

“Pray Then Like This...” (Part One)– Matthew 6:7-15

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July 5, 2015

[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com]

Take your Bibles and meet me Matthew 6 (page 811 in the pew Bibles). As you have probably concluded, we will be sharing the Lord’s Supper together. Before we do, I want us to reflect on a familiar part of the Sermon on the Mount, maybe the most familiar part—the Lord’s Prayer. The prayer was Jesus’ attempt to teach His followers how to pray. It’s a bit of an aside in the flow of the text, but that doesn’t mean it is unimportant.

Recall that the first verse of the chapter is more or less the thesis statement for the section. Jesus said, *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.”* He then applies that principle the three prominent acts of piety in first-century Judaism—Giving to the needy (6:2-4), praying (6:5-6), and fasting (6:16-18). We explored what Jesus had to say on such things last Sunday.

During His discussion on prayer, however, He deviates from the main theme in order to illustrate what a healthy prayer life looks like. I call it a deviation not because it’s completely unrelated; He is still talking about prayer after all. Yet when He begins talking about how the Gentiles pray, in verse 7, He is dealing with a different motivation. It’s no longer, first and foremost, the desire to be noticed and regarded as pious. It’s a manipulation tactic that’s aimed at God. I’ll explain that more in a moment. He does, however, shift back to the corporate aspect of prayer when He gives us the model prayer, at which point all those temptations He warned us about, concerning *“practicing our righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them,”* do come back into play.

Listen to what He says in this section and then we’ll consider its implications on our lives in this sermon and the next. Start in verse 7. This is God’s Word...

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. ¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:7-15)

Consider with me the first instruction—*“when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do...”* By Gentiles, He means non-Jewish folk. The pagans. The problem with their prayer method, according to Jesus, is that it consists of a mere heaping up of empty phrases. Some of your translations describe it as *“babbling”* (e.g., NIV; HCSB; NLT). The King James Version described the practice as *“vain repetitions.”* The New American Standard uses the phrase *“meaningless repetition.”* I wonder how many of our prayers consist of us babbling? How many of our prayers display patterns of meaningless or vain repetitions, empty phrases that we plug in like punctuation marks? They lack substance and meaningful content, despite their ever-expanding word count.

We do this too, don't we? We all do. And we can do it for a lot of different way and for a lot of different reasons. Evidently the reason *these* Gentiles did it was to make their prayers more effective. He explains that they did it because "*they think that they will be heard for their many words*" (6:7). He's not saying that a long prayer is necessarily bad, nor is He suggesting that all forms of repetition should be discarded. He Himself sometimes prayed for great lengths of time (e.g., Luke 6:12) and even repeated prayers (e.g., Matthew 26:44). He even shared a parable to teach His disciples that "*they should always pray and never give up*" (Luke 18:1). He wants us to prayer persistent prayers. That's not what He's criticizing here.

Instead, as D. A. Carson explains,

"His point is that his disciples should avoid meaningless, repetitive prayers offered under the misconception that mere length will make prayers efficacious. Such thoughtless babble can occur in liturgical and extemporaneous prayers alike. Essentially it is thoroughly pagan, for pagan gods allegedly thrive on incantation and repetition. But the personal Father God to whom believers pray does not require information about our needs (v.8). 'As a father knows the needs of his family, yet teaches them to ask in confidence and trust, so does God treat his children' (Hill)."¹

Instead of adopting a pagan outlook and strategy on prayer, He offers, in verse 9 and following, a model prayer for His followers, which is usually referred to as "The Lord's Prayer." This prayer, though short and simple, is worthy of more reflection than we can give it today. There have been times were I have set aside a couple months to preach through it as many a preacher has. Each of its petitions could (and perhaps should) grip our attention for a sustained period. This run through, time will allow for merely a bird's eye perspective. But that viewpoint has its advantages as well.

One of the disadvantages though that we have when approaching this prayer is *familiarity*. I'm not sure you could find a set of words spoken more in the history of the world. Yet ironically, as Tim Keller points out, "it is an untapped resource, partially because it is so familiar."²

Allison and I had a couple friends in Chicago who lived on the second or third floor of their building. They had a beautiful house. But the thing I remember most about their house was the view outside their living room windows. Basically there was a wall of windows and outside was a train track for a commuter train known as the Metra. The track was off the ground, but the room was too so whenever the train would pass by it looked as though it was going to drive into the living room and then at the last second it would veer to the side along the track and pass by. It was pretty neat. But I imagine it could be bright as the train shined its lights into the house. It wasn't as loud as I expected, but it was definitely noticeable. Yet our friends were pretty used to it by then. The train would come by and it didn't even faze them, even though it was a pretty remarkable sight for us.

The Lord's Prayer has a similar effect (or lack of effect) on us. We've gotten so familiar with it, that it doesn't really faze us. We could say it in our sleep. We could say it aloud without really thinking about what we are saying. It passes by our sight like that commuter train and we hardly even notice it. This is what Keller calls the "deadly peril of familiarity" and we have to overcome it. We don't have much time, but let's think briefly about the first several element of the prayer. What you'll notice is that the first several petitions are God-oriented, God-centered. They're about God and His glory. That certainly has implications for us (as we will see), but pride of place is given to asking for Him to make much of Himself and accomplish His purposes in this world. Thus, Jesus says, "*pray then like this...*"

“Our Father In Heaven”

What an amazing way to begin the prayer. And what a good illustration of how our familiarity with the prayer so often keeps us from marveling on what is being stated. Jesus invites us to call on God as our Father. This is incredible. Like any loving father, His actions toward His children are always honorable and full of grace. Like a good father, He watches over His children, protecting and providing for them even as he allows them to endure challenging situations. If you are a Christian, God is your Father. That doctrine should be a warm blanket for your soul.³ I will show you why the Fatherhood of God is comforting and helpful for us in a little bit. But we first must remind ourselves why we have the privilege of calling God our Father.

God is our Father because we have been adopted as His children through faith in Christ. Martin Luther, the great Protestant Reformer, reminded those under his care that God could “rightly and properly be a severe judge over us.”⁴ We could relate to God in this way. But instead, because Jesus died for our sins and rose for our justification before God, we have not only been forgiven of all our hostility but we have been adopted as God’s children (e.g., Romans 8:14). He looks upon the believer with the same affection that He looks upon Jesus because we are in Christ. This is incredible Gospel truth, that we too often lose sight of. To pray to God as our “Father” is to pray in Jesus’ name because apart from Jesus we would have no such familial relationship with God.⁵ So never forget, “When we say, ‘Our Father who is in heaven,’ we are not uttering a formal address but celebrating a relationship.”⁶

“Hallowed Be Your Name”

“Hallowed” is probably not a word that you use at all apart from reciting this prayer. When you “hallow” something you make it holy or you treat it as holy, or set apart. In this case, we are told to ask God for His name to be hallowed, which cannot mean to become holy. His name stands for who He is. He is holy. He can’t be made any holier than He already is by His very nature.

Jesus then is not telling us to pray that God would become holy, but rather that He would be treated as holy. He must be regarded as holy by us (cf. HCSB, NLT). Do our lives, which bare the name of God as Christians, convey the holiness of God? When we pray for His name to be hallowed, we have to be mindful of the way our lifestyles and choices may not reflect His holiness. We know the world certainly cares little for God’s holiness and even despises it. We should be asking God in our prayers to make this not so, both in our lives and in the nations. Jesus gives this petition priority. Do we?

“Your Kingdom Come”

In Matthew, God’s “Kingdom” refers to His “reign.” On one level, God reigns as sovereign over history. We have a tendency to forget this. It is quite common for people to ask Christians condescendingly whenever they disagree with any stance we take on any moral issue, “Surely you don’t want to be on the wrong side of history, do you?” Well, that depends on what we mean.

Second Thessalonians 2, for example, describes a man of lawlessness who rises up and deceives countless people. I guarantee you, those deceived will consider themselves on the “right side of history” and, in that instance, I *do* indeed want to be on the wrong side of *that* history. On the other hand, we must remember that God’s reign is seen in the reigning of the Christ, who is the Lord of history. The events of history are unfolding at the discretion and direction of the Lord Himself as He sovereignly brings His will to pass. So, absolutely, I don’t want to be on the wrong side of history. I want to be on the same side of history as Jesus. Since Jesus Christ is coming again, the only way ultimately to be on the right side of history is to belong to Him. As Christians, we belong to Christ, and thereby we will in time be shown to be on the right side of history.⁷ His Kingdom comes.

When we ask for God's kingdom to come, we are asking for that history to unfold. And since His kingdom stands for His reign, we are asking for His reign to be acknowledged and manifest in the world, both in the lives of His people and increasingly in the nations among those whom He will bring into His people. In that sense, this petition is akin to us asking for His name to be hallowed. Just as He is already holy and we want that to be acknowledged, so also He reigns and we want people to acknowledge that reality and submit to His Lordship.⁸ No one will be saved who refuses to acknowledge Christ as Lord in this life.

Therefore, the request—"your kingdom come"—is, in some aspects, a missional or evangelistic request. God does reign. But we want people to see that and submit to His Kingship. We are seeing God's kingdom come every time we see a conversion. That's a new child of God, a new kingdom citizen. And we are seeing God's kingdom come every time we see a deepening of commitment to Jesus and His way.⁹ The more He reigns in our hearts the more the fullness of His reign may be felt in this world, which will lead to true justice and peace. We can experience this in some measure as those kingdom realities shape our lives and wills. But we will experience it ultimately when the Lord Jesus comes back.

In the meantime, I think R. C. Sproul makes a good point,

“...it is the task of the church to make the invisible kingdom visible, but how do we bear witness to the reality of a kingdom that already exists? We live in such a way as to bear witness to the reality of the kingship of Christ, at work, within our family, in our school, and with our checkbook, because God in Christ is King over every one of these spheres of our life. The only way the kingdom of God is going to manifest in this world before Christ comes is if we manifest it in our lives.”¹⁰

So if we are not seeing some reflection of God's reign in this world, it can only be because we are not seeing it in the lives of His children and in our personal lives. We may not be seeing it in our lives because we are not praying for His kingdom to come in this sense. Imagine if we were. What implications would it have in our world?

One of my favorite books on prayer is called *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*, by Paul E. Miller. He does such a wonderful job synthesizing the biblical wisdom and instruction and offering practical suggestions for our prayer lives. I highly recommend the book, if you're seeking to grow in your prayer life. He has a chapter where he explore how seldom we pray “your kingdom come” prayers, because of how those prayers involve us in change and we tend to resist change. He gives three examples of kingdom prayers that we seldom pray

The first one is praying for “change in others,” which we are reluctant to pray because it is viewed as being either “too controlling” or “too hopeless.” So we don't pray for God's kingdom purposes in others enough.¹¹

The second example is praying for change in ourselves, which we avoid because it's “too scary” to pray for that. We're afraid to ask God to change us because deep down we don't want to change at the moment and we know that, if we sincerely pray for God to change us, He probably will. We also don't pray for God to change our character because to do so requires us admitting our character flaws. Miller gives a good example of this:

“Look at how difficult this prayer is—*Lord, this morning I feel irritable. Would you help me to be kind?* In order to pray this, I have to stop being irritable long enough to admit my grumpiness to myself. It's difficult to see my attitude because the problem isn't me; it's all those other idiots.”¹²

You see his point. So we don't pray for God's Kingdom to come because we don't like the inevitable implications it has for our character.

Finally, he argues that we don't pray the "kingdom come" prayers that involve requesting God to bring change to the things we don't like in our culture. We don't pray for that because we functionally adopted the stance that such things are impossible. But nothing is impossible for God. If we fail to pray because we think the change we want to see in society is impossible it is only because we have too low a view of God.¹³

If God's people would sincerely pray for God's kingdom to come, God will answer and His answer will have implications for all of these spheres. He will bring change in the hearts of others. He will bring change in our own hearts. And he will bring change in society.¹⁴ Until that sounds like "good news" to us, we won't pray "thy kingdom come."

"Your Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven"

"Your will be done" can be a difficult prayer to pray because of how strongly our own will enthrones itself in our heart. But God's not establishing your kingdom, He unveiling His by revealing the King and dethroning you.

Last week I visited with another pastor and we reviewed a chapter from a book called *Dangerous Calling*, by Paul David Tripp, which addressed the dangerous temptations to "self-glory" in ministry. The chapter ends with the author's own personal reflections.

"In love, [God] has worked to dent and deface my glory so that his glory would be my delight. He has plundered my kingdom so that his kingdom would be my joy. And he has crushed my crown under his feet so that I would quest to be a good ambassador and not crave to be king. In this violent mercy there is hope for every person in ministry. Your Lord is not just after the success or your ministry; he is working to dethrone you as well. It is only when his throne is more important than yours that you will find joy in the hard and humbling task of gospel ministry. And his face will not relent until our hearts have been fully captured by his glory. Now, that's good news!"¹⁵

I share that with you as a reminder that seeking first God's Kingdom and not our personal kingdom is something that every minister struggles with as well. This is the fight of faith. We are all involved in the same sanctifying work of God's Spirit and His work is not always painless for us. In fact, it's often a "violent mercy." But in the end we will find it infinitely more satisfying to see God on the throne, than to fight to sit there ourselves.¹⁶ That's really the heart of this petition of the Lord's Prayer—"Your will be done."

In some ways the entire Sermon on the Mount is a description of what it means to be a child of our heavenly Father and accept and walk in God's will for our life, at the expense of our own will. He begins by describing his followers as poor, mourning, meek, hungry, thirsty, mercy-giving, peacemaking, and persecuted. Who would on their own accord choose for themselves that lot in life? Then, as Matthew 5 continues, we are told to lay down our anger. We are told to pursue peace with those that are irritated by us, even when they do not. We're told to no longer seek revenge or retaliation. We are told to serve, love, and pray for our enemies. We are told to stop objectifying the opposite sex in our lust. We are told to give up lying. We are told to not seek divorce.

In chapter 6, we are told to hide our most commendable actions from the public eye, like our generosity. Don't try to impress people with your prayer lives. When you fast, try to keep people from noticing. Don't

use spirituality as a means of glorifying self. Later He tells us to stop living for all the treasures of this world. We are told to cease our anxious tendencies in light of who God is.

In chapter 7, He will push us to notice the sin and hypocritical tendencies in our life. He calls us to be dependent on God for our needs. We are to treat others like we would want to be treated, which will probably involve a lot of sacrifice since that's what we so often expect of them. And we could keep going.

What is all this? It's Jesus crucifying our self-will. It's Him issuing a death sentence to the will of self and calling us to pick up a cross and follow Him until He is done dealing with our selfish will. Our way is represented by everything Jesus seems to be telling us *not* to do. Jesus is showing us that there is a better way. And until we see that God's way is better, we will not be able to pray, "*Your will be done.*" With each unfolding step in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is asking us to cease doing what our sinful wills are inclined to do and to long instead for God's will to be done. As Miller writes, "at the center of self-will is me, carving a world in my image, but at the center of prayer is God, carving me in his Son's image."¹⁷ That's what God is doing in our lives when we pray for His will to be done. It leads to glorious life. But not before the sometimes painful death of "my way."

In commenting on this request for God's will to be done, Luther offers the following paraphrase: "Grant us grace to bear willingly all sorts of sickness, poverty, disgrace, suffering, and adversity and to recognize that in this your divine will is crucifying our will."¹⁸ Luther realized that in praying for God's will to be accomplished, it might mean that his will at any particular moment must be left on the altar.

This, friends, is why it is vital for us to view God as "Father." We can't say with integrity, "*your will be done,*" unless we have a deep conviction that God is our loving Father. That's what "frees us from all distrust" as John Calvin put it. That's what frees us from the anxiety of sacrificing self on the altar of "thy will be done." Joe Thorn describes this comforting implication of God's Fatherhood like this: "Your anxieties are alleviated in the fatherhood of God. He cares for you with such love and precision that nothing befalls you that isn't offered through his parental purposes for your good."¹⁹

A child doesn't usually understand the "why" of his father's instructions, but when he obeys properly it's because he trusts him. This is what the heavenly Father expects of us. We are to trust Him. Even when it doesn't make sense, we are to trust that He is a loving Father who is working all things together for our ultimate good (Romans 8:28). This is why we can say, "*Your will be done.*" And notice, we are being taught to ask for His will to be done "*on earth as it is in heaven.*" How is God's will done by those in heaven? With absolute joy and without reservation! We are not to settle for a uttering "your will be done" in a spirit of resentment or resignation. "Oh fine, whatever you want God." That's not what God is after. He's after willing and joyful obedience and submission. Even when it hurts, we can count it all joy (James 1:2) like Jesus, "*who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross*" (Hebrews 12:2). We willingly, not begrudgingly, trust the Lord, because He is our loving Father.

How can we be sure that we can trust the Father and set aside our own will? The answer comes from a garden in Gethsemane. In that moment preceding Jesus' suffering and execution, a set of circumstances far more crushing than anything you presently endure (or will ever endure), the one part of the Lord's Prayer that we hear on His lips is "*not my will, but yours, be done*" (Luke 22:42). What is that? That's Him submitting to His Father's will and thereby saving us. This is why we can trust Jesus and pray for God's will to be done. "Jesus is not asking us to do anything for him that he hasn't already done for us, under conditions of difficulty beyond our comprehension."²⁰

There has been no greater display of "thy will be done," than the resolve displayed by Jesus Christ as He endured the cross as our substitute. Jesus demonstrates God's love for us. Knowing the filth and wretchedness of our condition, He willingly took every speck of it upon Himself and died the death that

we deserved for it. That is love. There is no greater example of love than what was displayed on the cross of Christ. And that is what we remember when we gather at the table and share the Lord's Supper.

This weekend we celebrate the independence we have been afforded as a nation through the sacrifices of our forbears. But there is an even greater freedom that is ours through the even greater sacrifice of the Son of God. We have come to the portion of our service where we are to set our minds on what He endured to accomplish our salvation. He shed His blood to cleanse us of sin. He accomplished our salvation through a cross. Through faith in Jesus and His finished work we are saved set free first from the *penalty* of sin (justification), increasingly from the *power* of sin (sanctification), and ultimately from the *presence* of sin (glorification).²¹ This glorious freedom from sin and death is brought to us through the sacrifice of Christ. It's time now to focus our minds on Him and what He has done to accomplish our salvation.

[Lord's Supper]

¹ D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in *Matthew & Mark* (EBC; rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 200.

² Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Dutton, 2014), 109. Much of what I will say about the Lord's Prayer in this sermon and the next is influenced by the discussion in this book. Particularly, Keller's use of the wisdom of the Protestant Reformers was very helpful. Those Reformers referenced throughout the course of the sermon you're reading are references I derived from Keller's writing.

³ Joe Thorn, *Experiencing the Trinity: The Grace of God for the People of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 57.

⁴ Luther, "Personal Prayer Book," 29. R. C. Sproul tells the story behind this book: "Years ago there was a barber named Peter who made his living cutting hair and shaving faces. One day as he was cutting the hair of a customer, he looked up and saw a man come in the door whom he recognized immediately as an outlaw, one with a large bounty on his life. When the outlaw got into the barber's chair, the barber put the apron on him and then, taking out the sharpest knife he had, applied soap to the man's chin and neck and pressed the razor to his jugular vein. Just a little more pressure and the reward would be his. However, the barber had no intention of even nicking his client in the neck, because the barber had profound respect for his customer. The outlaw was Martin Luther, and the barber saw Martin Luther not as an outlaw but as his mentor. One day when the barber was shaving Martin Luther, he said to him, 'Dr. Luther, can you teach me how to pray?' Luther said, 'Of course, Master Peter. I'd be happy to do that.' When the shave was finished, Martin Luther went back to his cell and wrote a book just for his barber entitled *A Simple Way to Pray*. Everyone should read that book. It is the best book I have ever read on prayer. Luther's simple suggestion was to pray the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. He did not mean that we should get down on our knees and recite the law, the creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Luther meant that if we really want to learn how to pray, we must focus on the things that God reveals in His law, in the creed, and in the Lord's Prayer. Luther would pray, 'You, Lord, are the one who brought your people out of the land of bondage. You are a God who is so offended by idolatry in every form that you have told us not to allow any other gods before you. May we never tolerate in our hearts the very presence of an idol that would tarnish the glory that belongs to You.' Luther would take the Apostles' Creed and pray, 'Oh, Lord, I am so grateful that I can call you 'Father' and that you are not the Father impotent or the Father abusive, but you are the Father almighty. There is no power or force in this universe that can resist the power of your word. It is by your word, God, that the heavens and the earth were made, by which you said, 'Let there be light,' and the lights came. My soul is overcome when I consider the work of your hands, the sun and the moon and all that you have ordained, and I am forced to ask the question, What is man that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man that you visit him?' That is what Luther meant by praying the Lord's Prayer. Rather than praying, 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name,' he would say, 'Oh, God, I have not regarded your name as holy, because I have not regarded you as holy. I live in the midst of a people that think nothing of using your name in an irreverent manner. God, I know that your kingdom and your will won't be done on this earth as it is in heaven until or unless we begin to exalt the majesty of your name.'" R. C. Sproul, *Matthew* (SAEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 138-139.

⁵ Keller, 110.

⁶ Grant Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 232.

⁷ These insights were picked up from a very helpful roundtable discussion between D. A. Carson, Timothy Keller, and John Piper. They offer some additional wisdom on the matter for those interested. The fuller discussion can be viewed, as of July 3, 2015, here: <https://vimeo.com/100309195>.

⁸ John Stott makes the same point: “As He is already holy so He is already King, reigning in absolute sovereignty over both nature and history.” John R. W. Stott, *Christian Counter-Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 147; cf. Psalm 24:1.

⁹ John MacArthur, *Matthew 1-7* (MNTC; Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 381.

¹⁰ Sproul, 152. He credits these insights to John Calvin.

¹¹ Paul E. Miller, *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2009), 149-153.

¹² *Ibid.*, 153-154.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁴ “Our vision for society should be the kingdom of God, and that is what we strive for. To be sure, we will never succeed in establishing a perfect kingdom as was supposed by some of our forebears. However, kingdom living has made and does make a difference in the world. Virtually all the great social reforms in history had their roots in kingdom living. The abolition of slavery came through the kingdom living of Christians such as William Wilberforce. Prison reform came from the kingdom living of Elizabeth Fry. Great advances in compassion and medical care came through Florence Nightingale. We do make a difference when we pray ‘your kingdom come.’” R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom* (PW; Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 171-172.

¹⁵ Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 181.

¹⁶ Keller writes, “If we can’t say, ‘thy will be done’ from the bottom of our hearts, we will never know any peace. We will feel compelled to try to control people and control our environment and make things the way we believe they ought to be. Yet to control life like this is beyond our abilities, and we will just dash ourselves upon the rocks.” Keller, 113.

¹⁷ Miller, 160.

¹⁸ Luther, “Personal Prayer Book,” 32.

¹⁹ Thorn, 57-58. He continues: “This is gospel confidence: In Jesus Christ God welcomes you as his child, and he watches over you and cares for you with not only good intentions, but also with successful actions. He even numbers the hairs of your head. This means that no detail of your life and existence escapes God’s attention, just as the life and death of each individual sparrow is accounted for in the sovereign care of the Lord. But you are no bird. You have far greater value as a person both made in God’s image and adopted as a child through Jesus. The Lord is your Father, and as such his eyes are fixed on you in the midst of all you must go through.” *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁰ Keller, 112-113.

²¹ Jen Wilkin wrote a fabulous article along these lines, called, “How Salvation Brings Freedom.” As of July 4, 2015, it could be found here: <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-salvation-brings-freedom>.