

**Our Father ...**  
**Matthew 6:9-13**  
**Sunday, June 21, 2026**

Why do melons have weddings? They cantelope.

Everyone loves dad jokes, right? Here's another one. My uncle Gilbert once went to the hardware store with my cousin Gibby, who was maybe 4-5 years old. When Gilbert got home, my aunt asked where Gibby was. My uncle got right back in the car and returned to the hardware store to retrieve Gibby. My aunt didn't think that one was so funny.

And here's one more. My daughter Caitlin's first away swim meet for her swim team was in Corpus Christi. She was maybe 8-9 years old. After the first morning's events, I thought it would be a good idea to go to the beach. Unfortunately, I neglected to put enough (or maybe even any) sunscreen on Caitlin. As you might expect, Caitlin did not enjoy the rest of the swim meet. Neither Caitlin nor Kirsten thought that one was funny.

Unfortunately, I've got a lot of similar stories. It's a miracle Kirsten ever left the kids with me, and it's equally miraculous that they all survived and seem to have become reasonably well-adjusted human beings. I tried, but when I look back on my career as a father, I realize that there's probably some room for improvement.

But thankfully, as we read in today's scripture, that's not the case with God.

Now, the background for this scripture is simple. Jesus' disciples have been with him for a while now. They've seen him teach and heal. They've witnessed first-hand his peace and his joy; his close, deep, and intimate relationship with God, which would have been expressed in

his abundant prayer life. They understandably want to get some of that for themselves, so they ask him how to pray.

And this is the prayer he gives them. The prayer we pray every Sunday. The Lord's prayer. And in this prayer, we are given a beautiful summary of who God is.

And the first two words sum it up: *our father*. God is Jesus' father, and our father. And Jesus makes clear that God isn't some sort of absent or distant father. The Aramaic word he uses is *Abba*, which suggests intimate familiarity and love. If he were giving us the prayer today in our language, he might have said "daddy" or "papa."

Jesus is telling us right off the bat that God is a loving father and that as a consequence, we are his beloved children. Which makes sense. The apostle John tells us that God is love. We read in the book of Genesis that we were created in the image of that love; we were created out of God's love to live in God's love. And that means living in deep, intimate, beautiful relationship with God. That relationship is the purpose of our existence [repeat]. It's our deepest fulfillment. And what's amazing is, it's also God's deepest joy. Imagine that. The deepest joy the creator of the universe is when you seek Him out to love Him.

As I've shared before, our oldest daughter Caitlin lives in Vancouver, BC. We don't get to see her in person all that often. But she does a video call with Kirsten most every Sunday. And I can't speak for Caitlin, but that's one of the happiest moments of our week. Just getting to spend some time with her and knowing she's thinking about us.

That's how it is with us and God, only much more so. God loves us as human parents were created to love their children ... only with the power of eternity behind it.

And this is what we begin to see as we go deeper into this prayer. It continues, “Hallowed be your name,” which, when you boil it down, simply means God is holy. God is perfectly good. In fact, God is the nature and definition of Goodness. God is the perfect Father.

Now, this is probably a good place to address the elephant in the room. Not all of us have had good experiences with our fathers. Some have been distant or absent. Some have been mentally or physically abusive. Some have been selfish or childish. And consequently, some of us have a problem thinking of God as our father.

And I get this. But I want to suggest that thinking about God in terms of human parents kind of misses the point. Because God came first. God created us in God’s image, not the other way around. God is the perfect, original father, the one on whom human fatherhood is modeled. So, we need to be careful about projecting onto God how we have experienced our earthly fathers (or mothers, for that matter).

But, of course, that’s easy for me to say. My dad was great. So, if it helps you to understand God better, think of him as a mother. And it’s OK to do so, it’s Biblical. The Old Testament wisdom literature, such as proverbs, often depicts God, in the form of Wisdom, as female. Or you can think of God as our brother, in the form of Jesus. The point is that God IS the relationship of love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a perfectly loving relationship that God invites us to participate in, regardless of our prior experiences or expectations.

Something else we learn from this prayer is that God, our father, is not just perfectly good, but also perfectly powerful. He is a king, in fact the king and creator of everything. We pray that his kingdom will come and his will will be done. In other words, we recognize that our

perfectly good perfectly loving father is in control not just of the universe, but of our lives, if we will just submit ourselves to his will.

And so, we can trust that God, as our perfectly loving, perfectly good, and perfectly powerful father, will provide for us. Which is why we say “give us this day our daily bread.” We acknowledge that we can rely on God for everything we need. As Jesus says elsewhere, “*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?*” (Luke 11:11-13) We can rely on God not only *not* to give us snakes and scorpions, but like a good father, to fulfill all our needs.

And by the same token, we can rely on our perfectly good, loving, and powerful father to forgive us when we mess up. And we *will* mess up. As we talk about often we are fallen. We constantly face the temptation to make life about me, myself, and I instead of God and others. And all too often, we succumb to the temptation. But, like the father in the story of the prodigal son, God is always waiting to run to us, waiting to enfold us in his compassionate, loving arms.

And even more than that, like a good father who patiently works with his children so they can learn how to avoid the bad and do the good, God has given us, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, to help us steadily grow into the kind of people who don't *need* to be forgiven quite as often.

Which gets us to the last part of this prayer: deliver us from the evil one. And there *is* a power in this world that wants nothing more than to separate us from the love of God; that wants to prevent us from living the kinds of lives we were created to live. This is the power in whose image far too many of fathers (and mothers) in this world are living. You can call it the

force of evil, or the zeitgeist, or the culture, or the devil. But it is real and it is seeking to keep us from living in our good and loving father's love.

And so, when we pray this prayer, we are acknowledging what saint Paul says at the end of chapter 8 of his letter to the church in Rome: *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

God is good, and goodness conquers evil. God is love, and love conquers hate. God is more powerful than anything in all creation. And God will not allow anything in all creation to get between us and God, as long as we are willing to surrender ourselves to God, our good, good father.

So, on this Father's day, let's celebrate our earthly fathers. But let's also take this opportunity to re-commit ourselves to our heavenly father; to focus more of our time, attention, thoughts and will, on our heavenly Father. To really mean the words of this prayer we pray every Sunday. To live as if God really IS our perfectly good, perfectly loving, all powerful Father, in whose arms we can securely and safely rest ... now, and for eternity.