

**Sunday, March 7, 2021**

**3rd Sunday of Lent**

Aldersgate UMC in Butte, Montana - Pastor Matthias Krier

*Living into a More Beloved Community*

*Through Praying and Living out the Lord's Prayer*

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## **Background to Scripture**

We come to the conclusion of the sermon series on the Lord's Prayer, but if you have taken this series to heart, you know that our journey with the Lord's Prayer is only beginning. I have said again and again how this prayer in the native tongue of Jesus has changed the way in which I live and move and have my being. IF you have taken this series to heart, then you will no doubt have a different feel about praying this prayer. Today, we hear the summary and possible new translation of the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic which can bring Christians together - which can help us to live in peace and in harmony with one another if we pray and open our hearts and minds to the depth and breadth of what this prayer has to offer. Hear then, these words from a translation from the Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke:

## **Scripture Lesson from the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic A Possible New Translation**

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,  
Focus your light within us--make it useful:

Create your reign of unity now --  
your one desire then acts with ours,  
As in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,

as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.

Don't let surface things delude us,  
but free us from what holds us back.

From you is born all ruling will,  
the power and the life to do,  
the song that beautifies all,  
from age to age it renews.

Truly--power to these statements --  
may they be the ground from which all  
my actions grow. Amen! So Be It!

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

**Message**

**Amen! And so be it!**

I hope these past few weeks that you have been on a journey with me deepening your understanding as well as experience of the Lord's Prayer. I realize we have only scratched the surface of the Lord's Prayer and that there is so much more to explore and to experience. We have contemplated a number of different translations and paraphrases of this remarkable prayer. We have taken a look at how rich and full this prayer is in the Aramaic and how our understanding of this prayer has been expanded to include so much more than what the English translation has to offer, but I need to offer this for those of who take life too seriously. Oh, yes, we should take life somewhat seriously because our world is in turmoil in so many ways. However, it is important to keep things in perspective. Here is a quote by Thomas Keating to help us:

You should not take prayer too seriously. There is something playful about God. You only have to look at a penguin ... to realize that God likes to play little jokes on creatures. Father Thomas Keating

Then Father Thomas continues with this insight when speaking about prayer:

**What I really wanted was to fall in love with God. It's amazing what obstacles there are within us, or at least in me, that seem to slow this process. Father Thomas Keating**

I am not sure what the obstacles are for you, but one of the obstacles in all of Christendom is that many Christians do not have the courage or desire to be followers of Jesus. Instead, they only want to be fans of Jesus.

As with scripture in general and especially with the Lord's Prayer, **fans of Jesus** will recite this prayer regularly and without much thought about it.

*Followers of Jesus* will meditate on these words and discover how their lives will be changed and transformed.

**Fans of Jesus** will discard these words once they get home and pretty much forget them the rest of the week.

*Followers of Jesus* will pray these words daily and ask God how is it they can live their lives differently in light of this prayer.

**Fans of Jesus** will pretty much go on living their lives as they see fit, not as God sees fit.

*Followers of Jesus* will take the words seriously, *thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

**Fans of Jesus** will not seek justice for all.

*Followers of Jesus* will seek justice for those in poverty and without enough bread to eat. *Followers of Jesus* will seek justice for the abused, and the oppressed. This includes minorities, refugees, LGBTQ siblings, and those who are victims of human trafficking. *Followers of Jesus* are actually striving to be disciples through feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned.

Furthermore, *followers of Jesus* take seriously what it is we are doing to Mother Earth and respond accordingly.

If we ever dream of living in harmony with Mother Earth, one another, we must learn to pray **Abwoon**, our Father-Mother and pray that *thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*. We must learn to forgive as God forgives, unconditionally with no strings attached. As a temple of God, we must be so filled with the Spirit and Presence of God, that no matter the temptations we experience, the temptations will go by the wayside and be forgotten.

May we never forget who we are and just as Jesus proclaimed that he was One with God, we too can experience this Oneness with the Divine! Let go and let God and we will be transformed in the likeness of Yeshua who gave us this prayer.

Yeshua who spoke Aramaic has given us so many life-changing teachings and the Lord's Prayer is just one of them.

Listen to this prayer again with a few moments of silence in between to take in the wisdom of this prayer. At the end of this prayer, we will have a few more moments in silence to meditate on one thought, one phrase that speaks to you in this moment.

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,  
Focus your light within us--make it useful:  
Create your reign of unity now --  
your one desire then acts with ours,  
As in all light, so in all forms.  
Grant what we need each day  
in bread and insight.  
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,  
as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.  
Don't let surface things delude us,  
but free us from what holds us back.  
From you is born all ruling will,  
the power and the life to do,  
the song that beautifies all,

from age to age it renews.  
Truly--power to these statements --  
may they be the ground from which all  
my actions grow: Amen.

**Fans of Jesus** will find these words interesting, but not allow them to change the way they live and move and have their being. Listen to author of “not a fan” by Kyle Idleman:

“The biggest threat to the church today is fans who call themselves Christian but aren’t actually interested in following Christ. They want to be close enough to Jesus to get all the benefits, but not so close that it requires anything from them.”

*Followers of Jesus* who are striving to be disciples of Yeshua will let these words wash over them again and again until insight and wisdom brings this prayer alive in them.

**Fans of Jesus** pretty much stick to the bleachers and remain spectators. For example, when seated in an auditorium listening to a concert, a fan enjoys the music, but is not involved in the hard work and dedication of making this concert a reality. Each instrumentalist is needing to play in harmony if the music is to be moving and inspiring.

*Followers of Jesus* are involved in the making of this music and if not actually playing an instrument, they are behind the scenes in all the work that is involved in supporting the orchestra and the conductor. The concert could not become a reality without both orchestra and support staff.

Back in seminary, I truly enjoyed watching liturgical dancers in worship.

Then one day, I was asked to become a part of the liturgical dance troupe. I said, “No, that’s okay. That is way too far outside my comfort zone. I have never done anything like that.”

The person just looked at me and was silent. She said something to the effect, "It changes you." I said, "Huh?" "Yes," she said, "instead of just watching and actually moving to the music, it changes you."

I became involved in this liturgical dance group for a time and she was right. Something changed when I moved from being a spectator to a dancer. Something shifted inside me and I experienced what she was saying.

Today, I will demonstrate something I learned at Camp Hope years and years ago which was a Camp for the disabled. Many of them were in wheelchairs and could not move around a great deal so the interpretive movement of the Lord's Prayer the staff created would be that everyone could participate whether standing or sitting. I must tell you in advance, I am moved to tears everytime I do this which is why I will be closing this message with this body prayer as a hymn of preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

(Interpretive movement to Lord's Prayer can be seen by going to our website and clicking on *Scripture and Sermons* in the upper left hand box. Once you are there, click on "Amen, So Be It" title of the message.

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