

Prayers of the People

By Rick Ritchie

OUR FATHER - You are Jesus' Father by nature, and our Father by adoption. In Creation alone we are given many things to thank you for. You have given us spirit and intellect like angels but also bodies like other earthly creatures. You have given us far-reaching senses that can tell us about the universe beyond our little planet. You have given us memory and imagination, connecting us to past and future. Many of these things you give to all people, but you did not stop there. We thank you that in baptism you made us your own. Having a common Father, we are a family. We begin our petitions remembering who you are, and who you have made us to be. Lord, in your mercy...

WHO ART IN HEAVEN - You are not just a nature god like those that people worshipped long ago. Even at its most chaotic, nature is under your power. When it ceases to be hospitable to us, you remind us that our destiny is in heaven. We thank you that you give us hope beyond this life. Lord, in your mercy...

HALLOWED BY THY NAME - We know that your name is holy, but we pray that we would hold it as holy. Some of us misuse your name to curse, swear, practice magic, lie, or deceive. Some of us forget to use it at all, to call upon you in every need, to pray to you, to praise you, to give thanks to you. This is a matter of the heart and we pray for hearts that would wish to use your name well. Lord, in your mercy...

THY KINGDOM COME - Your kingdom advances. We often miss it. We pray that we would not be downcast when the kingdom does not take the shape we expected, but that we would trust that it is hidden in you, to be revealed fully later. Lord, in your mercy...

THY WILL BE DONE - It is not your will that any should perish, but that all would come to a knowledge of the truth, the truth of free salvation in your Son, who died for us. We pray that your will would be done among us. That we would cling to this truth. That we would share this truth. Lord, in your mercy...

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN - Surely in heaven, your kingdom is visible, and your will is always done. We pray that among us, people would find a foretaste of heaven. Lord, in your mercy...

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD - You give daily bread to all, but we pray in this petition that you would make us newly aware of it, and give us thankful hearts so we can enjoy it more. Lord, in your mercy...

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES - If you held our sins against us, you would not hear our prayers, and all our time just spent in prayer would be time spent in vain. Instead, we ask you to remember your Son's obedience and not our sins. We ask for His sake that you grant our petitions. And make us bold sinners, so that in the coming weeks, we continue to ask things of you even when our sins are before us. Lord, in your mercy...

AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US - When our debts before you became incalculably great, you did not arrange a debt reduction plan or give us a stimulus package, but you wrote off our debt and gave us an inheritance. Help us to see forgiving those who have wronged us in another light. When they seek our mercy, let us rejoice in our inheritance together. Remind us that even if they continue to fail us, you can come through for us and make it good. Lord, in your mercy...

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION - Temptations to leave the faith may arise. But you have promised that we would not be tempted beyond our control. So we ask that you keep us from being put to the test. And we ask that when temptation does arise, that we would be mindful that you provide ways of escape. Lord, in your mercy...

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL - The evil one is an accuser. We pray that we would not merely be delivered from his power to harm our bodies, but that we would be shielded from his accusations through the shield of faith. If we are ever to be dull of hearing, make us dull to hearing accusations from our enemy. But let our ears ring with the sound of the Gospel. That you gave your only Son for us that we who believe would not perish but have eternal life. Lord, in your mercy...

And now hear us as we say these petitions together, as your Son taught us to pray...