will fall into the sin of pride! Like when you were learning to ride a bike and your dad or mom let go. You wobbled down the sidewalk, turned around to shout, "Look at me! I'm riding!" And down you went with broken pride and skinned knee!

James 1:14-15 shows how our inclination to sin resides within us when we are lured, attracted like a fish to bait, by our own evil desires. Listen – "*But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*" We sin because we are sinners. And God's just punishment for sin is death. We need protection from temptation.

Where does temptation come from? We can't flippantly palm off the source of temptation as Flip Wilson famously said in the early 1970's when he declared, "The devil made me do it!" That idea was not original with Mr. Wilson, though. Blame shifting is as old as time. Adam blamed his eating of the forbidden fruit on Eve and Eve blamed the serpent – a.k.a. the devil. Even Paul in Romans 7:17 says, "*So now it is no longer I who do it (that is sin), but sin that dwells within me.*"

Much as we try to distance ourselves from the sin that we do, we are still accountable before our Holy Father. We WILL give an account for every idle word we speak. Think about that. How many idle, useless, words do you utter every day? Words for which there WILL be an accounting when you stand before Jesus, the One who will judge all on that final day. But for believers, followers of Jesus, that judgment is a judgment of assessment, not condemnation. As those who trust Jesus and are forgiven for now and for all eternity, we are assured in Romans 8 verse 1 that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

So, yes, **temptation comes from the devil**, Satan, the great deceiver and accuser. Even Jesus was sorely tempted by the devil. And he countered that temptation with Scripture. We have that same weapon available to us today. Ephesians 6 describes the armor God gives us with which to defeat the devil's fiery darts. Among those weapons and defenses is the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

**Temptation also comes at us from the world** around us. What we see on our screens, what we hear among our friends and acquaintances, the attitudes we absorb from the culture everywhere we turn. We can't escape the world. It becomes part of the way we see and interpret life. It's called a worldview.

Everyone has a worldview – an attempt to make sense of life. The more our worldview reflects God's view of the world, the more clearly we will see the temptations around us and learn ways to avoid or stand firm against those temptations.

How do we develop a view of the world that reflects God's own view? By immersing ourselves in His Word – reading the Bible, studying the Bible, participating in Bible studies where we help each other understand God's Word, listening to sermons. Songs based on Scripture can be a good way to bathe our thoughts, souls, emotions and attitudes in God's view of life. Memorizing Scripture. But the pull of the world is so strong, that we must be consistent and persistent in our pursuit of the mind of Christ.

Finally, perhaps the scariest **source of temptation is our own sinful nature**. Scary because now we see the evil that resides in our own hearts. The evil we must acknowledge and guard against. In Genesis 4:7 God warns Cain that sin is crouching at his door. Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7:21 both affirm that "*out of the heart come evil thoughts.*" Romans 5 explains how the sin of our original parents infected the whole human race. Ephesians 2:3 says that by

nature we are children of wrath. We sin because we are sinners. We are guilty. All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Psalm 14:3 says, as well, "*there are none who do good, no not one.*"

This is our dilemma. We are sinners. The just penalty for sin is death. Where is there hope? Where is there a way out? Are we doomed to eternal death, the just punishment for sinning against our infinitely holy God? With Paul we cry out, "*O, wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" Our hope, our way out, our protection, our SALVATION is found only in trusting Jesus! He has paid it all. His death on the cross was not for any sins of his own for he had no sin. He is infinitely perfect for he is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, God himself. With the infinite value of his perfect life Jesus satisfied God's just demand for holy living and then satisfying God's justice in paying for OUR sin on the cross. When we respond to God's gospel call by trusting Jesus and him alone for forgiveness, the infinite righteousness of Jesus is credited to our account. Life from death.

And the same grace that saves us – for we are saved by grace alone through faith alone which is also a gift from God – the same grace that saves us is the grace that keeps us saved through God's protection. That is the protection for which we pray when we ask God to "*lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*"

Jesus defeated the devil and death when he died on the cross for us, when he rose from the dead on the third day showing God's acceptance of his final and sufficient blood sacrifice. And when he ascended back to heaven, where he sits even now at God's right hand interceding for us – protecting us – from the devil, the world, and ourselves.

We must daily, even hourly, plead for and live under his protection as he delivers us from the evil one. The moment you think you can go it alone, resist the evil one in your own strength, you are in trouble. Jesus has promised he will never leave us nor forsake us. He is always with us. He has given us his Word and his Spirit to help us stand against the deceit of the evil one, the lure of the world, and the weakness of our own sinful nature. Pray without ceasing. Immerse yourself in the Word. Fill your mind and heart with Christ until there is no room for sin to take root. Jesus is always ready to protect you, to deliver you from the evil one.

How must we pray? We must pray for God's protection. We must also ...

...praise him in our prayers.

At the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, we acknowledge that the *kingdom, power and glory belong exclusively to God*. While this closing phrase does not appear in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, the words and the intent are certainly relevant and true. Indeed, all praise is due to God alone, for he alone is worthy of praise. Psalm 86:10 tells us that God alone is great, does marvelous things and that he alone is God. Psalm 148:13 affirms "*Let them praise the name of Jehovah. For his name alone is excellent. His glory is above the earth and heaven.*" Deuteronomy 10:21 says, "*He alone is your God, the only one who is worthy of praise.*" In Isaiah 42:8 God declares, "*I am Jehovah; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols.*" 1 Peter 5:11 shows us that all power is God's when it declares, "*To him be the power forever and ever. Amen!*" Psalm 62:11 says, "*Once God has spoken, twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God.*" 1 Chronicles 29:11 declares, "*Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the Kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.*"

So while the closing phrase of what we recite in the Lord's Prayer is not explicitly attached to the prayer as Jesus taught it to his disciples, still, the truth that he alone is the rightful owner of the Kingdom, power and glory, is certainly scriptural and is seen in multiple places throughout the Old and New Testaments.

We rightly acknowledge that the kingdom, power and glory belong to God and him alone as we close the Lord's Prayer. But that should not be the only time we acknowledge these truths. He alone is totally worthy of praise. If you ever get stuck and don't know what to say to God in prayer, just start praising him for all he is and does! Reserve words like awesome and righteous for praising God, the King of Kings. We diminish the value of these words when we apply them to our cell phones or our sports moves or to any other man-centered object or person.

We acknowledge God's power when we rightly interpret mighty storms, lightening, earthquakes, volcanoes, the immensity of space and the intricacy of cells to God's creative and sustaining power. There is no such thing as mother nature for all that is comes from God. Beautiful sunsets, glistening snow, springtime flowers – it's all the work of God's might and wisdom.

And glory – God is a jealous God. Not in the sense of a jealous spouse, but in the sense of not sharing his glory with any created thing. We have already seen in Isaiah 42:8 that he will not share his glory with anyone else. Isaiah 48:11 repeats this – “*My glory I will not give to another.*” Romans 11:36 says, “*For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen!*” God's glory is unique, part of who he is as the only God. His glory cannot be shared with any part of creation.

We end this prayer in praise of all God is as sovereign over his all-encompassing kingdom, as all-powerful – nothing is too difficult for him, and as all-glorious – glory and majesty that we cannot truly comprehend this side of eternity.

What does this mean for us in our everyday lives? It means that since we have been bought by the blood of Jesus, we belong to God, have been adopted by God, are his children, heirs and joint heirs with Jesus the Christ. Since that is true of us, we must live in such a way that the whole of our lives declares to the world around that we belong to him – the way we speak, the way we interact with others, the things we value, the way we use the money and other resources God has entrusted to our care, the way we dress and drive – even to our innermost thoughts and desires. You are not your own. You have been bought with a price. Can others see the beauty of Jesus in you? Praise him by the way you live.

How must we pray? We must pray for protection, praise God in our prayers and, finally, we must trust and rely on his...

### **...promises.**

What does the word *Amen* mean? It is not only a word signifying agreement, but also testifying to the truth of a prayer offered in humility and dependence upon God and his always truthful responses. It is a simple word that we use so often that we don't give it much thought. Actually, it is full of meaning and promise! The Heidelberg Catechism points us to two or three Scripture references that help to unpack this small word.

Isaiah 65:24 – “*Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.*” This is a promise that God knows us, better than we know ourselves. He is always attentive and ready to respond. He has been this way in the past, is still this way, even as we look forward to the time when we will live with him in perfect peace and contentment in Jesus' manifested, completed Kingdom.

2 Corinthians 1:20 – “*All the promises of God are 'Yes' in Christ. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.*” Jesus is the ultimate confirmation and source of God's faithful covenants. Even when we are unfaithful, God remains faithful for he is unchanging and unchangeable. When we say “Amen” as we end our prayers, we confess that we believe and depend upon God's promises brought to reality through Jesus' incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension and session with the Father.

God's promise to remain faithful in 2 Timothy 2:13 where he promises to remain faithful even when we aren't comforts us in our often weak and fickle faith. We must pray in confidence knowing that God does not change. His faithfulness does not rest in the strength of our faith, the eloquence of our words as we pray, the intensity with which we pray, or the volume of our prayer. His faithfulness resides in his own perfect character.

Our prayers are to draw us closer to God. As he draws us closer, we are changed to become more like Jesus living faithful, righteous lives that honor God and benefit our neighbor.

Have you ever noticed how in a long-term relationship, whether with spouse or friend or family, you tend to become more like the person with whom you spend a great deal of time? Linda has helped me be a better man in our 53 years of marriage. Likewise, as we spend time with Jesus in prayer, in worship, in his Word, he works in our lives molding, shaping – sanctifying – us to become more like him.

When we say “Amen” it is not just putting a full stop at the end of our prayer. It is a word of confirmation, agreement, and trust that all his promises are true and we must rest in those promises. We must step out in faith – like Peter stepping out of the boat to walk on the water – we must step out in faith on those promises. We must put all of that trust and faith and confidence into action as we live out our salvation with reverence and godly fear.

As we draw 2025 to a close, wrap up our journey through the Heidelberg Catechism and say “amen” at the end of the questions and answers about the Lord’s Prayer, we stand at the threshold of a brand new year. Sometimes as we wrap up something - a long, hard year, or a term paper, or a career, we might be in a hurry to just see things in the rear view mirror without much reflection or contemplation. It is my prayer that as we have spent the last little bit thinking about one phrase of the Lord’s Prayer, that we will be encouraged to trust God’s **protection**, to **praise** him in and for all things, and to rest in and work from the faithfulness of his **promises**. Jesus has shown us how to pray, so we believers must pray resting on his protection, praising him and trusting his promises as we pray to the Father, through the Son and by the direction and enabling of the Holy Spirit.