

The Great House of God  
Matthew 6:5-13  
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February 15, 2009

A daddy was listening to his child say his prayer "Dear Harold". At this, dad interrupted and said, "Wait a minute, "How come you called God, "Harold"? The little boy looked up and said, "That's what they call Him in church. You know the prayer we say, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, Harold be Thy name."

A four-year-old prayed: "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets." (Sounds like that child knew what they were talking about)

A five-year-old said grace at family dinner one night. "Dear God, thank you for these pancakes." When he concluded, his parents asked him why he thanked God for pancakes when they were having chicken. He smiled and said, "I thought I'd see if He was paying attention tonight." (Have you ever wondered that yourself as you prayed?)

And finally:

A little boy's prayer. "Dear God, please take care of my daddy and my mommy and my sister and my brother and my doggy and me. Oh, please take care of yourself, God. If anything happens to you, we're gonna be in a big mess."

Isn't that the truth.

Jesus actually had much to say about prayer. After all, He spent a great deal of time in prayer. In fact, Jesus refers to prayer in His teachings 42 times, and the gospels record Him personally praying 28 times.

Several times, the Word tells us, "And He went up to the mountain to pray." (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 6:12; Luke 9:28) He prayed in the wilderness, in the Temple, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He prayed on the Cross.

Prayer was so much a part of the life of the Savior that, early on, the disciples came to Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1).

They were amazed at the level of significance and the depth of meaning that prayer had for Jesus.

His life was a beautiful expression of close communication with Almighty God.

The disciples, who lived and walked and ate with Jesus, realized the kind of man Jesus was as a result of His prayer life and they wanted to know how they could have that also. So they ask him, "Lord, teach us to pray."

And Jesus does.

We, who want to live like Jesus today, ask the same question, "Lord, teach us to pray."

And Jesus still answers.

Here at TCUMC we value prayer so much that it is one of our Core Principles. Matt talked about this particular principle last week in the GROW class. We also have a Prayer Chapel located just to the right of the sanctuary so that we can go there corporately or by ourselves to pray because we are serious about wanting to live like Jesus and we know without prayer, we cannot.

Turn with me to Matthew 6:5-13.

As you are turning to that let me just tell you that we are in the process of making our prayer room more inviting to everyone. So you will be seeing some changes taking place in the prayer room. We want it to be a place where everyone not only CAN go to but that they WANT to go there and pray. Pray for themselves, for this church, this community, this country and this world.

We would love to have your ideas, suggestions, and input on the prayer room as we begin this very important process. If you want to be a part of this, Please see myself or Gary Locker or Dixie Moore.

We want everyone in this church to want to use the prayer room. Because we firmly believe that PRAYER CHANGES THINGS.

Let's read Matthew.

We commonly refer to this prayer as the Lord's Prayer because Jesus gave it to us. Many of us know this prayer by heart because we have said it so often. But what happens sometimes, when we think we know something so well, is we forget to really listen to what we are saying and we forget the power in this prayer. Today we are going to take a look at this prayer with the help of Max Lucado and a book he wrote called, "*The Great House of God.*" In it he refers to this prayer as a blueprint of a house because the greatest desire of God is to be your dwelling place – the home of your heart.

John 14:23 says, "If my people love me, they will obey my teaching. My father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them."

King David said it this way: I'm asking Yahweh for one thing, only one thing: to live with him in his house my whole life long. I'll contemplate his beauty, I'll study at his feet. That's the only quiet secure place in a noisy world. (Ps. 27:4-5 MSG)

The Lord's Prayer is a floor plan of the house of God: a step-by-step description of how God meets our needs when we dwell in him. Here we will find protection, instruction, forgiveness and provision all under God's roof. The trick to learning to find all of this, is learning to dwell in the house of God. Not just stop by and visit or drop in for a meal but truly dwell in it.

Recently as many of you know, I went on vacation. My sister and I went to Chicago. We had a wonderful time as we always do when we are together. However, we would

both tell you that even though we enjoy these times together and value time away from other responsibilities, it is always good to get back home. Home to our own bed, our own surroundings. It is reassuring to be back around what is familiar and comforting.

Just as a physical home is comforting for our bodies so a spiritual home is comforting for our soul.

And though I may be miles from my physical home, I am always just one step, one thought away from my spiritual home no matter where I am or what time it is.

Let's take a look at this spiritual home,  
     this model for prayer, this model for living.

Because these words do more than tell us what to say to God,  
     they tell us how to exist with God.

However because this house is so great, this prayer is so powerful, I will not be able to cover all the terrain in one sermon – so we are just going to cover the first few lines and let God reveal himself to us.

### **Our first stop will be the living room.**

When I was a little girl, I could most usually find my dad in the living room sitting in his chair. In this room there was a family picture. You could find each of us kids in the picture with our dad hung up for everyone to see.

That's because dad was proud of the fact that he was our father and we were his kids.

If you look in God's living room, you will find your picture with your father here as well. Hung up for everyone to see.

The reason is because God is proud to be your Father.

Of all God's names, Father is his favorite.

While on earth Jesus called God, Abba, Father over 200 times.

That doesn't seem like a big deal to us today because we say, "Our Father," without even thinking.

But in Jesus day, you didn't do that. No one referred to God as Father.

So the words, "Our Father" are significant because they remind us that we are part of God's family.

You see when you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, God not only forgives your sins, promises you eternal life, but he adopts you as one of the family.

It would have been enough if God just cleansed our name, but he does more.

He gives us his name.

It would be enough if God just set us free, but he does more.

He takes us home.

Now I know that not everyone had a great relationship with their father and so this concept may be hard to understand.

I have shared with you before that I loved my father dearly, but our relationship was not a great one for various reasons.

And often when I think of how unconditionally God loves me, I have to relate that to my mom in order to fully understand it.

However, my heavenly Father is not my earthly father.

The Bible tells me in Romans 8 and again in Galatians 4 that I have received a spirit of adoption as a child of God through what Jesus Christ has done for me and that I may now cry out, “Abba, Father.”

The key word there is received. I received this as a gift from God.

You received this as a gift from God.

We didn’t earn it and so we can’t lose it.

God loves us and wants each one of us to be a part of his family so much that he gave up his own Son to assure our place in his family.

Our Abba, Dad, Father, will never turn away from us or close the doors to the living room.

When the world is closing in on you, others have hurt you with their words, or you just need to feel loved, step into the living room and call on your Abba.

**Next we need to take a look at the foundation of our house.**

If you ask Keith Lavy, our resident contractor, or any builder, they will tell you that you must have a good foundation. Most anything can be done if you have a good foundation.

Our foundation is built upon one little word. IS

We say ART but that word really means IS.

Our Father, who IS...

Not who was or will be, not our God who could be or should be.

But our God who IS – present tense.

You see it doesn’t matter how great your achievements are or how impressive your credentials.

The key question of life is not, “How strong am I?” but rather,  
“How strong is God?”

We need to focus on God’s strength, God’s nature.

You will see this over and over again in the Bible:

God calls Moses and Moses points out how ill equipped he is.

God calls Jeremiah and Jeremiah points out how young he is.

God calls David and everyone points out that he is just a young shepherd boy.

We do the same don’t we?

God calls us and we point out that we can’t because we are too young or old, or poor, or uneducated or whatever our reason might be.

The Bible reminds us that God is our loving Father and that he meets us at every crossroad in our life no matter what it might be.

We are weak, but God is strong. Strong enough to be for us - whatever we are needing for whatever he is calling.

We see this when we look at the different names that God is referred to in the Bible.

Let me give you a few examples:

Jacob in Genesis 48 refers to God as Jehovah-raah-caring Shepherd, when he said, “Like a Shepherd, God has led me all my life.”

Abraham knows God better as Jehovah-jireh-the Lord who provides because God provided a promised land for him and his family, he provided a son to him in his old age and he provided a ram in the bushes when he was to offer his son Issac to God.

Then there is Jehovah-shalom – the God of peace for Gideon and David.

Jehovah-rophe, the God who heals for the lepers.

The list goes on but you get the idea.

What are you needing today: healing, caring, guidance, protection, peace – look in your Bible, you will find that God IS each of those and more.

Most importantly our foundation is secure and solid because God IS.

**Next we head upstairs – clear to the top - to the observatory.**

I love it up here. It reminds me of when I was younger and would lay on the ground and look up at all the stars and try to count them and realize there was no way, or when I was a little older and stood by the ocean and watched the waves crash on the shore, looked out at the horizon and stood in awe at the power of God.

It also brings the words of Isaiah to life for me when he says in chapter 55: “My thoughts are not like your thoughts. Your ways are not like my ways. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than yours.”

Did you hear the word *like* when I read that?

Not only are our thoughts not God’s thoughts, they aren’t even like them.

He has a different agenda, he operates on a different level,  
he lives on another plane.

**Our Father, who is in heaven...**

For me this answers all those unanswerable questions I have and I imagine you do to.

Questions that betray our lack of understanding.

How can God be everywhere at one time?

How can God hear everyone’s prayers at once?

How can God be the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

With God all things are possible. What limits us, doesn’t limit God, what controls us, doesn’t control God, what troubles us, doesn’t trouble God.

My oldest brother was hit in the mouth by our horse when he was younger and because of that today he wears a partial for his front teeth. On occasion he will mess with my granddaughter Chloe and move his teeth in and out of place. Chloe was amazed that he could make his teeth move like that because she couldn’t. Now we know the truth and understand why he can do it. But because Chloe’s understanding was limited, she couldn’t figure it out.

Now let me ask you:

Is it possible that the God who hung the stars in space, could guide your life?

Can the God who ignites the sun, light your path?

Could the God who cares enough to give the nightingale its beautiful voice, care enough about you to meet your needs?

When you think about all that God can do, it ought to energize your prayers.

After all, Nothing is impossible for God.

Still find that kind of love hard to believe?

That’s okay. Just because Chloe didn’t understand how my brother could remove his teeth from their sockets didn’t make it not so.

Just because we can’t imagine God caring for us so much he gives us beautiful sunsets, doesn’t make it not so.

His thoughts are higher than ours, his ways greater and every once in a while he even gives us a piece of heaven just to remind us.

**Next we enter the chapel, the prayer room if you will.**

The phrase for the chapel is “Hallowed by thy name.”

Hallowed means holy and holy means to separate or to cut.

To be hallowed means to be a cut above the norm, superior, extraordinary.

When we pray “be hallowed” we are asking God to do whatever it takes to be holy in our life.

To take up his rightful place on the throne of our life.

To be glorified, magnified.

Just as a ship sets its sights in a storm on the lighthouse -

By seeking God in the chapel, you set your sights on God, you focus on the one who is a cut above whatever storms life may bring you.

In the middle of my house we have a prayer room. With the way our house is designed, we walk through this room a lot. You have to pass through it to get to the back of the house. So it is rather busy and noisy a lot when you are in there. One day as I was in there praying, I thought to myself, “Maybe we need to move this to a quieter more secluded room in the house.” And I could hear God saying to me, “Life is hectic and busy and noisy and in the midst of all of that you need to get yourself still, focus on me and pray. You don’t wait for everything to be perfect and then pray. What would you need me for then. You pray in the midst of life.”

Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still and know that I am God.”

This verse contains a command and a promise.

The command – Be still – Close your mouth, bend your knees, pray.

The promise – You will know that I am God.

Visit the chapel often and you can’t help but know that God is God, and you can’t help but confess “Hallowed be thy name.”

We have only begun to explore this great house of God and already I hope that you know that God is waiting in eager expectation and hope that you come home, you make this your dwelling place, you live in him.

We could go on to look at “His kingdom come” and see that after just declaring God holy, we now invite him to come walk around in our world- be present in my heart, my marriage, my workplace, my school.

Be Lord of my worries, my fears, my doubts.

This is not feeble request, it is a bold appeal for God to occupy every corner of your life.

After all you are his child and you have the privilege to make your requests known.

Hebrews tells us to come boldly to the throne of God and stay there to receive his mercy and to find grace to help us in our time of need.

Just remember that when you pray for the kingdom to come, it comes.

In the study we’ll learn about “Thy will be done.”

Here we pray learning what God desires, his heart, his passions.

He won’t hide it from us.

After all didn’t he send his Son, didn’t he give us his holy Word,

didn't he send his Holy Spirit?  
 We learn God's will by spending time with him, having a personal relationship with him,  
 by taking up residence in his house every single day.

God wants us to know his will so that it can be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**In the Great House of God is a furnace.**

The furnace affects the whole house, and your prayers fuel the furnace.

**The power of prayer does not depend on the one who makes the prayer, but on the one who hears the prayer.**

When you speak, Jesus hears.

And when Jesus hears, thunder falls.

And when thunder falls, the world is changed.

All because someone prayed.

Let's pray now.

**Our Father**

Thank you for adopting me into your family.

**Who is**

Thank you, my Lord,

For being a God of the present tense:

My Jehovah-jirah (the God who provides)

My Jehovah-raah (the caring Shepherd)

My Jehovah-shalom (the God of peace)

My Jehovah-rophe (the God who heals)

**In heaven,**

Your workshop of creation reminds me: If you can make the skies, you can make sense  
 out of my struggles.

**Hallowed be thy name**

Be holy in my heart.

You are a cut above all else.

Enable me to set my sights on you.

**Thy kingdom come,**

Come kingdom!

Be present, Lord Jesus!

Have free reign in every corner of my life.

**Thy will be done,**

Reveal your heart to me, dear Father.

Show me my role in your passion.

Grant me guidance in my decisions.

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

Thank you that you silence heaven to hear my prayer.

On my heart are the ones you love.

I pray for each of them now.

And Lord may we continue to dwell in your great house and seek your face everyday.

AMEN.

References: The Bible, The NIB Commentary, The Great House of God by  
Max Lucado.