

# DAILY MEDITATIONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

by Pastors of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America

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**NOV**

**Lord's Days 45 - 48**

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Of Prayer

#### Lord's Day 45

##### **Question 116. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?**

*Answer.* Because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us[\[a\]](#); and also, because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them[\[b\]](#).

##### **Question 117. What are the requisites of that prayer, which is acceptable to God, and which He will hear?**

*Answer.* First, that we from the heart pray to the one true God only, who hath manifested Himself in His word[\[c\]](#), for all things He hath commanded us to ask of Him[\[d\]](#); secondly, that we rightly and thoroughly know our need and misery, that so we may deeply humble ourselves in the presence of His divine majesty[\[e\]](#); thirdly, that we be fully persuaded that He, notwithstanding that we are unworthy of it[\[f\]](#), will, for the sake of Christ our Lord, certainly hear our prayer[\[g\]](#), as He has promised us in His Word[\[h\]](#).

##### **Question 118. What hath God commanded us to ask of Him?**

*Answer.* All things necessary for soul and body[\[i\]](#); which Christ our Lord has comprised in that prayer He Himself has taught us[\[j\]](#).

##### **Question 119. What are the words of that prayer?**

*Answer.* Our Father which 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, for ever. Amen.

[a]: [Psa. 50:14,15](#)

[b]: [Mat. 7:7,8](#); [Luke 11:9,13](#); [Mat. 13:12](#); [Psa. 50:15](#)

[c]: [John 4:22,23](#)

[d]: [Rom. 8:26](#); [1John 5:14](#)

[e]: [John 4:23,24](#); [Psa. 145:18](#)

[f]: [2Chron. 20:12](#)

[g]: [Psa. 2:11](#); [Psa. 34:18,19](#); [Isa. 66:2](#)

[h]: [Rom. 10:13](#); [Rom. 8:15,16](#); [James 1:6ff](#); [John 14:13](#); [Dan. 9:17,18](#); [Mat. 7:8](#); [Psa. 143:1](#)

[i]: [James 1:17](#); [Mat. 6:33](#)

[j]: [Mat. 6:9ff](#); [Luke 11:2ff](#)

**November 5 - LD 45, Day 1: The Wonder that is Prayer**  
**by Rev. Gise Van Baren**

Read: Matthew 6:9-15

The Heidelberg Catechism presented in earlier Lord's Days the two great Scriptural truths called "sin" and "grace." It presented sin in all of its terribleness ("I am prone to hate God and my neighbor"). Our first father, Adam, sinned and made all of those born from him guilty and corrupt, worthy of eternal damnation in hell. He was the representative of man for succeeding generations. Besides, each person continues to add to his guiltiness every day. The Bible says that there is none righteous, no, not one (Rom 3:10).

The Heidelberg Catechism presents the one way of deliverance from the wrath of the righteous God. God in His grace sent His Son, the second Person of the Godhead, to pay for the sins of those whom God gave to His Son (John 3:16; 17:24). The wonder of salvation that God works for His people is in the way of the offering of Christ's shed blood on the cross. What a wonder God has done--so that all the glory for the deliverance of His people can be given to God alone.

In the third section of the Heidelberg Catechism, we are taught concerning the proper part of thankfulness to God for what He has done for His people. The question might be asked: "What must I do in order to repay God for His great gift?" Is His gift given conditionally? Must I do something to contribute towards this deliverance? These questions must be answered. The answer is simple and short. There is nothing that we can do to either contribute towards or earn this salvation! Nor is there any possible thing with which we can repay God for this great work of salvation.

But the fruit of salvation must be seen in the way the Christian lives and walks. He shows thanksgiving in all things before God. The Catechism emphasizes two ways that the Christian shows proper thanksgiving. Scripture teaches that the saved person shows and desires to show true thankfulness by obeying God's law--summarized in the Ten Commandments. Obedience to the commandments is not a matter of repayment but the fruit of God's work in His people.

The second aspect of thankfulness is prayer. Prayer is the God-given avenue to the very throne of God. Prayer is our "hotline" to the eternal God. It is the means both to praise God for His greatness and glory and to make petitions for our own needs and cares on this earth.

But how does one pray to God? For what must we ask God? It was the concern of Christ's disciples too. In Luke 11:1b, the disciples came to Christ and asked, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Then Christ taught them what is called "The Lord's Prayer." What a prayer that is! In six petitions, with few words, Christ gives a summary of what proper prayer is, and for what we must ask. In a prayer that can be uttered in less than half a minute, Christ shows us the model for and summary of prayer. This we must briefly study in the remaining Lord's Days of the Catechism.

**November 6 - LD 45, Day 2: Why is Prayer Necessary?**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: James 5

Prayer is necessary, states the Catechism, because it is the chief part of thankfulness and also, because God gives His grace and Holy Spirit to those only who ask them of Him and are thankful for what they receive.

There is nothing more satisfying to our God than that we pray to Him. The Catechism does not state that prayer is the *only* way of thankfulness, but it is the *chief* part of thankfulness. It is the fruit and evidence of the work of God in saving His people. So: how do we pray? How often do we pray? This would give us some idea of how thankful we truly are for our salvation.

Secondly, God gives His grace and Spirit only to those who sincerely ask them of Him.

Many consider prayer as some sort of emergency tool (e.g. "break in case of fire"). When one faces sudden and devastating trials, then one will earnestly pray to God. Those on an airplane apparently ready to crash, are later reported to be "all praying". Others regard "prayer" as a way to express themselves forcibly (e.g. "Oh, my God!") Some find it necessary to request hundreds of others to pray for them--as though God will be swayed by numbers. Others believe that if they pray to God for anything, God must surely give that for which they ask.

The Christian prays for such things as God teaches him to ask of Him. He is not as a little child who is convinced that if he asks God for a bike, God must give it to him. Jesus taught us to ask for those things necessary for body and soul.

Why should God require that His people ask of Him anything? In His providence, has He not eternally determined everything we would receive? He has. However, God has also determined that we would receive these things in the way of asking Him for them. God rejoices in our petitions to Him. He teaches us important truths. We learn thereby that we are unable to provide for ourselves. We learn that we do not earn anything of Him. We learn that God gives graciously and freely. We learn that He often gives more than we could ever think or ask. We learn that His grace to us is only because of what Christ has done on the cross.

Then our hearts overflow with thankfulness to God. Think: the infinite, eternal and almighty God condescends to do these for creatures who are less than specks of dust before the Almighty.

Do you desire these of Him? Do you ask in sincerity? Are you thankful for what He provides? If so, you begin to have a proper understanding of prayer.

**November 7 - LD 45, Day 3: The Requirements of the Godly Prayer**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Luke 18:9-14

Prayer is not a matter of man's invention. Prayer is God's gift to His people who are born again and converted. God gives to them a way of access to His throne, so that they can confidently approach Him. God expects that this gift be used by them as the highest expression of thanksgiving to Him for the salvation that is theirs through Jesus Christ.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the devil would seek to divert attention from this great gift by many ways of deception. The devil seeks to direct his followers to use prayer too--to their "gods" or idols. The claim is then made that all worship the same "god" but in different ways. All pray--but prayer comes in different forms.

The devil also seeks to lead the Christians astray with regards to prayer. He seeks to persuade us that if we pray to "saints", they can more successfully intercede for us with God; or, perhaps prayer to the Virgin Mary, who can approach her Son Jesus for us, would be the best way to gain the ear of Jesus.

In prayer, the child of God acknowledges that grace and the Holy Spirit come to him in the way of prayer. We thankfully acknowledge that all this is the gift of God. We cannot purchase these nor earn them. We pray for them, and in this way God also provides.

Prayer must represent a sincere desire for these things. It is not merely a routine exercise out of custom or habit. The Christian prays because he desires earnestly God's grace and guidance of the Spirit.

Nor is this prayer a matter of a "one time" request. It might be argued that God knows we need His grace and Spirit before we even ask. Further, we might think that if we ask once, God would not forget that we have asked--and He would then provide. Fact is: we must continually ask for these things (Luke 18:5). This is not because God does not understand our request. Rather, God teaches us that we must continually ask so that we never forget that God is the One Who provides.

Finally, we show in all that we do, that we are thankful for the grace and Holy Spirit He provides. He gives these not merely once, but again and again. Every day we thank Him for these.

That's faithful prayer. It is not that of the Pharisee who thanks God that he was "not as other men," but as the publican who cries out, "Oh God, be merciful to me, the sinner! (Luke 18:9-11).

**November 8 - LD 45, Day 4: The Requisites of the Godly Prayer**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Romans 3

The question we face is: what kind of prayer is "acceptable to God, which He will hear?" That ought to be of concern to us. Remember: we are but specks of dust on the planet earth which itself is but a speck in the vastness of the universe. God created and sustains the whole universe. One might quickly be overwhelmed with the very thought of approaching such a God. It would seem far more likely that an ant addresses and seeks to please a human being, than we approach the Infinite, Sovereign God, the Creator of all.

But the Bible shows the possibilities and the Catechism summarizes these. First, it must be "from the heart, to the one true God only, Who has revealed Himself in His Word." It must come from the born-again, regenerated heart--it cannot come from the heart of the unbeliever. Prayer is not a matter of show or pretence, but sincerity. It must be to the one only true God. It cannot be to God, and something else. It must not be to an idol or a god of one's imagination. Proper prayer cannot rest either upon "luck," or "change," or upon man's own cleverness in taking care of his own needs.

We must thoroughly know our needs and misery. One does not approach God in prayer only in those situations where he knows not what to do. We are deeply humbled before His divine majesty. We confess that "the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." (Rom 7:15-25) That's quite a confession! There is in the Christian a deep consciousness of his own sinfulness and unworthiness before God. That consciousness arises because he knows his own old nature against which he still struggles. Not only is he so very insignificant in size before the Almighty God, but at the same time, he sees rebellion in his members against God.

But out of his regenerated heart proceeds that work of the Spirit by which he confesses his sins daily. He acknowledges his unworthiness. He confesses that he has no where else to go than God's throne of grace. His prayer, then, is a confession of his own inability to provide what he needs. He confesses that his God can and does provide - in the way of his calling upon God.

Let us measure our own prayers by this standard.

**November 9 - LD 45, Day 5: The Conviction that God Will Answer Our Prayer**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Psalm 115

There is one large question that comes up in connection with prayer. Will God hear and answer *me* when I pray to Him? The Catechism assures us that He will certainly hear and answer us.

Why bring up this question? The Catechism points out our confession that we are not worthy to be heard and answered by God. That is true.

There are related questions which quickly arise in the mind of the Christian. There are those times when our prayers seem to rise no higher than the ceiling, as someone has expressed it. Simply put, the Christian can easily and quickly, but unjustly, conclude that God does not hear his prayer, or refuses to hear it. That can often be a very devastating conclusion of the Christian. He might despair of God's mercy and grace.

With the above, comes the conclusion that God does not care. He does not answer prayer as He has promised to do. At the least, we might conclude that God is too slow in the answers He gives. We desire an answer *right now*. But the answer does not come. It may be a prayer for a cure from some serious illness. It might be for sufficient funds to pay off one's debts. But God didn't answer.

Several truths the Christian must remember. Prayers for cures or for seemingly necessary earthly things are not always answered as we might desire. Our prayers must always be with the stipulation, "If the Lord wills..." (Jam 4:15). The fact is that God always sends what is best for His people, for their everlasting welfare in glory. Some requests seem unanswered - for God would teach us patience to await an answer. Has not He taught us in His Word, "all things work together for good to them that love God"? (Rom 8:28) Think of Job. In the loss of virtually everything he had possessed: great riches, many children, he confessed, "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21).

The Catechism reminds us that it is for the sake of Christ our Lord that God will hear and properly respond to our prayers. Whether we have health or sickness, riches or poverty, none of these is God's punishment for us. Christ has borne God's wrath, the wrath of hell, for our sins. Our sins are covered by Christ's blood. For Christ's sake, God promises to bless His people in every way. Faith holds fast to that promise of God.

**November 10 - LD 45, Day 6: The Model Prayer**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Luke 11:1-12

The disciples had made their request of Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." They were aware of the fact that John the Baptist had taught his disciples how to pray. In response, Jesus had given to them the "Lord's Prayer." Some call it, rightly, the "model prayer."

What immediately strikes one is the brevity of the prayer itself. It is striking that the prayer consists of but six petitions. It is a prayer which can be uttered in its entirety in less than 30 seconds.

By this instruction, Jesus did not teach that our prayers ought to be very brief -perhaps no more than 30 seconds. Jesus Himself could pray all night. We ask, "Did the perfect Son of God have the need to pray all night?" Jesus would have communion with God His Father even as He was ready to offer Himself to satisfy God's just demands for payment for the sins of those given Him by the Father.

Our prayers likewise may be fervent cries to God uttered in times of great need or great distress. Jesus does condemn long prayers spoken in pretence and made to gain the admiration of men (Matt 23:14).

What Jesus does teach is that prayer need not be lengthy to be heard by God. God is not to be swayed by our "much speaking." A sincere prayer which is heard and answered by God might consist of but a few words.

In the "Lord's Prayer", Jesus sets forth the principle of prayer and the proper content of prayer. We are taught to clearly understand to Whom we pray and for what we ask in that prayer. This is the thrust of the instruction of the Catechism in succeeding Lord's Days.

We consider one further important question. Ought we to pray only this prayer? Is it not the perfect prayer? Does it not present to God petitions covering the complete array of what ought to be included in any prayer?

This prayer can appropriately be prayed as Christ has given it to us. In fact, godly parents can teach their very young children to pray this prayer. It is a prayer that they can remember and use for life. It becomes the occasion for parents to remind their children the requirements of proper prayer.

What a gift is this prayer Christ taught us! We often know not what we should pray for as we ought. Now we are given a simple yet perfect example of what we are to pray for. God grant that His people may learn well from this model.



**November 11 - LD 45, Day 7: For What Do We Pray?**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Psalm 116

Finally, in this Lord's Day, we take a view of the LORD's model prayer in general. The following Lord's Days will study each part of the prayer itself. An examination of the prayer should give a good idea on how each part of this brief prayer fits in with the whole.

We must remind ourselves first of all that this prayer was given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is therefore, not open to amendment or change. It is not a "time-conditioned" prayer which was given for that period of Jesus' day - but now must be adapted to our current society. It is a "timeless" prayer - equally relevant today as it was 2000 years ago.

This prayer consists of several divisions or parts. It consists of an address, of a series of petitions, and a closing doxology. The remarkable fact is that the prayer, though so very brief, cannot be added to in order to improve it, or have parts taken away. It is complete the way Christ has given it.

The address is to "Father Which art in heaven." That address is treated more extensively in the following Lord's Day. This is the proper address for this prayer and for the petitions which comprise its body.

There follows six petitions which can again be divided into two parts of three petitions each. The first three petitions relate to God and our relationship to Him. Though brief, these express the basic truths of our proper relationship to God. We could correctly say that the truths of these petitions could not be stated more succinctly than they are. One must be amazed at the beautiful summary that they give concerning God, His kingdom, and His will. The following Lord's Days will explain this further.

The second group of three petitions treats of that which pertains to our own needs. Again, one might hastily make some erroneous conclusions. Why should we ask for bread before treating that which is spiritual? One might also wonder at the brevity of the petitions. We might multiply the number of petitions. No doubt,, other petitions can be presented to our Father. But the "model" prayer presents all of this in a summary form.

The concluding doxology is recorded in the Matthew account (Matt. 6:13ff) but not in the Luke account (Luke 11). It is a beautiful concluding doxology. This prayer begins by addressing "Our Father" and concludes with the emphasis, though again so briefly, upon our Father's greatness and glory.

On the basis of the whole prayer, we can by faith believe that God hears and answers it. Our prayers, modeled after the principles of this prayer, will likewise be answered. Be assured of it - it is God's promise.

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Of Prayer

#### Lord's Day 46

**Question 120.** Why hath Christ commanded us to address God thus: "Our Father"?

*Answer.* That immediately, in the very beginning of our prayer, he might excite in us a childlike reverence for, and confidence in God, which are the foundation of our prayer: namely, that God is become our Father in Christ, [a] and will much less deny us what we ask of him in true faith, than our parents [b] will refuse us earthly things.

**Question 121.** Why is it here added, "Which art in heaven"?

*Answer.* Lest we should form any [c] earthly conceptions of God's heavenly majesty, and that we [d] may expect from His almighty power all things necessary for soul and body.

[a]: [Mat. 6:9](#)

[b]: [Mat. 7:9,10,11](#); [Luke 11:11](#); [Isa. 49:15](#)

[c]: [Jer. 23:24](#)

[d]: [Acts 17:24](#); [Rom. 10:12](#)

**November 12 - LD 46, Day 1: The Address**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Psalm 145

A prayer is a means of contact with another, with the intent of presenting petitions to him. It is very specific in its address. It indicates that we know whom we address; we know what we will ask of him; and we believe that he is able to give that for which we ask.

In the case of this model prayer, we must be deeply conscious that we are not addressing a mere creature, but rather the Sovereign God. In addressing earthly royalty, we would not use crude language ("hey, you!"), but use addresses considered appropriate for royalty ("Your Royal Highness"). Much more ought we to address God with names appropriate to Him.

The Bible gives many names of God in Scripture. He is the "Holy One of Israel", "God Almighty" or, "Jehovah". There are many similar names indicating the high standing of our God. It would not be improper to use any of these names when addressing our God. The "Lord's Prayer," however, uses that Name most appropriate for God in light of the petitions presented.

It would be very improper for man to alter this Name of the Lord's Prayer to fit into man's current concept of the male/female relationship. Society would have a gender-free name so that both man and woman are represented. Some address God thus: "Our Father/Mother Who is in heaven." Thus, God is said to be that Being Who not only shows the characteristics of an earthly father, but also the softness, love, and concern of an earthly mother. If we are going to honor the fact that Jesus taught us to pray, how dare we alter the address that Jesus teaches here?

We are to address God properly as "Father," and our Father for Jesus' sake. We must carefully avoid the "politically correct" approach of the moment. Let us pray as Jesus taught us in this prayer.

At the same time, let us be sensitive to the amazing truth involved in the name we use. We are addressing the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He is the eternal, almighty, Sovereign God. We are but creatures of the dust. We are finite but God is infinite. One might wonder, "How dare we even think that we can address this God?" Will He not strike us down in anger if we even dare to try to approach Him thus? Could one imagine an ant addressing a human being as "father?" It's preposterous.

But Jesus taught us to call this Sovereign One "Father." So we will do. This is not some great self-esteem or pride on our part, but our submission to the instruction of our Master and Lord.

**November 13 - LD 46, Day 2: Our Father Who is in heaven**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Psalm 115

The name "Father" is appropriate to the petitions made. The name "Father" reminds us of the parent-child relationships we enjoy. Earthly fathers are expected to make adequate provision for their children. Fathers provide food, clothing, and shelter for them. They also provide protection against storms and dangers from people who might want to harm their children. Most children will quickly turn to their fathers for provision and protection.

That earthly relationship is but a picture of the relationship of the child of God to his "Father Which art in heaven." Jesus teaches us to use this address to show us what we ought to ask of our heavenly Father. Children may not ask for anything or everything, but only for the proper things as Scripture presents them.

Scripture uses "Father" in either one of two ways. "Father" sometimes has reference to the First Person of the Trinity. There are the three Persons in one Being. The First Person of the Trinity eternally generates the Second Person, Jesus, Who entered human flesh to provide the way of salvation by paying for our sins. Jesus, however, does not teach us to pray exclusively to the First Person of the Trinity.

Our Father in heaven is the Triune God. We address Him not through individual Persons of the Trinity, but to the Three (Persons) in One (Being). The Triune God must answer our petitions. We pray to the Father, through the Son, and by the work of the Holy Spirit.

As is true throughout the prayer, the Christian is conscious that he prays in the communion of the saints: "*OUR Father*". He prays with the whole church of God. He asks not all of these petitions simply for himself, but for the whole body of Christ. It is very important that we remember this as we pray.

The address of the prayer is a beautiful way of emphasizing our close relationship to God. It is almost inconceivable that one so small, and such a rebel, is able to address the Infinite God as "Father." But it is true, because of the perfect work of Christ on the cross whereby He satisfied the justice of God for the sins of His people. Then the Triune God can and does receive us unto Himself. Deut 33:27 speaks of the eternal God as a refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. We have a Father who is both able and willing to provide for His children with every necessary good.

**November 14 - LD 46, Day 3: Our Father - in Heaven**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: I Kings 8:22-30

The danger of addressing God as "Father" is that one might be inclined to visualize God perhaps in the form of a man. The Catechism reminds us that our Father "is in heaven." That immediately directs our attention that there is to be no god of our own imagination. Artists have frequently portrayed God as a very old man with flowing white beard and long white hair. We ourselves can easily form a mental image of our Father. Therefore Christ taught us to state the fact that He is "in heaven."

We even try to visualize heaven. Yet none can see heaven while on this earth. It is a realm different from anything that we now see. It is that place where God is pleased to reveal His glory, wisdom and might. There, our Father gathers His people who have been purified through the sacrifice Christ made to remove the guilt of their sins. There, we enjoy glorious and everlasting fellowship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our Father, the Triune God, reveals Himself in His Son who has united Himself to human flesh. We shall see Him in heaven. He reveals to us the Triune God, our Father. Jesus also reminded us that God is Spirit (not of some created substance) and those who worship Him, do so in spirit and truth.

He is infinite - bound neither by time nor space which are created by Him. All of this we confess in our prayers - our Father is infinitely far beyond us. Our Father is in heaven - not as one of many gods, but the One true God.

There is another glorious truth that this address teaches us. Our Father has almighty power, and He can provide all things necessary for our body and soul. Earthly fathers would likely be ready to give up their lives to protect and deliver their children from terrible dangers. But they are limited in their ability to provide their children with everything that they need.

However, our heavenly Father is both able and willing to give all that His children need. He can and does give them their "daily bread." through Christ, forgiveness of sin and life everlasting. Our Father does not always give us what we think we need or what we might desire. But He does hear and answer our prayers. He never fails to give us what we need. Therefore, the Christian is contented in whatever God gives.

Finally, in heaven we shall know and understand that whatever He provided us on this earth was exactly what we needed to prepare ourselves for our place there.

**November 15 - LD 46, Day 4: Sons of God the Father?  
by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: John 17

One great question arises. We've considered how great our Father is (Infinite and Eternal God), and how small and sinful we are. How is it possible that we be *sons* of God? Is not the possibility of such a blessed fellowship and union beyond the grasp of the sinner forever?

Various answers have been given to this important question. It is frequently taught that God loves all, seeks to save all, offers salvation and sonship to all who are willing to accept it. It's a matter of man's choice. But that is a terrible, anti-scriptural conclusion. How could it ever be that the infinite God, Who sincerely loves all, and sincerely desires to save all, does not, in fact, finally save all? How can a God of infinite love towards all, cast any into hell? If He sent His Son into human flesh to save all, how can it be that any would be lost forever?

A human father will do whatever he possibly can to provide for, protect from, and save his children from all danger. Certainly he would not allow his children to die if it were in his power to deliver them! More so it is true that God will save all those whom He sincerely loves. If He sends His Son to save all whom He loves, they shall be saved.

That is not the teaching of Scripture. Scripture declares the blessed truth that God so loved the world that He sent His Son to deliver that world (John 3:16). Jesus limits the scope of the word "world" when He teaches in John 17:9, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Imagine! God sent His Son into the world to enter human flesh to provide the only way of saving this "world" (all those given by God to Christ) and bringing them to glory.

So God has ordained that He would adopt unto Himself those whom He has eternally chosen as "sons of God." He is their Father. He who comes to the Father, sees in this very action the perfect work of God the Father within him.

So God's people need neither doubt nor fear to come daily, fervently, to their Father. He so loved them that He gave His only-begotten Son to atone, to pay for their sins. He will hear the cries of His "sons" and provide for their every need.

What a wonder of grace to have such a Father!

**November 16 - LD 46, Day 5: Child-like reverence...**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Psalm 89:1-18

When we address the Triune God as our "Father," we thereby indicate that we are children of His. We must keep in mind what that also means when we address God. We cannot approach God as if somehow He is our equal. We do not seek to make some special agreement with God. Surely we do not approach God as though we are speaking to a servant or a slave. We do not draw up a list of things we want of God and expect that He ought to hear us and provide as we have asked.

Rather, we recognize that we are sons (by adoption through Christ's shed blood) and our Father will give us what is right and good for us. Scripture expresses it thus: "...we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered" (Rom 8:26). It must also be true that we ask with the understanding that only "if the Lord will" can we do what we propose or receive that for which we ask (Jam 4:15).

The "Lord's Prayer" is Christ's own instruction concerning the necessary things for which we must ask. There are six necessary petitions - each important in its own way. One is not limited to these six petitions. Yet there is a sense that these six petitions include everything essential for our lives on this earth. The Heidelberg Catechism continues to analyze each of these petitions in turn.

But in every prayer and every petition, we address our Father *in heaven*, which ought to excite in us a childlike reverence and confidence. This childlike attitude is seen in children. It is touching to see young children run to their parents. There they believe themselves to be safe. As long as they can hold to their father's hand, they can be virtually fearless. When they are separated from their parents, they can be filled with fear. The Psalmist also compares the father's care for his children with that of God for His people (Psa 103:12-14).

That confidence is also taught in Scripture which describes God as a high tower into which the righteous runneth and is safe. What comfort, what assurance ought to be ours when we have our heavenly Father to whom we can turn. He protects and provides; He comforts and encourages. Our Father works all things together for good to them that love Him.

**November 17 - LD 46, Day 6: Only 'Good' Things?**  
**by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Job 1

It is very important to remember that whatever God sends to His children, it is always good. What earthly father would give his children only candy for food - and not give carrots and spinach and peas because these are repulsive to his children? What earthly father will only and always praise his children - and never rebuke nor chastise them?

When our heavenly Father sends what we might not like, it is not to punish us for some sin we have committed. Jesus has taken on Himself the guilt of and punishment for our sin. That's the wonder of the cross. But God does chastise. We still have the "old man," the old nature, as long as we live on this earth. We often need correction from our heavenly Father to remind us of our calling to flee sin and seek righteousness.

Sometimes, we do not see that what we receive is needed - we can think of no specific sin for which God is chastising us. The Bible presents a striking instance of this in the Old Testament saint, Job. He had an abundance of material things, much cattle, many servants, and ten children. He was very godly - he offered sacrifices and prayers for his children. Suddenly, God took all of that away from Job. It must have been devastating. Would Job's Father in heaven do that to one so obviously serving God rightly? Yes, God did. It was not to chastise Job, but to shape and prepare him for his place in glory. Satan had challenged God to take all these things away - and then Job would no longer serve God.

But Satan was terribly wrong. Job was strengthened in his faith in the way of afflictions. He refused to follow the advice of his wife to curse God and die. He acknowledged God's Sovereignty in confessing, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the LORD" (Job 1:21b). Job did not simply confess some dogmatic truth, but experienced in his heart and life the truth of that confession.

So it must be with God's people. God sends many difficult things in the lives of His people. In Rom 8:28 we confess, "All things work together for good for them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

That's the confession of faith of the Christian. He knows that whatever befalls him, his heavenly Father knows what is best. God's design must be realized. If we do not understand why some thing befalls us, we know that finally in glory we shall understand and thank God for what He sends.



**November 18 - LD 46, Day 7: Father Almighty  
by Rev. G. Van Baren**

Read: Matthew 7:6-12

It is no wonder that the child of God holds his heavenly Father in great esteem. He rejoices in the Word from his Father. He loves His law. He rejoices in opportunities to speak to others concerning his Father in Heaven. The Christian points out the greatness of his Father: He is the Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and the earth. He directs the affairs of nations. He continues to gather His children from the four corners of the earth. Not a sparrow can fall and not a hair from one's head can drop without the will of our heavenly Father (Matt 10:28-30).

He is *my* Father. The Christian enjoys that very close relationship with his Father - of which earthly father-son relationships are but a faint picture. The Christian holds his Father's hand. God guides and directs him in the way he must go. His Father encircles him with His arm. His Father can and does defend him from every enemy. God is closer to His people than a human father could ever be to his children. Our Father guides us by His Holy Spirit (the third Person of the Trinity). He assures of the forgiveness of sins through Christ (the second Person come into human flesh).

It's all so amazing—even unbelievable if not for the gift of faith. How can it be that One so infinitely great, so almighty, would care for one so finite, and sinful besides - so that He works all things together for his good! His people treasure that relationship above anything that this world has to offer. Material things, earthly prosperity, are as dung compared to this glorious relationship to their Father.

That relationship is established by our Father out of pure sovereign grace. We did not contribute to it nor deserve it—but Christ offered Himself to obtain for us the forgiveness of sin and the right to sonship.

Christ now teaches His disciples and us what we ought to ask of our Father. In six short petitions, He teaches what we must ask of our Father, how we must express ourselves, and why we can be sure God will answer our prayers. Though we can bring before our Father all of our concerns, Christ shows us what is absolutely essential for us to bring before Him. In presenting our petitions to our Father, we acknowledge our great need. We cannot live before our Father unless He provides that for which we ask in this prayer. Only He is able to provide for us.

In the final Lord's Days, we confront the glorious teaching of Scripture concerning these six petitions.

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Of Prayer

#### Lord's Day 47

**Question 122. Which is the first petition?**

*Answer.* [a] "Hallowed be thy name"; that is, grant us, first, rightly [b] to know Thee, and to [c] sanctify, glorify and praise Thee, in all Thy works, in which Thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth, are clearly displayed; and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words and actions, that Thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather [d] honored and praised on our account.

[a]: [Mat. 6:9](#)

[b]: [John 17:3](#); [Jer. 9:23,24](#); [Mat. 16:17](#); [James 1:5](#)

[c]: [Psa. 119:137,138](#); [Luke 1:46](#); [Psa. 145:8,9](#)

[d]: [Psa. 115:1](#); [Psa. 71:8](#)

**November 19 - LD 47, Day 1: Ask, and It Shall Be Given You**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

Did you ever notice how often little children ask for things? “Daddy, may I have some juice?” “Mommy, will you help me get dressed?” “Grandpa, will you read to me?” Especially when children are small, they are entirely dependent upon their parents and other beloved adults for all things. They must be constantly asking their parents to provide them with those things they need.

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches us that we are not much different from these little children. In fact, in another place, He teaches us that we must become as little children, or we shall have no part in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:3). As little children, we are entirely dependent upon our heavenly Father for all things. As little children, we must constantly be asking Him to provide for all our needs.

These requests to God are called *petitions*. The Lord’s Prayer, which the Heidelberg Catechism is now explaining, contains six of these petitions, explained in Lord’s Days 47-52. When we pray, we must not only give thanks to God, praise God, and confess our sins to God; we must also petition God to supply all of our needs.

The six petitions of the Lord’s Prayer can be divided into two groups of three. The first group includes petitions that have to do with God’s glory and honor: hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done. The second group includes petitions that have to do with our needs as creatures who are also sinners: give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our debts; lead us not into temptation. This order is appropriate. God is always first, even in our petitions.

The big question, however, is *why* our Lord taught us to request our needs from Him. If God knows all things, including our needs, why must we still make petitions to Him? More on this next time.

Remember: we are children of our heavenly Father. As children, we depend upon Him. As dependents, we must ask Him for all things we need. And asking, we shall receive.

**November 20 - LD 47, Day 2: Asking, Believing, and Receiving  
by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Matthew 21:22.

Last time, we ended with the question: why must we ask God to supply our needs? In answering this question, we must avoid several errors that are easy to fall into.

First, we do not make petitions to God in order to *inform* Him of something He did not already know. God does not learn that we are hungry and thirsty because we ask Him for food and drink. God is omniscient, all-knowing. He knows what we have need of, even before we ask Him (Matt 6:8). There is no additional information that we can give Him, for He knows all.

Second, we do not make petitions in order to *change God's mind* by persuading Him to give us something that He had intended to withhold. For example, our pleas for forgiveness of sins do not turn God's heart of wrath towards us into a heart of mercy towards us. God answers our pleas because His heart has always been merciful towards us in Christ. God is the great I AM THAT I AM, who cannot change. What He was yesterday, He is today, and will be tomorrow. "For I Am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal 3:6).

So then, why must we ask God to supply our needs?

First of all, our petitions give honor and glory to God. They are a way of acknowledging that God alone can provide. We do not place our trust in our own strength to provide our needs, nor in the government, nor in any earthly agency or individual. Rather, we place our trust in God. Our petitions are not only *requests*, they are also *confessions of faith* that God alone is sovereign.

Second, God uses our petitions to strengthen our faith. Matt 21:22 and Jam 1:6-7 both teach that prayer requires faith. We may not pray doubting God's promises to answer, but we must pray, believing. Every time we pray, therefore, God exercises our faith. Therefore, our petitions are not only *requests*, they are also *expressions of trust* that God will answer us.

Finally, God uses our petitions as means to provide us with our needs. God is pleased to use instruments and means to accomplish His purposes. When He speaks to us, He does not thunder with His own voice directly from heaven, but He speaks through the Scriptures, and through office-bearers who expound those Scriptures. So also, when God provides our needs, He does not drop them on us from the heavens, but uses our prayers as one of His instruments of provision. Therefore, our petitions are not only *requests*, they are also *God's means of answering*.

**November 21 - LD 47, Day 3: The Awesome Name of God**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Psalm 8.

The first petition is a petition about God's *name*: "Hallowed be thy name."

God's name is unique and special, because God's name reveals who He is. Our names are not like this, for our names are merely tags to distinguish us from each other. Our names do not describe who we are, what we are like, whether we are kind or cruel, rich or poor, healthy or ill. Our names do not describe our hopes and aspirations. Perhaps our parents gave us our names to honor a family member who bears that name, or because they liked the way the name sounds, or because the name has a significant meaning. But for all of their significance, our names can never reveal who we are. In the end, they are just a way to address each other.

However, God's name is different. When God speaks His name, He is telling us who and what He is. To know God's name is to know God Himself!

This is true of God's proper names first of all. His name, *God*, literally means *mighty*. It reveals Him as all-powerful, both to create and to save. His name, *Jehovah*, literally means *I AM*. It reveals Him as the eternal and unchangeable God of the covenant. His name, *Lord*, refers to His sovereign dominion and authority over all things. His name, *Father*, reveals Him as the God of the covenant, who brings His chosen people into covenant fellowship with Himself. His name, *Shepherd*, reveals Him to be the tender, compassionate leader and pastor of His people. These names are more than mere handles to address God; they are His revelation of Himself to His people.

Scripture goes even further yet. It identifies God's name to be certain things that we would not normally consider the name of God. For example, Psa 8:1 says that God's name is revealed in the creation: "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens." This does not merely mean that God's name is praised as excellent in all the earth. It means that all of the earth is God's excellent name. No matter where the believer looks in creation, he sees the revelation of God, and therefore the name of God. That is why Lord's Day 47 explains this petition about God's *name* in terms of God's *works*.

The response of the believer is to exclaim with the Psalmist in a different place, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." (Psa 103:1).

**November 22 - LD 47, Day 4: Jesus, Name Above Every Name**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Philippians 2:5-11.

As we saw last time, God's name is His revelation of Himself. To know God's name is to know God. We also saw that God's name includes more than His proper names. Wherever God is revealed, there is His name.

This time, we see the ultimate revelation of God's name: Jesus Christ.

God is pleased to reveal Himself most fully in Jesus. We can distinguish three ways in which Jesus fully reveals God: in Jesus' name, in His person, and in His work.

First, God reveals Himself in Jesus' name. The name *Jesus* is made up of two words: Jehovah, salvation. As God told Joseph through the angel in Matt 1:21, "...thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." Therefore, Jesus' name reveals Him to be the outstanding demonstration of God's love and faithfulness. God is not only the great, unchangeable Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM; He is also the merciful Savior who delivers His people from their sins. God's unchangeable mercy for His elect people is revealed in the sending of Jesus. Jesus' name is a constant testimony to God's people: Jehovah, your God, saves you. As Phil 2 says, Jesus' name is above every name, and this brings glory to God.

Second, God reveals Himself in Jesus' person. Jesus is the eternal Son and the eternal Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. In that Person are united the divine and human natures of Christ. Therefore, all who look upon Jesus look upon God Himself. For that reason, Heb 1:3 calls Jesus "the brightness of His [God's] glory, and the express image of His [God's] person." This is also why Jesus Himself taught in John 14:7-9: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father..."

Third, God reveals Himself in Jesus' works. The powerful teaching and the mighty miracles of Jesus all revealed the glory of God. This explains what Jesus means in John 17:6 when He prays to God, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." Immediately after this, Jesus goes on to recount the work that He performed in keeping them. By Jesus' mighty works, God is revealed.

What a glorious name belongs to Jesus! God most fully reveals Himself in this *Jehovah-salvation*. And therefore, it is the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12)!

**November 23 - LD 47, Day 5: God's Hallowed Name**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Psalm 20

Do you know what it means to *hallow* something? It is one of those words that we might have a hard time with, because although we use it every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we do not use it very much in our daily speech. One way to remember its meaning is to see that *hallow* sounds kind of like *holy*. That is exactly what it means! To hallow something means to set it apart from other things as holy. For example, the Bible is the *Holy* Bible because it is set apart from all other books as the only book written by God Himself. In the Old Testament, Zion was the *holy* mountain because God had set it apart as the place where He would dwell with His people.

When we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we are asking God to set apart His name from all other names as holy. We are asking God to exalt His name as something to be revered and worshiped. To be sure, we are asking that we might be given grace to treat His name with reverence; but we are first of all asking that God would honor and glorify His own name.

God does indeed hallow His name. He does so by making the first petition of the Lord's Prayer, the hallowing of His name. His name is more important than our daily bread or anything else that we need. Therefore His name comes first in the prayer.

God also hallows His name by making it the object of our faith and trust. Psa 20 especially brings this out. Psa 20 describes the salvation of God's people, especially when they are threatened by enemies. But Psa 20 describes the Savior as God's name! "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." (v1) Because we are saved by God's name, we set up our banners in God's name (v5) and remember God's name (v7). Remember, God is His name. He is God; He is Jehovah. Therefore, when God says His name saves us, that means God Himself saves us. But God describes Himself according to His name in order that His name might be hallowed and exalted.

The fruit of this hallowing of God's name is that "we will remember the name of the LORD our God." (Psa 20:7)

**November 24 - LD 47, Day 6: Unto Thy Name Give Glory  
by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Psalm 115

Last time we saw that God hallows His own name by setting it apart from all other names as holy and worthy of praise. This time we see that God also hallows His name in us. When we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we are asking God to give us the grace to treat His name with reverence and praise. The Catechism indicates this when it explains the petition to mean: "Grant us . . . to know thee, and to sanctify, glorify, and praise thee . . . and that we may so order and direct our whole lives . . . that thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honored and praised on our account."

The Catechism recognizes that there is a connection between God and His people. What we do reflects on His name. To illustrate, this is the way it goes even in our earthly families. Each family has a certain reputation. If they have a good reputation, we say they have a good name. There is such a connection between the family members that the father's name is affected by the children's actions. If the children are rebellious and live in sin, that gives their father a bad reputation. But if the children are obedient and live uprightly, that gives their father a good reputation. That is something like what goes on with God's name and His people. We bear God's name. As David says in Psa 115:3, He is *our God*. As Acts 11:26 says, we are called *Christians*, bearing the name of Christ. What we do reflects on the name of God. As God's children, therefore, we greatly desire to live in holiness to the praise of God. We pray urgently, "Hallowed be thy name *in my life!*"

Honoring God's name this way will involve self-denial. All that we are belongs to God for the glory of His name. The Catechism indicates that this first petition is all-encompassing. We are asking God for the grace to glorify Him in "our whole lives, our thoughts, words, and actions." This means that our plans, our ambitions, our desires, our speech, our entire lives must be subject to God. As Psa 115:1 puts it, "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

There are two parts to God's name being hallowed in our lives: avoiding blasphemy and honoring Him. We conclude with this next time.



**November 25 - LD 47, Day 7: Hallowed Be Thy Name!**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Psalm 71

There are two ways to look at hallowing God's name. Negatively, it is to avoid blasphemy. Positively, it is to honor and praise God's name. The Catechism mentions each of these briefly.

First, hallowing God's name means that we do not blaspheme God's name. When we hear the word *blasphemy*, we probably first of all think of those who use God's name as a curse word, or who use God's name as a way to express their surprise, joy, or anguish. But blasphemy includes much more than this evil use of God's name. Blasphemy is anything that lowers, disparages, or disrespects the name of God. For example, Acts 13:45 says that it was blasphemy for the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia to contradict Paul's gospel. By their open denial of Jesus Christ, they disrespected God's name, and thus blasphemed. Our prayer, therefore, is that we never do anything in our lives that will lower or disparage the glorious name of God.

Second, hallowing God's name means that we honor and praise God's name in everything that we do. Interestingly, the Catechism has its eye not only on how *we* use God's name, but also on how *other people* are led to use God's name when they see us. Grant, it says, "that Thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honored and praised on our account." We are to live in such a way that other people are led by our good example to honor and reverence God's name. "Hallowed be thy name, not only in me, but by others who see me."

The first petition is a glorious petition. It is especially glorious because it speaks of God's grace. You see, hallowing God's name is impossible in our own strength. Left to ourselves, we would blaspheme God's name with our every action and thought. Apart from God's grace, we would bring only dishonor to His glorious name. Hallowing God's name can only be accomplished by the power of His grace. Therefore, we urgently and fervently make this first petition every day of our lives: *Hallowed be thy name!*

## The Third Part - Of Thankfulness

### Of Prayer

#### Lord's Day 48

**Question 123.** Which is the second petition?

*Answer.* [a] "Thy kingdom come"; that is, rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit, that we may [b] submit ourselves more and more to Thee; preserve and [c] increase Thy church; destroy the [d] works of the devil and all violence which would exalt itself against Thee; and also, all wicked counsels devised against Thy holy word; till the full [e] perfection of Thy kingdom take place, [f] wherein Thou shalt be all in all.

[a]: [Mat. 6:10](#)

[b]: [Psa. 119:5](#)

[c]: [Psa. 51:18](#)

[d]: [1John 3:8](#); [Rom. 16:20](#)

[e]: [Rev. 22:17,20](#)

[f]: [1Cor. 15:15,28](#)

**November 26 - LD 48, Day 1: Wrong Views About the Kingdom of God  
by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Hebrews 11:8-14

The second petition deals with God's kingdom: *Thy kingdom come*. The kingdom of God is one of the most glorious realities in all of creation. God's kingdom possesses unparalleled glory, because it is the kingdom where God is pleased to dwell. The citizens of the kingdom not only inhabit the kingdom, but they are heirs to the kingdom; they are not mere denizens, but princes and princesses of the King. Above all, the King of the kingdom is stunning in His glory, majesty, honor, and power. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. As Psa 24:7ff declares, He is the King of glory.

However, in spite of all of the kingdom's striking beauty and glory, it is one of the most misunderstood realities in all of creation. There are many today who teach falsehoods about the kingdom. Therefore, before we look at what the kingdom is positively, we must be warned against these wrong views.

All of the wrong views of the kingdom spring from one root error: the teaching that the kingdom of God is earthly and physical. According to these false teachings, the glories of the kingdom are earthly glories and riches, and the coming of the kingdom is the rise of some earthly institution that will be more or less Christian in character. Thus, for example, the postmillennialists and the premillennialists both look for an age in which the kingdom will flourish materially on this earth.

There are two main errors in this view. First, it is not biblical. In fact, the Bible specifically denies that the kingdom is earthly. Jesus Himself taught that we must not look at earthly appearances to find the kingdom, for "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (Luke 17:20b). So also Paul taught in Rom 14:17 that the "kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The Bible clearly teaches that the kingdom of God is spiritual and not physical or material.

The second main error is, the view that the kingdom is earthly makes people set their hearts upon this earth. Rather than hope for the return of Christ and the new heavens and earth where righteousness dwells, instead God's people are told that their great hope lies here on earth. We reject this, just as Abraham of old rejected this idea. Abraham could have had a grand earthly kingdom - he was certainly wealthy enough. But he lived as a stranger and pilgrim in the land of promise, for he sought the kingdom which is above.

The kingdom is not physical. But then, what is it? More on this next time.

**November 27 - LD 48, Day 2: The Proper View of the Kingdom of God  
by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: John 3:1-21

Last time we ended with a question: If the kingdom of God is not physical and material, then what is it? This time, let us look at Scripture and the Heidelberg Catechism to answer that question.

There are some key passages of God's Word that help us identify the kingdom. First, we have Jesus' instruction to Nicodemus in John 3. When Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, Jesus taught him the truth of regeneration. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Again, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:5,6). Jesus' instruction here clearly identifies the kingdom as a spiritual realm, not a physical realm. One does not enter the kingdom by joining some earthly nation or institution, but one enters the kingdom of God when God sovereignly regenerates his heart. The moment the Holy Spirit implants the new life of Christ into a sinner's heart, he is in the kingdom and can see its glories, but not before. Just as one's physical birth gives him access to earthly, physical kingdoms, so one's spiritual rebirth gives him access to the spiritual kingdom of God.

There are many other passages that confirm this spiritual identity of God's kingdom. In answer to Pilate's question on what He had done, Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Last time we saw Jesus' teaching in Luke 17:20 and Paul's in Rom 14:17. The kingdom of God is a spiritual realm.

The Bible also teaches that God's kingdom is ruled and governed by God through Jesus Christ as King. Going back to what Jesus said to Pilate in John 18:37, "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Putting these truths together, we may define the kingdom of God as that spiritual realm of righteousness in which Christ rules by His Word and Spirit.

The Heidelberg Catechism is in perfect harmony with Scripture's teaching here. It begins its explanation of the second petition: "rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit."

What a glorious kingdom! What a privilege to be its citizen!

**November 28 - LD 48, Day 3: Thy Kingdom Come . . . In Me**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Romans 10:13-17

The second petition is very brief, consisting of only three words: Thy kingdom come. However, in this brief petition we are asking God for many, many things. We are asking for the kingdom to come in us personally, for the kingdom to come ecclesiastically in the building up of the church, and for the kingdom to come in the way of the destruction of the enemies. The Heidelberg Catechism treats each of these aspects in turn. Today we are going to look at what it means for the kingdom to come in us personally.

The Catechism indicates that there is a personal coming of the kingdom when it says, "Rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to Thee." Submitting ourselves more and more to God is an aspect of our sanctification. Therefore, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we are asking God to make us ever more holy as citizens of His kingdom.

This petition is necessary because we still must battle our old man of sin. It is true that God has given us a rich and full salvation. That salvation includes His sovereign choice of His people in His eternal decree of election, His regeneration of our hearts so that we now have spiritual life, His gift of faith so that we believe in Jesus Christ, and His gracious declaration in justification that all our sins are forgiven. None of these saving gifts can ever be lost. However, that salvation has not yet been completed in us. We still remain on this earth fighting against the weakness of our flesh and the corruption of our totally depraved nature. We do not obey God's law perfectly from the heart as we are required. For that reason, we pray earnestly: Thy kingdom come . . . in me!

The Catechism indicates that the way God's kingdom comes in us is by God's Word and Spirit. God's Word is a reference to the Scriptures, including the preaching of those Scriptures in the public worship services. That Word is powerful; so powerful that Paul calls it God's power unto salvation (Rom 1:16). That Word reveals the Savior, Jesus Christ; that Word calls us to believe on Jesus Christ; that Word proclaims the will of God, and calls us to submit to His will. By faithful attendance to this Word, we more and more submit ourselves to God.

Faithful obedience to the Word, however, is impossible in our own strength. Therefore, the Holy Spirit must take that Word and apply it to our hearts so that we see the truth of it and believe it. By God's Spirit and Word, we submit ourselves to God more and more.

And so we pray: Thy kingdom come . . . in me.

**November 29 - LD 48, Day 4: Thy Kingdom Come . . . In the Church**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Psalm 48

Last time we saw that when we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” we are asking God to perform a work in our hearts, to make us submit more and more to His will. This time, we see that the second petition is also about Christ’s church. The Heidelberg Catechism indicates this when it says, “preserve and increase Thy church.” We shift our attention now from the personal to the ecclesiastical.

The church is the assembly of believers and their children whom God has called out of darkness into His marvelous light. The church is the body and bride of Christ and consists of all of the elect who are gathered by Christ through His Word. The church is not confined to a specific place or time, but is found throughout history. Especially in the New Testament, the church is made up of all nations, tribes, and tongues. This church assembles together in order to worship Jehovah. Wherever we find a congregation that holds to the Word of God and proclaims the true gospel of Jesus Christ, there we find a manifestation of the glorious body and bride of Christ. It is this church that we ask God to preserve and increase.

The church must be preserved because she has so many enemies. The Heidelberg Catechism deals with this at length a little bit later in Lord’s Day 48, so we will treat this some more next time. For now, we simply recognize that the church could not stand a moment if Christ did not preserve her.

Let us focus for a moment on the petition for God to increase His church. With this petition, we are asking God to gather all of His elect into the church. God is pleased to gather His elect people in two ways. First, God gathers His church from the elect children of believing parents. Therefore, when we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” we are praying for our children, thanking God for making them members of His church and covenant. We are also asking that we be given grace to raise them in His fear, that they might know Him and love Him.

Second, God gathers His church through the work of missions and through our speaking to our family, friends, and neighbors who are not yet converted to Christ. By the Word, sinners are called out of darkness into His marvelous light. Therefore, we are asking God to send forth His Word powerfully to gather in His elect people.

And so we pray: Thy kingdom come . . . in the church.

**November 30 - LD 48, Day 5: Thy Kingdom Come . . . Against the Enemies**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Revelation 12:12-17

The Heidelberg Catechism makes special reference to the enemies who oppose God's church and kingdom: "destroy the works of the devil and all violence which would exalt itself against Thee." Part of the coming of God's kingdom is the overthrow of God's enemies.

The enemies of the church are numerous and powerful. The Catechism specifically mentions the devil, because he is the chief enemy of God and the church. The devil was not always evil. He was created as a good angel, sometime during the creation week. At some point after the creation week, he fell into sin and rebelled against God. This fallen angel, now known as Satan or the devil, took with him many other angels, who are now demons.

The devil hates Christ above all. One of the devil's names, Satan, means *adversary*. Satan is the great adversary of God and is consumed with bitter wrath against God. As Rev 12 teaches, Satan vents his wrath against the church. He makes war with the church and tries to overthrow her. Satan conducts this war with all kinds of weapons. Sometimes he uses physical persecution; sometimes he uses doubts and fears; sometimes he uses temptations to sin. Whatever his weapon, his goal is always the destruction of God's people.

Satan is not the only enemy of the church. There is also the unregenerate, wicked world. The world hates the church because the church is a constant testimony against the sins of the world. The wicked world puts pressure on the church to abandon her confession and be like the unbelievers. Sometimes this pressure takes the form of persecution, other times it takes the form of ridicule, other times it takes the form of making sin look attractive and desirable. Whatever form it takes, the goal is always to silence the church's testimony against the sins of the world.

The church also faces an enemy within her own bosom: the old man of sin that lives in every child of God. Like the devil and the wicked world, this depraved nature of the child of God wars against him.

These enemies are powerful, but they are not sovereign. There is One whose might far exceeds that of all of the enemies put together. The power of God is infinite, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against Him. He takes pleasure in His church and will preserve her to the end.

Therefore we pray: Thy kingdom come . . . against the enemies.

**December 1 - LD 48, Day 6: Thy Kingdom Come . . . By Thy Word**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: Ephesians 2:11-22

Last time, we saw that the church has many enemies. The second petition asks God to preserve the church by overthrowing those enemies. Today, we see that the Heidelberg Catechism identifies one very specific strategy of Satan: “wicked counsels devised against Thy holy Word.” Because this strategy can be seen in many places today, let us take heed to this aspect of the petition.

The Word of God is the foundation of the church. Read that sentence again. Is that how you would identify the foundation of the church? Perhaps you are thinking of that passage in Eph 2 that says that Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone. If that is the case, then we should say that *Jesus* is the foundation of the church, not the Bible. Well, it is true that Christ alone is the foundation of the church. Our Lord said as much to Peter in Matt 16:16,18. Peter confessed, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus responded, “Upon this rock (that is, the rock of truth that Jesus is Christ), I will build my church.”

Nevertheless, it remains true that the Scriptures are the foundation of the church. This does not mean that the Scriptures supplant Christ as the church’s foundation, but that the Scriptures reveal Christ. The Word of God is the revelation of Christ. Without the Scriptures, we don’t know anything about Christ. Another way to say it is this: Christ, as revealed in the Word of God, is the foundation of the church. This is what Eph 2:20 means when it says that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.

For this reason, the Scriptures are constantly under attack by Satan. He is constantly devising “wicked counsels” to overthrow the Word. He devised higher criticism, which claims that certain portions of God’s Word are merely the thoughts of men. He devised doctrinal heresies that corrupt and twist the clear Word of God. He even devises some Bible translations that are so loose and unfaithful that they teach false doctrine. Satan knows that if he can undermine Scripture, he has undermined the foundation of the church.

For that reason, the church asks to be preserved against the nefarious attacks on the Word. Fervently, she prays: Thy kingdom come . . . by thy Word.



**December 2 - LD 48, Day 7: Thy Kingdom Come . . . Unto Its Perfection**  
**by Rev. Andrew Lanning**

Read: I Corinthians 15:1228

Lord's Day 48 concludes by pointing our spiritual eyes of faith away from this earth to the glory of God's kingdom perfected in heaven. "Thy kingdom come . . . till the full perfection of Thy kingdom take place, wherein Thou shalt be all in all." This conclusion indicates that the second petition does not only have to do with God's kingdom as it appears in this age, but as it will appear to all eternity in the new heavens and earth. It is another way of praying, "Come, Lord Jesus." (Rev 22:20b)

The fact that the kingdom must reach its full perfection in the future indicates that it has not reached its full perfection now. This is not a defect of the kingdom, nor is it due to any weakness in God. Rather, the sovereign, almighty God of the kingdom has decreed that His kingdom will only reach its perfection in the way of sin and redemption. In this way, God's glory, majesty, mercy, and justice are most clearly shown.

When we look around today at external things, it does not appear that the kingdom of God is flourishing. The enemies are assaulting the church from every side. Large portions of historically conservative churches are falling away into false doctrine. The church is despised and small, while the world boasts itself against God. Our mission work does not convert the nations, but produces only a little group here and a small church there.

However, in spite of these appearances, the kingdom is being perfected. The coming of the kingdom is not measured by external criteria. Rather, it is measured by the infinite power of God's grace to save His elect people and preserve them unto the end. However small and despised that church might be in the eyes of the world, that church is the kingdom of the King of kings and Lord of lords. That kingdom comes, just as surely as Christ promised, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev 22:7a).

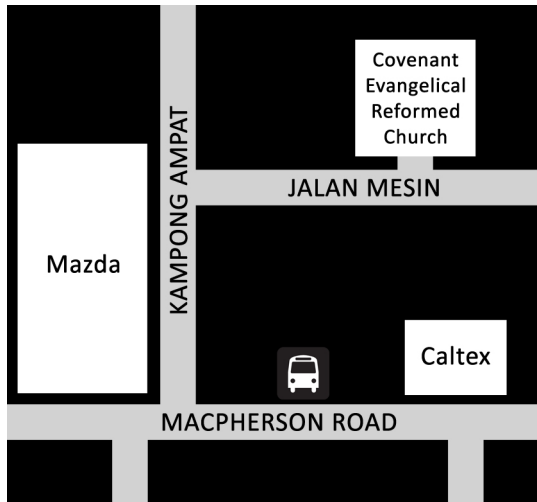
The day is coming when that kingdom shall reach its full perfection in the new heavens and new earth at the return of Jesus Christ. On that day, God will be all in all. All of our thoughts, which so often wander away from God now, will be focused on Him forever. All of our actions, which so often are self-serving now, will be to the service of His glory forever. All of history's events, which now seem so disconnected and aimless, will then be seen to have served the coming of his kingdom. What a day! What a kingdom! Lord, hasten thy return!

Thy Kingdom Come! Amen.



COVENANT EVANGELICAL REFORMED CHURCH

PLACE OF WORSHIP  
11 Jalan Mesin #04-00  
Standard Industrial Building



Public Transport:

Buses 8, 62, 62A, 90, 151

10 min walk from Tai Seng MRT Station (CC11)

(Take Harper Road exit, walk to Mactagart Road, turn left to Kampong Ampat  
and left again to Jalan Mesin)

TIME OF WORSHIP

Every Sunday

9.30 – 11.00 am

2.00 – 3.00 pm

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