

Quinquagesima

LORD'S PRAYER – THE INTRODUCTION

In the second place, we should be more encouraged and moved to pray because God has also added a promise and declared that it shall surely be done for us as we pray. He says in Psalm 50:15, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you.” And Christ says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, “Ask, and it will be given to you; ... for every-one who asks receives” (7:7–8). Such promises certainly ought to encourage and kindle our hearts to pray with pleasure and delight. For He testifies with His own Word that our prayer is heartily pleasing to Him. Furthermore, it shall certainly be heard and granted, in order that we may not despise it or think lightly of it and pray based on chance.

LORD'S PRAYER – THE THIRD PETITION

Look, we have in these three petitions, in the simplest way, the needs that relate to God Himself. Yet they are all for our sakes. Whatever we pray concerns us alone. As we have said before, we pray that what must be done without us anyway may also be done in us. As His name must be hallowed and His kingdom come whether we pray or not, so also His will must be done and succeed. This is true even though the devil with all his followers raise a great riot, are angry and rage against it, and try to exterminate the Gospel completely. But for our own sakes we must pray that, even against their fury, His will be done without hindrance among us also. We pray so that they may not be able to accomplish anything and that we may remain firm against all violence and persecution and submit to God's will.

LORD'S PRAYER – THE SEVENTH PETITION

It is, therefore, an evil deception on those who pray as though they could not dare from the heart to say “Yes!” and positively conclude that God hears them. Instead, they remain in doubt and say, “How can I be so bold as to boast that God hears my prayer? For I am but a poor sinner,” and other such things.

The reason for this is, they do not respect God's promise, but they rely on their own work and worthiness, by which they despise God and accuse Him of lying. Therefore, they receive nothing. As St. James says, “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” [1:6–7]. Behold, God attaches such importance to this fact that we can be sure we do not pray in vain, so that we do not despise our prayer in any way.

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