

July 24th 2022

Psalm 138  
Colossians 2:6-15  
Luke 11:1-13

When I read through the readings and the Psalm today, I thought everything seemed straight forward; the people seemed to have accepted Jesus Christ and were going about their business and learning to live for him. Or were they?

Paul writes to the Colossians out of concern for them, he realises they are being taken away from the teachings by these philosophers who were leading them astray.

These philosophers were encouraging them to worship angels and mystics and telling them not to eat this or touch that as these things are not good for them. They were taking away the physical things and especially on the feast days.

Paul tells them not to worry about what they eat or wear, but to celebrate the feast days, this is what Jesus would want them to do.

Not to go out and follow in the traditions of man, but to safeguard against false prophets. Not to let them lead them astray, from the truths of Christianity.

The philosophy that threatened the Colossian Christians was Gnosticism, a strange mix of Greek, Jewish mysticism, a collection of religious ideas and systems, which they believed these prophets had direct knowledge, by being part of God. They did not deal with the concept of sin and repentance, but more with illusion and enlightenment.

They even believed they could worship more than one God.

Paul so cared for the Colossians, he wanted them back to Christ's teachings and to get themselves rooted in their Faith again.

He warns them against judging one another; how to not worry about how each other was dressed or what they chose to eat, but be united, stay faithful to their own baptism, and see that Christ's death was for our sins and his resurrection for our souls .

So take a moment to think about today's life and times, are we also distracted from the truth ?

How many people have started out worshipping money as with more money our lives could be richer?

The drugs that get us hooked and eventually destroy lives started out as a small lift to either help through a bad time or a high at a party to make it a real good night?

So many more things that people believe if only we had these things in our life, our lives would be everything we want them to be. All the time these things take us away from Jesus and his teachings the way he really wants us to live out our lives.

So how much more important, is it that we come together on a Sunday morning, the feast day, be united, acknowledging our sins and the sinfulness of the community we live in.

When we decided to receive Jesus Christ in our lives, we owned our sins, we confessed of them, and that's when God nailed to the cross in Jesus Christ his son. He paid the penalty and with his death wiped our sins clean .

How great is that?

So don't be led astray by worldly things. Keep yourself focussed on God and Jesus; concentrate on all he has taught us and spoken of; and when you come before him, confess your sins, receive forgiveness and try not to sin any more, but keep him at the centre of your life and he will walk alongside you always and through it all with you .

So we come to Luke's Gospel and the disciples are watching Jesus praying . When he has finished they ask him, "teach us how to pray also." Jesus tells them to pray this prayer

Our Father hallowed be thy Name

Your Kingdom come

Give us this day our daily bread ,

Forgive us our sins ,as we forgive those who sin against us ,

Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil .

I believe this is the most famous prayer in the world, and spoken in so many different languages and used in so many different situations in good times and bad .

So let's take a brief look at its meaning, how I see it.

Father hallowed be thy name ,

Here we are recognising that God's name is Holy. He is the epitome of sanctity, there is no one more holy on earth or in heaven than he.

Your kingdom come,

This is two-fold. We want his kingdom here and now on earth, but it is also our faith and hope and promise that the love of God will be fulfilled here and in heaven when we die and we come to live with him eternally in his kingdom in heaven.

Give us our daily bread,

We of course need our daily bread to keep us healthy to nourish our bodies, but we also need the spiritual daily bread, which is the word of God to live out his message to take it out into the world through our direct thoughts and our actions.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us,

We are not only asking God to forgive us our sins, but we are asking each other to forgive us our sins also, as we do sin against each other in oh so many ways through our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil.

This is our petition, please don't let us fall into the temptations of the world and be led astray, as this will damage our relationship with God; but deliver us from all evils. For his is the kingdom, power and the might - everything is possible through him.

The Lord's prayer is a prayer of guidance, a moral compass as we revere God, accept his will, learn to live in love with one and another, reject evil and receive forgiveness.

But I remind you of Paul's concern for the Colossians, and how they could be forgiven by returning to the message and teachings of Christ Jesus; and in Luke's gospel we see Jesus' concern by teaching us how to pray. Jesus is saying the same thing in by reminding to pray this prayer each day as he taught us.

I was once talking to a soldier who told me that the padre would call the troops together before they went out in a battle. Believers and non-believers they would all listen to the prayers he says out of respect for his faith and that of their buddies who do believe, but when it came to the Lord's Prayer everyone said it united. It was said as a prayer when people were dying, and as a prayer for those who had sadly lost their lives, even if no one knew any other prayers to say.

During a cease fire when each side was collecting up their injured or dead comrades, the prayer that could be heard being said even in a different languages was the Our Father Prayer which always brought silence as we knew what the other side was thinking and feeling at that moment.

So the next time we say the Lord's prayer, really soak up those words. Be thankful he gave us this prayer. If we find we can't pray anything else at all, this will be the most important prayer of all.

The psalm we read today describes not only those who believe in human power and fantasy, but those who are in a close relationship with God and live in the reality of Jesus Christ.

So we need to say the Our Father prayer, as we ask God to guide us, and completely surrender our will, place our trust in him. By putting God's will before our own, above our own, we become more like ourselves - the person God wants us to be. This prayer calms our fears, helps us cope, gives us hope and praises God.

How wonderful are these words.

Amen.