

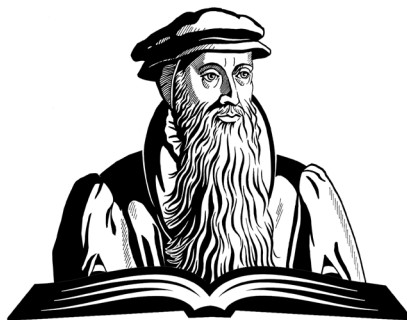
VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

The Lord's Prayer

by Rev. Gerald Procee

Lecture #10

Amen



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Rev. Gerald Procee (1953–2024) was a minister of the Gospel, who faithfully served the congregations of Opperdoes, Hamilton, Middelharnis, and Dundas.

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

The Lord's Prayer

14 Lectures

by Rev. Gerald Procee

1. Introduction: Biblical Foundation and Course Outline
2. Our Father Which Art in Heaven
3. Hallowed Be Thy Name
4. Thy Kingdom Come
5. Thy Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven
6. Give us This Day Our Daily Bread
7. Forgive Us Our Debts, as We Forgive Our Debtors
8. Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil
9. For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory
10. Amen
11. Practical Issues Regarding Prayer
12. Prayer Life of Pastors
13. Difficulties in Prayer
14. Blessings of Prayer



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The Lord's Prayer

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Lecture #10

Amen

Welcome to this lecture number 10 in the series on the Beauty of Prayer. Now, we wish to consider the last word of this prayer the Lord Jesus teaches us. It's the word "Amen." After the Lord Jesus has taught us to plead upon God's kingdom, upon God's power and glory and that He was to receive this forever and ever, after we have come to the end of our prayers and laid all our petitions before the Lord and have sought the Lord and have poured out our heart before Him, then we conclude the prayer by saying "Amen." That's actually a very glorious and most comforting end to this prayer, the word "Amen."

Some people think that "amen" simply means it's the end, the end of our prayer. Now we can open our eyes again, for now prayer is done. That's not the meaning of the word "amen." Amen is actually a beautiful word. It comes from the Hebrew. It's actually a Hebrew word that means "this shall be truly sure and certain." In the setting of prayer, it means that after we have laid our needs before God, we may be certain that God shall hear our prayers.

The Lord promises in His Word that He hears prayer. He is a God Who delights to hear the humble prayers of His people, and He will do so. When we pray in agreement to His will and to His Word, the Lord tells us several times that He will hear our prayers. That word "amen" is a very strong conclusion to our prayers, "it will surely be so."

The Lord Jesus teaches us then in Matthew 7:7-8, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Do you also notice here that the Lord Jesus repeats the same truth six times, so that we would be convinced that God hears prayer.

We find beautiful examples of that in Scripture. For instance, Peter, he was kept in prison. Acts 12:5 tells us, "But prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him." So, they prayed for the release of Peter, and the Lord heard their prayers and set Peter at liberty. The angel of the Lord came in the temple in the prison and delivered Peter and brought him outside. Then Peter walked to the house where the early church was gathered, and he knocked at the front door. But then you see they didn't even believe he was there. He kept on knocking, and then finally they realized it was really Peter.

You see that the Lord answering prayer is not dependent on if we'll expect it or if we believe it. The answering of God to our prayers is not dependent on our feelings or upon our expectation. It depends on the faithfulness of God. The hearing of prayer depends on the power and the grace of God; and therefore, we are to pray, to pray without ceasing. You will not pray in vain. Lay all your petitions before the Lord, even if the Lord hears you differently than you expect or even hope.

To use again that example of the Apostle Peter, we know from early church history that later

on he went to Rome. There at Rome, eventually, he was put in prison and put to death. We may imagine that the church of those days had also prayed to the Lord [asking] if God would deliver Peter out of prison again, but God answered differently. God took Peter out of this life and led him to glory. God still took care of Peter but differently than people had maybe been praying for.

So at times, God can answer our prayers differently than we imagine. You will know that well-known example of the Apostle Paul who prayed earnestly three times that he would be delivered from a thorn in his flesh, a certain pain he had, a certain great urgent need. He must have thought, "If this thorn of the flesh would no longer be there, I could do even more for the Lord." The Lord did not grant him his request; the thorn remained. The Lord told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you." You see the Lord answered and heard but differently than Paul had expected or hoped for.

Because, you see, the Lord does that which is good, and He leads all His people to be strengthened or to be taken where He is in glory. He hears prayer. He does what is good for His people. He knows what they are praying for, and He will answer them. What a sure and a rich reality. What a rich blessing. That's why we may pray with expectation. We should take our prayers seriously. God takes our prayers more seriously than we do. So, we may conclude our prayer with that little word "amen," implying that God hears prayer.

That little word "amen" is a confession at the end of our prayer that we believe God will answer our prayers. At the same time, that little word "amen" is also a call to faith. As we express and pronounce that word "amen," it's a call to us to have trust and confidence in the Lord that He will hear. He will lead us, and we will have to fear no evil for He will undertake for us. That little word "amen" is a call to trust in God.

Now how is it with us? Do we pray in faith? Do we exercise true faith? This word "amen" is a call that we examine ourselves if we lean upon the Lord by trust and confidence. It pleases the Lord to deal with His people in the way of His promises, and those promises are a call to faith, to believe, to trust in the Lord.

So the Lord deals with us in the way of faith. Faith is important. There is much faith that is not true faith. That's not biblical saving faith. There is also false faith. There are people who call themselves Christians, who give the impression that they also trust in the Lord, but they are false believers.

In which way can we recognize false faith? False faith is closely related to idolatry. Idolatry is a reality whereby we exchange the true God for an idol. Now that can be literally an idol. It can be an image. It used to happen a lot. It still happens in certain religions that they worship idols. Paul speaks about that in Romans 1:25, about the wicked "who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

Also, in our lives, we can have idols. Although we may not bow down in front of images, still we can have idols. We can believe in certain matters, trust in certain matters, and we expect them to give us happiness and joy. Some people trust in sexuality. Some people trust in money. Some people are their own idol. They elevate themselves. They are impressed about themselves. They think that they are so very important, and then you make yourself an idol. The Apostle Paul even says that some people made their belly an idol because they only think about eating and drinking and enjoying things, but that's all sinful.

It can also be that people invent their own view of God and that they remove all biblical attributes of God that they don't like. So they come up with a god of their own liking. There are quite a few people now who think that God is just loving, and He is condoning iniquity, and He only does nice things, and He is only there to bless us and after this life to take us into heaven. But

that's a warped view of God: a God Who is only love, and Who never punishes sin, Who never bothers people. That's a wrong view of God. Now this kind of idolatry occurs frequently, and it's hard to detect because people also speak about God and about Christ, but it's not true faith. It's counterfeit faith. It's idolatry. They don't have the biblical view of God, but they have this self-made view of Who God is.

So false faith is closely related to idolatry. A false faith is also delusional. It deceives us. It undermines our ability to think correctly about God. Our understanding will be darkened. Romans 1:21–22, “They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” So Paul writes in Second Corinthians 4:4, “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” These are people who followed the god of this world, an idol or a man-centered view of life, but the result is that they are blinded. They follow deceit, and so their rational abilities are compromised. We can no longer discern truth from error. We become blinded, and everyone believes in something, but many people believe a lie, and that lie blinds them. It hardens them because false faith is delusional.

False faith is also a deliberate commitment to evil. Man desires that which is evil; that is displayed, and the fact that men shy away from God's Truth, for instance, John 3:19, “light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” People don't want God. They hide away from Him. They don't seek Him at all. They have no delight in God's Word.

It's even addictive once you're on that pattern. This pattern increases, becomes worse with a person. It becomes a deliberate commitment to evil. Then, they don't even want to listen to God anymore. It's rebellion. So, there are only two alternatives: genuine faith or defiant disobedience. So, this is the reality of false faith, and it's a characteristic of the natural man that people exchange the truth about God for a lie. It's captivating. It ruins our relationship to God. It destroys our soul, and it also ruins relationships with other people.

To be delivered from false faith and to learn to trust truly in God, we need God to save us. We need the Lord to enlighten our heart and mind. When His Spirit works in our hearts and we see how true God is and how faithful He is, that His Word is true, then you learn to truly trust in the Lord and then you truly learn to say “Amen” to God, and you say “Amen” to all His commandments and to the totality of His Word. So, you thirst for His presence in your heart and life, and that's something we need to learn: to live by this true faith that says “Amen” to God, that we trust in the living God.

So we must learn to exercise true faith, and that can be quite difficult. Maybe you find it difficult to always trust in God and have confidence in God. I hope you do not embrace an idol. I hope you do love the truth of God's Word, that you do not want to exercise some commitment to evil, and that you may know in your heart how the Lord has become too strong for you and that the Lord has given you the fear of His name in your heart. I hope that this is what you long for, what you live for. And it can then still be that you find it difficult to always trust in God and that you find it hard to always trust His promises by faith.

You see, you look at yourself. You see your shortcomings. You see your failures, and you also know that God is a Holy God. Over against your shortcomings, you see that God is a consuming fire. You can easily fear, even after you have received grace, saving grace; and then you can wonder, ‘Would there still be grace for a sinner like me?’ Maybe you're shaken to and fro. Maybe you're in turmoil. Look then to Jesus. Look unto Him. See how He deals with His disciples, who were so often going astray and were impatient and also full of unbelief.

See how the Lord Jesus deals with sinners in the gospels. They come to Him, and He sends none away. He says in Luke 19:10, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He declares [to] you in John 3:17, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." He longs for salvation. He had compassion upon the multitude because He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. He wept over impenitent Jerusalem that killed the prophets. He longed to gather them as a hen gathers her young ones. Look at the sufferings of Christ. He went through a life of hardships and misery, and He entered the most miserable death. In this all, we see in Jesus His [love for sinners]. His [love for sinners] is so great that He gave Himself. Don't think He will turn you down in anger when you flee to Him with all your failures, with your sins, with your shortcomings, with your unworthiness, with your struggles against unbelief and with all the weakness of your faith.

Come to Him. The Lord is gracious, and He receives such people. He is full of loving kindness. He offers Himself freely to you with all His ability to save and to bless you. He even says in the last verses of Scripture, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). See how the Lord invites you kindly in this prayer to expect all grace and all salvation from the Lord alone. He calls you. He sets out before you all your needs, the vital matters in your life, what you need to pray for. You may come to Him, begging for His mercy. You may confess your unworthiness, pleading His righteousness, and you may be encouraged and comforted that the Lord is willing to hear your prayers far above your own expectation. That is what you see set before you in this little word "amen." What a blessed comfort, what a glorious hope to look unto Him. You may say in the struggles of the father of that sick child in Mark 9:24, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

So, "amen" is a call to trust the Lord. It's a call to adore God. It's a call to thank Him for all His blessings and faithfulness; and only when we pray in agreement to His will can we truly say "Amen" after our prayer. He tells us to say "Amen" after we have prayed in a biblical manner, and that is prayer focused upon God's honor, focused upon the extension of His kingdom; and thereby we plead God's power, and we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. That is prayer in agreement to God's Word and to that prayer, the Lord tells His people to say "Amen."

So, "amen" is a call to trust in God. All who have been taught to pray by God's Spirit should persevere in such prayer, for God shall answer. Be encouraged. God is faithful in the Lord Jesus. Persevere in faith for the extension of God's kingdom. Continue in faith seeking God's honor. Continue to pray for those around you and for your church, for its members. Continue to pray worldwide for the church that's being persecuted. Pray that His glorious name may be exalted. Continue with this prayer because the days are evil. There is much confusion and deceit. There are many needs, but lay them all before the Lord and conclude your prayer with "amen," trusting that He will hear you because "amen" is a call to trust.

"Amen" is also a call to be truly thankful, that you realize all the benefits God has given you in the Lord Jesus Christ and be thankful. Because of this thankfulness, you may say "Amen" to your prayers, knowing that God is faithful to His cause. Consider the miracles wherefore you may be thankful: that the eternal God became flesh and dwelt among us, that He entered our lives that we may have eternal life. Think of all the expositions of the Lord Jesus revealed to us in the gospel, that we may meditate upon all this and the glorious fact that He conquered death, that He overcame corruption and earned life everlasting, that He promises to make all things new. What love does God show us in the glorious victory of Christ, that He purchased all these benefits.

What a blessing to know this salvation and that the Lord has provided us with teachers, with

ministers, and above all, with His own Holy Word. When we know the grace of God in our own life, realize the great privilege that Ezekiel 16 tells us. Those words have then be fulfilled in our lives. There the prophet uses the illustration of a newly born infant who is unwanted, cast away in the desert ready to die. That's how God saw you and me, "You were cast out into open field to the loathing of your person, in the day that you were born. And when I passed by you, and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live;' yea, I said unto you in your blood, 'Live'" (Ezekiel 16:5–6). God gave His Son to die in your place.

What a miracle. He has known you from before the foundation of the Earth. His Spirit has entered your heart. He has opened your eyes for the grace of Christ Jesus. He has given you a new purpose in your life. He delivered you from the slavery of the devil. You may know His love, the love of Christ in your heart. He did not give you up to your own wicked passions. He daily leads you. He gives you a clear conscience through faith in Christ. He is daily strengthening you in all your labors. He has given you to experience with communion with God. "You may be satisfied with the fatness of God's house and be made to drink of the river of his pleasures," Psalm 36:8. For all these reasons, give thanks to God, and you may add "amen" to that, knowing that it is certainly sure and true. He has always provided for you. Show true thankfulness.

How many answers to prayer has the Lord given you? How often have you cried out of the depths, and He heard you? Thank God that He is faithful. Even in times of affliction, has He not encouraged you? Second Corinthians 4:17, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." What a continual care of Christ that He is now at work preparing a place for you in the house of His Father and that He'd made sure that you will not be plucked out of His hand, that He will give you the victory. They will overcome by the blood of the Lamb. How we should give thanks to the Lord for all His goodness. That we should thank the Lord for His Word.

So, all these blessings flow forth from that word "amen." They are confirmed by the word "amen." It's thinking of all the blessings, and you say "Amen" to them. The word "amen" is a call to trust. It's a call to be thankful, to realize what God has done. This word "amen" is a call to adoration, to glorify God, to remember His loving kindness that although we are small and unworthy, that we may adore Him for all His goodness and His loving kindness. You see, then you become so small.

What Peter had in Luke 5:8, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He means to say 'Thou and I, we do not fit together. I'm so unworthy.' Like the Roman centurion in Matthew 8:8, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof," so we become small. So we must adore God, and then everything in your life must revolve around the glory of God's name. Then your life is not about your ease and pleasure, but it's about His honor. I am not important, Lord. Thy name is important. Thou art important.

How we need the help of the Holy Spirit to say this in self-denial that we would truly adore Him. He is worthy. It's not about me. It's about Thee, O Lord. You see the honor of God and man's salvation, they always come together because God saves to the glory of His name. So, when we say "Amen" at the end of our prayers, it's a call of adoration of this good-doing glorious God. Then once the final "Amen" shall sound, that will be in heaven, where all the redeemed will say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." We read in Revelation 5:12–14 that all were united in glorifying God, and they worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever, amen.