

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

The actions and condition of men does not hold sway to who God is or what He does. Whether men pray to God or not, whether they keep the commandments (if only in part) or not, whether they believe or not, it does not change who God is or what He does.

- God gives for all of your needs whether you are good or evil, without your prayer. Jesus said as much when He taught, "He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45)
- God's will is done whether you pray for it or not.
- God's kingdom comes of itself, without your prayer.
- God's name is holy regardless of how you treat or view it.

It is clear from this that you have no influence over who God is or what He does.

So, why pray these things? So that you receive from God's hand thankfully—that He would lead you to thank Him for His providence. So that God's will be done favorably to you, too. So that you would receive God's kingdom because He sends it. So that you would be led to regard God's name as holy, as it is.

God does what He does and is who He is regardless, and perhaps in spite of, who you are and what you do. God is no respecter of persons. And, as confirmation of this, He tells you who He is, "And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.'" (Exodus 3:14) Yes, YHWH is the God who exists, but He is who He is. He can be no one else, nor can He act like anyone else. YHWH will be and act only like Himself. YHWH is the God who gives for all of everyone's needs of body and soul. YHWH is the one who's will is done—He is God. YHWH is the one who's kingdom comes, because He sent it, and He is God. YHWH is the name that is holy.

God is who He is, and it doesn't matter to Him who you are. This sounds like bad news. If it doesn't matter to an all-powerful, all-knowing deity who you are, what's to stop Him from acting with malice toward you? What's to stop Him from ignoring you and disregarding you and letting you die apart from giving you what you need? What's to stop Him from giving you what you deserve for your disregard of Him, even if only for an instant? For all of this, surely you deserve eternal punishment and death, on the spot! But that's not who God is—who you are doesn't matter to Him, but that doesn't mean that you do not matter to Him.

So He sends His Son, Jesus Christ, who taught you to pray, as He has given in tonight's text. (cf. Matthew 6:1-21) So, when you pray the Lord's Prayer, you are being reminded of the goodness, mercy, and graciousness of the one who sent His Son in the flesh to die in your place. You pray as your Lord has taught you,

- That you would be led to realize that you receive from God and thank Him for all of His benefits to you.
- That every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and your own sinful nature would be broken and hindered.
- That you would believe God's Word by His grace.
- That God's Word be taught in its truth and purity, that it would not be profaned among you, and that you would be led to live holy lives according to the Word.

All of this echoes what you have been taught with regard to the Ten Commandments. You should fear, love, in trust in God above all things, because He is God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. There has never been one like Him, there is none like Him, and none will ever be like Him. He has given you His name in order that you may call upon Him in trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks to Him. He sends you His Word, not that you may despise it and Him, but that you may learn from Him to believe in

your providential God, hear Him, and receive from Him all that you need to support this body and life, and bring you into the life to come.

So, He has sent His Son in order that you may perfectly have Him, in Word and in deed. Where you fail in keeping His commandments, Jesus has perfectly kept them in your stead, that you may stand in His stead before the Father, forgiven, renewed, and restored. This is who God is—your Savior, Jesus Christ, who has done all things marvelously for you.

- Jesus is the salvation of God, the One to fear, love, and trust above all things, because He has done all things for you and is, in the flesh, the love of God for you, with no respect to who you are and what you have done. Jesus has done all things well for you, and forgiven you for all of your sins.
- Jesus is the kingdom of God come to you. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and where He is, there the kingdom of God is come. He is come to you in Word and Sacraments, so to you and in you is the kingdom of God.
- Jesus is the will of God done for you and in you. What is that good and gracious will of God? That you are perfect as He is perfect, and that you believe in the One whom He has sent. (cf. Matthew 5:48; John 6:29) He knows that you are incapable doing this, so His will is that it was done for you, and in Jesus Christ, it is finished! (cf. John 19:30)
- Jesus is the One through whom you are thankful to God for all that He has given you—yes, your body, soul, food, drink, house, home, land, animals, and all that you have, but more than that, the life that you have in Him for eternity.

This is who God is. He is your God. He is your Savior. He is no respecter of persons, but desires that all be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. He doesn't care who you are or what you are, but He is your Creator, so He cares for you. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to accomplish salvation for you, that you might come to a knowledge of the truth—in your stead, on your behalf. And by the Son's death of the cross, He has fulfilled all righteousness for you.

Through His incarnation, death, and resurrection, the good and gracious will has been accomplished, the kingdom of God has come, and God keeps His name holy among you and in you. You can be assured of this, because Jesus is come, and He is yours, that is to say, you are forgiven for **all** of your sins.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.