Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at cdanielwilson@gmail.com. **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

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**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the service: #123

Bro & Sis: **Our only Hope is found in the Lord our God, the Creator and Sustainer of all Things & Saviour of those who trust in Him!**

Grace be yours in abundance, with Mercy and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let’s sing an opening Song of Praise Ps #171 “Immortal, Invisible, God only wise”

***Profession of faith HC Q&A 26 & 28***

Song of hope and **faith #447** “A debtor to mercy alone”

Congregational prayer

**Readings: Matthew 7 + LD 46**

Tithes and additional free-will offerings (deacons)

Song #279 “How deep the Father’s love for us”

**Sermon text: Matthew 6:5-15 Sermon title: Our Father in Heaven**

Song of Response: #168 “My God How wonderful thou art”

May God the Father bless you and keep you, May God the Son turn His face toward you & be gracious to you, may the Holy Spirit lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace! Amen.

Doxology: #531 “To Him who sits upon the Throne”

# Evening Sermon: “The Trustworthy Father” Heidelberg Cat.#55 - LD#46

Text: Matthew 6:5-15 Reading: Matthew 7:7-11, LD46,

**Introduction:**  Children, I am sure that you all know who the dad is in your family, right? Do you treat just anyone as your dad? Probably Not! Right?

So, Imagine this… After the morning service, one Sunday, Mr. Jae Kim and his wife Jinny go to get a coffee, and they are talking to people, and slowly, one by one, ALL 40-70 children who are here come up and look at Mr. Jae and say, **“Dad, when are we going home?**” At first, Mr. Jae would probably laugh, or look around and think that you are talking to someone else. If you all kept coming back to him and asking him for the keys to the car. He would get really confused. He would try to take each of you to your real Dad. But then when dozens of children try to buckle up in the backseat of his car to go home, he would probably begin to get a little frustrated or even angry! He would start saying, “It was funny at first, but it isn’t funny now. I am NOT your Dad! No, You can’t all come home with us! Go find your family! Seriously! Go!” And HE would be right! He does not owe you ANYTHING! He doesn’t need to feed you or care for you, because you are NOT His children.

You see, there are special privileges which only apply in YOUR family – between each of you children and your Dad! You can’t just pick some random man in the church and call him Dad! I seriously discourage that!  ***The same thing is true of Prayer!*** Only the Children of God can call Him their Father! Only those who have been adopted into God’s family have that relationship of dependence and responsibility and trust!

(**Review**) It has been nearly a month since we were last in our Heidelberg series! We have finished our look at God’s Law, and we began looking at the topic of prayer based on Romans 8. We saw that the Holy Spirit helps us in prayer when we are weak. He even intercedes for us, sharing the burdens which we bear. And best of all, the Spirit prays perfectly according to the will of God! *And God hears those prayers and answers!* That gives us great boldness and confidence to pray, even when we aren’t sure what to pray for – because God knows, and the Spirit is interceding too… ***so, we can simply trust God and pray – knowing that He will answer with exactly what is best!***

This evening, WE move on to the Lord’s Prayer, particularly the first line, “Our Father in heaven.” Officially, that is our text, and we will be looking at these other readings as a part of understanding that first line of the Lord’s Prayer. ***As we will learn: Calling God ‘Our Father in Heaven’ teaches us to Trust and Respect Him in Prayer.***

 We will explore this phrase under 3 headings:

1. **God the Father of Whom?**
2. **God is a Good Father**
3. **God is Our *Heavenly* Father**

*Let’s begin with:*

# God the Father of Whom? (REPEAT)

*When we consider that the Lord’s prayer begins by calling God “Our Father” – we need to stop and ask – “Who can say that?!”* Too often, people assume that it is a good thing for *ANYONE* to pray the Lord’s Prayer…

Even at the funerals of Non-Christians, you can often find people saying this prayer, with little to no understanding of what they are doing. ***Is that good or bad?*** Think about it… *It is a somewhat tricky question, really!*

On the one hand, we want to encourage people who don’t know God to come to Him in Faith, and to pray to God. But on the other hand, to publically encourage the children of Satan to call God their Father *apart from a knowledge of Christ* – is actually more of an insult to God!

 This is what we talked about in the introduction. This would never work in everyday life. If my 5 children went to Mr. Jae Kim and said, “When are we going home Dad?” He might laugh. But if they persisted, and got in his car – it wouldn’t be funny anymore. He would begin to be annoyed. “You aren’t my children! I don’t owe you anything, I don’t have to feed you!” And He would be completely right! ***AND the same is true of God!***

Now, *Please* don’t misunderstand me…

You and I are no better than anyone else, ***but*** the good news of salvation is that God provided a way for sinful rebels like us to become HIS children. ***As Paul puts it in Ephesians 1:*** *In love, He [God] predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ!* We could only EVER have the right to call God Our Father – **IN CHRIST!** **You see**, when we repent of our sins by the Power of God’s Spirit, and put our faith in Christ… We are trusting that He lived to provide the perfect righteousness that we need, and then He died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sin. ***AS WE TURN TO CHRIST AND BELIEVE IN HIM AS OUR SAVIOR,* *at that moment, we experience the Great Exchange!*** Our Sin is placed on Christ, and His perfect righteousness is placed on us! Which means that when God looks at each one of us, or hears our prayers – All He sees is the perfection of the Son of God! ***Therefore, God accepts us AS HIS CHILDREN!!*** Therefore, only in Christ, do we have that right to call God our Father!

 **But that isn’t all that we learn in those words “Our Father”…**

That phrase is PLURAL, Not Singular!

 When Jesus taught His disciples to pray ((and therefore, gave us ALL a pattern for Prayer…)) He very particularly chose to put the prayer in the PLURAL. *It is not, My Father in Heaven, and give me… NO!!*

**Every personal pronoun referring to humans in that prayer is PLURAL!**

So, Jesus is basically saying, “If you want to know how to pray, here is an outline/a form for you to follow – *and you have to do it together and FOR each other:* pray **OUR** Father, Give **us**, Forgive **us**, as **we** forgive **our** debtors, lead **us** not, but deliver **us**…” The emphasis is all on the people of God praying as the Church, assembled to pray together, and even when you aren’t together – *you must never forget that you are a PART of the CHURCH!!*

Even when you pray this prayer privately, you are NEVER to begin to think that you, yourself, your own family is a good enough church! This is yet another of the hundreds of references in the Bible **to the fact that we need to BE Together in Prayer/Church**, and we need to be *Together focused* in the way we pray! Not only praying for Me, myself and Mine – but Praying for US, Others and Ours! We do so Recognizing that God is not just MY Father, but OUR Father – and Trusting Him to provide!

*And that brings us to our SECOND point:*

# God is a Good Father (REPEAT)

**There are two major reasons why God encourages us to call Him Father:**

1. **Because it reminds us that we are God’s Children**
2. **Because it reminds us that God will love/provide for us like a Loving Father!**

When we open prayer by directing ourselves to Our FATHER – we should remember the glorious truth of our Adoption and Sonship! We are the children of God, even HIS HEIRS! Heirs of Salvation and eternal life! And as Paul said in ***Romans 8***, If God did not Spare HIS OWN Son, but Gave Him up for us all, How will He not also freely give us all things? When you remember that you belong to God as His Child, then you have EVERY Reason to Pray, and EVERY Reason to Trust!

 When I was little, my Father would tell me to jump to him from the playground – and while I was scared at first… I very quickly learned that when Dad says come, Trust Me! I could trust Him! And eventually, I grew to trust Dad so much I would jump before he told me to! **That Child-like faith is what we ought to have in Regard to our God!** *TRUST Him to give you what you need and WHEN you need it!*

*And that brings us to that second idea***, not only are we reminded that we are God’s Children, but God WILL provide for us like a Loving Father!**

If you have your Bibles open, Flip back over to Matthew 7 – ***In vs.7-11, READ it Again quickly for yourselves***

God commands us to ASK, so that we might receive. For everyone who asks, receives and for all who knock, the door will be opened! Sometimes little children forget to ask for things, don’t they? Instead of coming and asking for Morning Tea, they come whining that they are hungry and they didn’t get anything since breakfast… I have reminded my children before… *Wow, that much be hard! I am sorry to hear that. Is there a question coming? Did you want to ask me something?* For as soon as they ask me, I will answer – and if they really need some food, I will do my best to give them what they need!

 In these verses, Jesus points out that just as earthly parents give good things to their children… HOW MUCH MORE Should we expect good things from our Father in Heaven!! We only have to come to Him and ask!

 He is an infinitely better Father than any father on Earth! In fact, every human father pales in comparison to God*. For God is gracious and loving, slow to anger and abounding in covenant love! He does not harbor His anger forever, nor does He treat us as our sins deserve… but instead He removes our Sins, and covers us with His love and compassion* – providing for all of our needs in the best way possible! **THAT IS AN EPIC Father!**

 *And since HE is the one to whom we pray…we should have a fully dependent Trust in HIM!*

God will never pull the old stone for bread switch “Oh you want some bread, here is a rock” AND neither will God do the classic fish/snake swap – Instead of Fish and chips, you get Snake and chips.

Our Father will NEVER do that to us… and yet I dare say, those of you who have gone or are going *through hard times* *have no doubt wondered* ***on*** ***occasion***! “God, I asked you for the money to pay my bills, and the car broke down and a new bill arrived – What kind of fish is this? It bites and stings!”

In those moments we need to remember **who our God is** – that He is our Heavenly Father whose ways are infinitely higher than our ways, and He has promised not only to give us good things, but EVERYTHING that we need! As Vicar Nathaniel put it so helpfully last Sunday morning … God doesn’t always explain what He is doing in our lives! Adam and Eve probably thought the flaming sword was a punishment – not knowing that God was protecting them from a fate worse than death! The same is true for you and me! God doesn’t explain His methods!

So when you pray, you have to keep that humble, trusting attitude of a child – “*God, I know that it might not be the best time, but I would really like to solve this debt issue, this marriage problem, this health struggle… But if it isn’t your timing or if you have some better purpose for me, then I will take whatever you give me, and… Thank you!”*

 THAT is the Heart of Praying to Our Father in Heaven – the Attitude of the Children of God – the hope that God will do what is best *at the right time* for our good and His glory!

*And that brings us to our THIRD point:*

# God is Our *HEAVENLY* Father (REPEAT)

**This final idea tells us more than simply our Father’s *location*… It explains how we should approach him!**

 The whole Idea of God as our Father – brings us so close to God… IT brings this hope/faith/trust in His provision, nearness and care! **And yet, this Heavenly location – clarifies some things for us**. This isn’t your Earthly Father… This is your HEAVENLY Father to whom you speak in Prayer. Which means that you ought to be respectful!

Sometimes, children can be downright rude to their parents! Isn’t that right, Parents?! But it should not be… How much LESS should we be rude to our Father IN HEAVEN?! We need to realize that He is not like us. He is not to be trifled with. He is someone who demands and deserves your FULLEST Respect and Reverence!

I remember talking to someone once, who told me that his prayer times were rather lively… that he sometimes even cursed in prayer. And I asked Him what He meant, and He described a prayer relationship which scared me. He spoke very crassly and harshly to God… and I tried to warn him about giving God the respect that He deserves… ***I mean…*** ***We are CLOSE to God, but HE IS STILL GOD!!***

As Solomon warned in Ecclesiastes 5: Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. ***Therefore let your words be few.***

You see… THERE ARE 2 sides to this address to God.

1. **On the one hand, you are encouraged to call Him FATHER!!**

WOW!! What an Amazing privilege for any human sinner! God as your Father!

1. **But on the other hand, we get this additional reminder, that HE IS IN HEAVEN!**

This is not your buddy, chum or pal! This isn’t even your earthly Dad or Granddad! This is the Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth who dwells in Heavenly Glory! Enthroned on the praises of His people… When you keep that in mind, it helps you keep the right attitude and tone in your prayers!

As we have seen many times recently… You and I don’t know everything! WE are not in Control. God is! And God is ABSOLUTELY Trustworthy! HE is an infinitely caring Father!

And when we come to Him, in hope, faith = trusting Him to provide what is best for us… He does!

And when we don’t get what we want… or even what we think we need – we not only trust Him as Father, but we also respect Him as our God!

 We respect Him and trust Him by continuing to pray, continuing to be patient and gracious as we await HIS perfect answer.

***We can do that because we KNOW*** ***that His plan and will are infinitely higher and better than ours!***

 So, Pray! And Trust Your Father! **AMEN.**