



Seeing Justice Come

The Role of Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Biblical Texts

Matthew 6: 9-13 (The Lord's Prayer/Our Father); Psalm 10

Introduction

You may have grown up with some familiarity with The Lord's Prayer. So whether it was hearing it at church, learning it in Sunday school, or reciting it at bedtime – it may not be new to you. But I wonder how many of us have ever looked at it through the lens of justice. What do these familiar words that Jesus taught His disciples to pray have to do with justice?

1. Moving from “me” to “we”

Throughout the Lord's Prayer the plural pronoun is used. OUR Father, Give US this day, Deliver US from evil... Who is this us?

Often when I pray it's about me and my personal needs and circumstances, but Jesus teaches us to pray from a place of “we” rather than just focusing on “me”. I sometimes feel that way about my view of the world. “Our” and “Us” includes my family and friends, but it also includes the 4 billion people who woke up this morning with no protection from violence. In praying to “Our Father” we are praying a prayer of shalom; a prayer of justice. “Shalom” is a Hebrew greeting generally translated as peace. Strong's Concordance describes “shalom” as completeness, soundness, welfare, peace - nothing missing, broken, or lacking. Where there is justice there is shalom - not just for ourselves, but also for those who are facing injustice around the world.

2. Deliver “us” from evil

We come to another “us” at deliver “us” from evil. In Psalm 10 we are told a story of an evil person who pursues and persecutes the poor (Psalm 10:2). In this passage the one doing evil is particularly targeting the poor and does so with impunity thinking he will never be punished (Psalm 10:4; Psalm 10:11) Where do we see evidence of evil like that in our world today?

Perhaps you can use an IJM video (like [Lyna's Story](#)) or speak about an issue within your own community. Individual stories speak more strongly to this point than numbers or statistics.

Psalm 10 ends with a prayer to the Lord to “do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man, who is of the earth, may not terrify them anymore.” (Psalm 10:18). We can partner with God in seeing people delivered from evil through prayers for justice.

3. Your kingdom come

Another key in the Lord's Prayer are the words "Your kingdom come." What does it look like for God's kingdom to come here on earth? For His will to be done?

God's kingdom coming is a "now and yet to come phenomenon". The Bible tells us that there will be **that** day of the fullness of His kingdom on earth, but Jesus also instructs us to pray for God's kingdom to come and His will do be done in **this** day. He invites us to partner with Him in seeing His shalom, His justice, to come to earth today. To see people freed from violence and oppression in our backyards and around the world. Amazing things happen when we are willing to partner with God in prayer.

Perhaps you can share a story from your own community's history of an answer to prayer or share IJM's story of praying for India. Invite the congregation to pray together for justice to close the sermon using The Lord's Prayer.

