

SERMON – LORDS PRAYER & BAPTISM

So, what's the sacred heartbeat at the centre of the Lord's prayer and Baptism?

Well, is all there in the very first word of the Lord's prayer... **OUR**.

Every word we hear today, every action we take today will be about the sanctity, the intimacy and the centrality of relationship. **Our** relationship with **our** God. **Our** relationship with all that God created and declared very good. And our relationship with each other.

And how could it be otherwise, when Holy Scripture tells us that the very essence and nature of the God we worship, is relationship. **Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**



In Genesis 1:26 God declares, **“Let us make humankind in OUR image, in OUR likeness.”** Which means by very definition, that everything created by the divine relationship, is created to be IN relationship with the divine. Think About it. Is there anything in all existence, that can function, thrive, or even find meaning, outside of relationship?

And what's the lifeblood of all relationships that are life-giving? It's LOVE.

And again, how could it be otherwise when scripture tells us that God IS LOVE. And that we are able to love, need to love, and we are called to love, because God first loved us.

The 2 greatest commandments are the 2 greatest commandments because they call us to live our lives in such a way as to honour and dignify the sanctity of relationships through the centrality of LOVE. Love God and love OUR neighbours.

Baptism is declaring this intention.

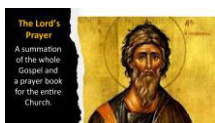
Sei, Riana, Evan, Millie and Sylvia are today declaring that they want to live their lives in this loving intimate relationship with the ONE who created them. They want to live their lives dignifying and honouring all that God created and declared sacred. And their intention is also OUR intention.

So Sei, Riana, Evan, Millie and Sylvia, when you go down into the cleansing waters, you will be putting to the death, saying NO to anything that is life-diminishing. Saying YES to all that is life-giving.

You will be saying NO to the accusing voices that make you feel that you're in some way “NOT ENOUGH” and saying Yes to voice that says ...'You are my son/daughter in whom I am delighted.' You will be Saying NO to the anything that undermines the sanctity of relationship and Yes to everything that is True, beautiful and Good.

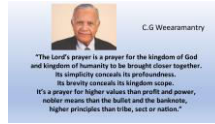
When Jesus called the hallowed name of Yaweh, OUR Abba, our Father, he blew the minds of his own people. This was a new Kingdom paradigm of intimacy with God our creator. The loving intimacy of parent and child.

When Jesus made 'OUR' the very first word of the LORD'S prayer he signalled that this was a prayer for ALL people for ALL time, with no boundaries and no borders.



This man is Tertullian and he's is one giants of the early church, and he described the Lord's prayer as a summation of the whole Gospel and prayer book for the entire CHURCH. That the words of the

prayer are meant to not just be recited, but actually lived out in our daily lives. And Sri Lanka C G Weeramantry wrote a beautiful book on the Lord's prayer and I love these words.



“The Lord’s prayer is a prayer for the kingdom of God and kingdom of humanity to be brought closer together. Its simplicity conceals its profoundness.

Its brevity conceals its kingdom scope.

It’s a prayer for higher values than profit and power, nobler means than the bullet and the banknote, higher principles than tribe, sect or nation.”

So today guys you walk in the footsteps of all who have gone before you. And this Baptism is where we join with Sei, Riana, Evan Millie and Sylvia in OUR intention to live out these Kingdom values of the Lord’s prayer honouring the sanctity of relationship.

As a final preparation of our hearts and souls, let’s all savour these words from the NZ prayer book liturgy of baptism. Note how many times we hear the centrality and the truth of relationship. WE, US.

When someone is baptised, that person is brought to Jesus Christ, and made a member of Christ’s Church. It is a new start to life in which the baptised person is accepted and sealed by God with the Holy Spirit to represent Christ to the world.

As a response to the baptism which God gives us, we and the candidates declare *our* faith and *our* intention to serve Christ, and we ask for God’s continuing grace to support us in the task to which we are called.

Through prayer and fellowship within the body of Christ, God strengthens and nourishes us. You are here today to help with your presence, your prayers and your love. Jesus Christ came that we might have life and have it in all its fullness.