

7th June 2020 6 pm Healing and Refreshing – partial transcription

Meditation by Lynda Howells

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Meditation

[Lynda Howells:]

Prayer: why? Praying brings us into relationship with God.

Think about Jesus. When He lived on this earth, His ministry was underpinned by a lifestyle of prayer. So if that is how Jesus lived, who was perfect without sin, the Son of God, how can we live any other way, if we want to serve our Lord, here and now? The disciples sensed the Father-Son relationship Jesus had with God, which sustained Him through everything. He was totally reliant on God, for daily strength and direction. He relied on the Father's presence and power being there for Him. And in Luke 11 verses 1 to 4, we read that watching Jesus pray was such a new revelation for the disciples that they asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." As I said before, the prayer life of Jesus revealed His absolute dependency on His Father for everything. And it is this Father-son/daughter relationship that God wants for us. Jesus gave us such a gift when He gave us this prayer.

We're so used to saying the Lord's Prayer, but now I suggest we read it slowly as a prayer. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. Close your eyes. But that's entirely up to you. The purpose of this is for you to relax.

Let your imagination take you to a special or favourite place for you to be there with your Heavenly Father. Think about your breathing – slowly. Breathe in God's love for you. And breathe out all that robs you of the joy of receiving God's love and His acceptance of you. Let God's Holy Spirit bring healing to you to free you from painful memories, physical pains, emotional hurts, to free you from anything you know is not of our Lord. God knows your needs.

So we read:

Our Father, who art in Heaven.

Thank You God that You long for us to call You 'Father'.
We are all your children.
We can come to You knowing that You are perfect.
You love us and long for us to love You.
You are omnipotent, holy.
The world is yours.
Yet, You want, You choose to be our Father,

Hallowed be your name.

So often, all we hear is your precious name used as a swear word.
This hurts so much.
Help us to be proactive, where possible, and to pray against this blasphemy. And to pray for those using your name this way. We need to show honour and glory in our lives.

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Are we bold enough to take up this challenge?
To help build the kingdom now,
To be obedient to do the will of God,
Just as Jesus did, and still does, praying for us in Heaven.
Are we willing for God's will to be done in our lives?
To serve as Jesus serves
On His terms, not our own.

Give us today our daily bread.

When we say 'us' what do we think or mean?
Ourselves?
Our families?
Or do we take bold, trusting steps and include those who are starving,
those without choice or hope,
those who have no one to pray for them.

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

Where does our forgiveness for others start and finish?
This goes beyond personal relationships to world situations, governments,
the unfairness of life for so many.
Should this lead us to pray for unity, respect for each other?
For our Father's unconditional love to flourish,
to free us to live and work to the well-being of all?

Lead us not into temptation.

Can I pray "lead not into temptation" if I choose to remain or put myself
into situations where I'm likely to be tempted?
Search me, Lord, and know my heart. I pray.

Deliver us from evil.

We are in a spiritual battle.
We need to recognise this and arm ourselves with the Word of God, and
prayer.
Every day
to deal with the evil one

For Thine is the Kingdom, ...

Do I live as if I'm living in God's kingdom?
Am I an obedient, loyal subject of the King?

... the power ...

Do I live worried, anxious and fearful?
And does my life reflect my trust in God's power to always take care of me
and guide and carry me through the good and the bad times?

... and the glory, ...

My actions, my intentions, whose glory is most important to me and all I
do?
My glory or God's glory?

... forever and ever.

What effect, if any, do these words have on me?
Are they a comfort, assurance, bringing freedom from worry and anxiety, a Heavenly Father's perfect promise and commitment to each one of us?

Amen.

Commit this prayer to yourselves and have the freedom to personalise and make it your own.

Amen.

Prayer activity

Our prayer activity tonight is looking at a different way to pray. There will be a picture of some blocks of wood, first, to look at.



Normally in church you would be able to pick the pieces up. So in your imagination, pick up a piece of wood. Try it in the hand that you don't write with.

What does it feel like?

Be careful of the sharp edges and the splinters.

And also the rusty nails that have left holes in the wood.

What does this remind you of?

We think of the rough wooden cross used at Jesus' crucifixion.

The next picture is of different-sized wooden holding crosses.



Once again, imagine picking one of these crosses up and placing it in the hand that you write with.

How does it feel?
Feel the smoothness,
the way it's cut to fit your hand.
Whatever the size, the wood fits in your hand to hold with ease.
It's comfortable,
no sharp bits here.
It feels peaceful.

This is what Jesus did in dying and His resurrection.
He took all of our sin on His shoulders to show the wealth of God's Love and Grace.
He fulfilled the promise of His Heavenly Father.
He made everything new.
And yet gave us the promise of eternal life, to all who believe in Him.
Jesus came to obtain for us all things that are good for us.

The holding cross is not decorated or ornamental.
It is a true reminder of the harsh wood of the cross.
Sometimes it's enough simply to hold the cross silently.
This in itself is a prayer.
Maybe you have no words anyway.
And it's through your sense of touch
that you are expressing your love of Christ, and your need for Him.

Holding a cross can also be a way of praying for others, especially those who are suffering,

Some find it helpful to say that Jesus prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

or whichever version of that prayer that you know.

Sometimes repeating a well-known verse of scripture that means a lot to you, or a prayer that you can recite without the words in front of you.

So on the one hand, we have the reminder of the rough wood and in the other the smooth wood of the holding cross to give us comfort, for whatever reason.

I have shared with our home group and the Mothers' Union groups we have taken this service to within our Diocese of Coventry, that I sometimes find holding the little cross, even under my pillow if I can't sleep, or if I've woken during the night, I find it helps to use it as a time of prayer. And I had this thought, that we all have times when we don't sleep very well, so we could be holding our crosses and praying in the middle of the night. Now there's an amazing thought, let's use the power of prayer!

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]