

**Lent**  
**March 13, 2019**

**“Our Father, who are in heaven, hallowed be thy name”**  
**Sermon Preached by Pastor Gary Ulrich**  
**American Lutheran Church of Sun City**

Thank you, Brian. A Testimony that bring feeling and insight and commitment and faith and strength as you call forth the face of God. God bless you.

I bring to you a lesson this evening; that lesson is from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, spoken by him. The words that I will meditate on is, as Jesus taught the disciples to pray as he was asked, “Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.” Oh, such wondrous words, but Jesus taught us more than words. If we look in our text, it says “Jesus told them to pray this way”, and Jesus then taught us more than mere words but the way and the form of which our prayers are to take. It came about that it is the Lord’s Prayer that we gathered from him, a teaching that has become a constant and necessary in Christian liturgy, prayer, and daily life. But as we feel and see and experience the whole Lenten theme in our personal journeys, as we witness and partake in our active confessions, as we open our hearts and proclaim our trust to meet our God face to face in prayer, Jesus Christ taught us to pray. So I believe we fast in prayer from the world’s outrages that try to distract us. We are refreshed and we repent as we draw close to God, person to person, person to God. Tonight we do express ourselves when we say, “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.” A marvelous teaching by our Lord, an exciting and complete faith-like walk, opening up ourselves to God the Father Almighty, our heart to heart, soul to soul, soul to glory commitment to the true God. Witness of faith and belief all in that statement, total submission, honor, praise, commitment to the God of all times, God’s promises that he gives us to the securities of life itself in our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.

Let us take a faith-walk now with Brian as he told his story. Oh, as he told his story, he knelt in holy presence, focused on the holy call to God, recognized, welcomed, acknowledged, opened his heart and refreshed his soul as he reached and was welcomed by God within the distractions of the world he was living in, as he entered a kingdom of holy recognition, joy, and security. Did you see and feel and were you refreshed by his walk of faith? Did you feel the excitement and the joy, not that he made it, but the presence of God with him? He was not only a faithful witness, but he called forth God to be with him, and God was there. In our Psalm, David, after recovery, delivered from some heathen oppression, praises God as ruler of the world, the defender of his people. He writes a poem, a song, a prayer as I have read. “I praise you,” he says enthusiastically, “praise you with all my heart, with the things I have around me.” David says, “I was awakened from earthly security again, to trust in you, O Lord.” A prayer opened his heart, bore his soul in songs of praise, in trust and commitment, in confession, in witness, and in submission to his Lord and God, Yahweh. To the only one God who loves and strengthens and fulfills promises, unfailing . . . unfailing.

And David bears witness. He writes with intensity. It flows with the tears and the beauty and the songs of his heart, proclaiming God’s glory and kingship over all, God’s power and God’s saving might. A song

of God's graciousness, divine call to the righteousness that he has given us to meet him face to face and to lead a God-fearing life. David summons to praise God as ruler, as creator, as Lord and ruler of the world, as a God that his people have a strength more than the greatest worldly power or distraction. Omniscient power, he is in and around and through all things. He hears us where we are, and he hears all of us as we cry forth. Omnipotent, great resources of power that helps us, that shields us, gives us joy, that creates the Father of the righteous people as he cares for us. And God's word is true, safe a secure – a God who listens, watches, and protects. A God of life now and forever. A God that looks favorably on those that love him and is trustworthy . . . trustworthy in all his promises. David worships and praises the one true God, Lord of Lords, eternal creator, preserver, redeemer, and Savior.

You have 2 testimonials. And now we talk about our prayer. We pray a lot times with words. We pray sometimes in cute rhymes. Oh, I use them: "Now I lay me down to sleep." "O give thanks unto the Lord." "Come Lord Jesus; be our guest." And "Rub a dub, dub; we thank Him for the grub." Nothing wrong with those as long as our heart is open, as long as we are meeting God face to face in a prayer. But it's always important for us to go back. Go back and say, "Jesus, teach us how to pray." The disciples asked him as we, in our Lenten season, come forth and ask him. Matthew and Luke report this asking, and Jesus teaches the form and the way of addressing, acknowledging, witnessing, confessing, petitioning - all in a few words. Jesus says prayer is not a habit. It's holy. It's not speaking out in flighty phrases to impress others and try to impress God and try to impress others that you can only address God this way or that way. It's a time when we come before God with our open heart, with our faith and trust as we call upon his name, that God hears and will act. A consciousness of our own personal story and life journey, knowing that we are human, lost and condemned creatures, purchased and won by His Son, Jesus Christ and we come to him in praise. We come before God with an open heart to see God face to face, not that we can behold his glory but to come before him, your image enlightened to see and feel the experience of God's glory. That's what it's about. Your faith blooms with praise and glory and commitment in belief and honor and dignity as you submit to God's rule in your heart. Righteous, righteous, righteous because Jesus Christ made us righteous in His suffering and death. And we can do this. We need no intermediary. We are before God, knees bent, heads bow, hearts pounce. The soul is refreshed. We are in His holy presence.

We say, "Our Father." Listen to how Jesus taught. Our Father – such deep meaning. That's a glorious title of adoption, that we are the children of God. We are his children, redeemed through the death and suffering of Jesus Christ, connected with God now as a family. The family is the holy saints in heaven, the angels, His confirmed people, His children of all nations, all kindreds, all tribes – tons and those that are life eternal living with him. We call this the family triumphant. And with the family, militant on earth, his children clothed in the righteousness of God's calling, of God's favor, the work and belief in the Gospel, the saving love of God through Jesus Christ. We are family! Put that all together, and we become God's kingdom. The kingdom is not a place, but it is God's rule in our heart.

And Jesus goes on and says, "Who art in heaven" - a realm separate from earth. Our God is Yahweh, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, eternal Lord of all Lords. Not any contrived idea of modern thought, an idle human-developed myth. Our God is real, one and only, omnipotent, all powerful, great resources of power. Our God hears his people. Our God is present. The Psalms say our God is in the heavens. Hallowed be thy name – God's word, God's promise and his name is holy. Exalted above all others. He is the Lord of Life, of death, of salvation, preservation, resurrection. You are here now. It is our holy time. God is in the midst of us. And now as we are here, we continue that worship together.

Can you feel the experience? We trust together. We know God and say with me if you would, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name."

God also smiles upon us, doesn't He? He loves us, he favors us. Our Father, who art in heaven. Now shush. Be quiet. Listen and feel the overwhelming joy and security you have by just bringing forth the way Jesus has taught us to pray. God is listening. It's nothing magic. It's a reality of our faith and the promises of God, alive in our prayers. It's the holy time, the holy time we have that fills us with confidence and joy. And now we together can continue in that joy and confidence. And continue to stand in need of that prayer, and so I ask you right now, would you please stand up as we continue to sing the great prayer of the evening hymn, "It's Me O Lord"? I'm here, and I'm here with you and you are here with me.