

The Lords Prayer

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[0 : 00] Well, if you don't know me, my name is Jesse. I'm one of the pastors here at City Grace Church and get to continue on in our series on prayer today. And I just want to stop. If you were here last week, we talked about being still and waiting on God.

And one of the challenges was, hey, take 10 minutes this week and give it a shot. Who tried that? All right. Two people. I'm just kidding. You guys just didn't raise your hands very high. All right. Who failed fabulously at it like me?

All right. Cool. Sweet. But it was still good. At the end of the day, I found like, oh, there's a lot my mind is full of. And I tried it once. I tried it twice.

And then by the third time, I kind of like, oh, wait, I really felt like I connected with that one. So anyways, keep at it. Just want to encourage you in that. Do that. Today, we are going to look at a different kind of prayer.

And actually, it's the Lord's Prayer, the one that is found in both the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke. We're going to be reading from Matthew chapter 6 today. So if you got a Bible and you need to thumb over there, you can get ahead of me and do that.

[1 : 03] We're also going to have it up on the screens. Here is my hope for today, talking about the Lord's Prayer. My hope is by the end, all of you start praying it every day. Because it is that good.

I just want to tell you, it is that good. Seriously. Now, imagine you are on a high school basketball team in the 1990s. And you really want to up your game and help your team win.

And then somehow, Michael Jordan shows up while you are shooting baskets in your driveway. And he says, I'm going to teach you my jump shot. I may have had that daydream a time or two back in the 90s as a basketball player, right?

I wanted to be like Mike. Well, the Lord's Prayer is like the Michael Jordan jump shot of Christianity, okay? Jesus gives it to us. He says, I'm going to teach you to pray.

This is the best I got, right? And what we're going to look at today is how this particular prayer does many things. It informs our faith. It joins us to Jesus. It brings us into God's big story.

[2 : 05] And it calibrates our lives to the way of Jesus. And all of that, what it does, it starts to transform and change us so that we begin to shine more of Jesus wherever we go.

Now, you may be hearing this and you're saying like, well, that's a pretty audacious claim there, Jesse. I get that. You may be thinking there ain't no way that one prayer can do all of that.

And I'm just saying, I'm going to argue back to you. Yes, it can. But let's see how. And first, before we see how, let's look at the Lord's Prayer. So quick context before we read it. The disciples come to Jesus and say, hey, we want to pray like you pray.

Teach us how to pray. So Jesus says this. Pray then like this. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[3 : 13] This is God's word to us. So first of all, you have to appreciate how short this prayer is. Right? It's one of the shortest prayers in the Bible.

Easy to memorize. Easy to use. Like if you're going to a prayer conference and paying good money for it, you would have been really disappointed. Right? You're just, Jesus, is this it? Is this it? We get like a one-minuter?

Anything else? You know, can I get some hours and hours of more teaching on prayer and the efficacies of prayer and why we should be doing it? Can you tag somebody in to make us all feel a little bit guilty of how we're not praying enough and how to motivate us?

But for Jesus, this is what he did. This is how he taught his disciples to pray. One minute, one small prayer. And for him, that was enough. So now I'm going to talk about it for another 30 minutes. Okay? All right.

I don't, I don't, the irony isn't missed out on me. But my encouragement for us today is before we get into the weeds to use this prayer very regularly, I'm hoping, is that you just, just pray the prayer. [4 : 17] All right? Don't study the prayer. Just pray the prayer. Trust me, it works. A few years back, I started to pray this prayer daily, up to three times a day.

It was one of the things I was like, man, God convicted me. He said, Jesse, you need to up your prayer game. I'm like, okay, what can I do? And I read and I studied and I started to learn that all the guys that I really looked up to, they prayed this prayer a lot.

And so I started doing that. And over time, as I prayed that prayer, these words, these words of the Lord's Prayer began to sink deeper and deeper into my heart and it began to fuel a greater love for God and a desire for his redemptive purpose in my life and for those around me.

It kept me humble. I began to become more humble. I began to become more dependent on God in every way. And I got guarded against drifting into self-righteousness.

It helped me to think beyond myself and to pray more for God's glory and his redemptive purpose through his church and into the world. And I began to understand a little bit more what Jesus meant when he said, seek God's kingdom first and what that was all about because the Lord's Prayer informs us.

[5 : 23] It informs our understanding of what matters most. It's not that God doesn't care about the things not mentioned in the Lord's Prayer, but these are the kind of the seek first things of the kingdom.

Last Monday, maybe you watched it, Indiana University won the college football championship. It was a nail-biter. It was a lot of fun to watch. And all the way to the very end, right? And the fans of both teams, man, in the fourth quarter, there was a lot of prayer hands out.

The cameras went to the crowd, right? It's like fourth down conversions needed. Lord, give us favor. Like drive starting, like, Lord, we need to score on this one.

Please help us. We need to win this thing, right? It's not that God doesn't care about those things. And he understands how important they are to us. But in his grand redemptive purpose, the college football championship doesn't rank on the same level as saving sinners, right?

It's not on the same level as somebody's eternal destination. So here are three God priorities he wants us to put first in our lives that are found in the Lord's Prayer.

[6 : 27] Priority number one, his glory and his purpose. Right? It says, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And when you read that, those first two sentences, they carry, every word of it carries significant weight and meaning. All right? He opens up.

He is our Father in heaven, which means we are his children. Right? What does that say about him and about his nature?

Right? But he's not just a father here on earth like any of us. He's a father in heaven. He's exalted. There's a recognition that he is above. He is unlike any power, any authority here on earth.

And so it goes, hallowed be your name. Hallowed is a bit of a strange word, but it's just a word that means to hold sacred and to cherish, to recognize something that is unique and special and other and beyond.

[7 : 29] And so we say, Lord, your name is like no other name. But also we need to, we want to be those, like we're not saying, Lord, your name is hallowed. It's Lord, may your name be hallowed.

So we're recognizing that it's not as hallowed as it should be. And we're praying for that, to be hallowed more. We want to be those who recognize that we need to cherish it more and revere it more and hold it more sacred as it rightfully should be.

But not just for us, for all of God's people. And even in the hopes for this world that those who don't know that would come to know that. And then so we go on to say, your kingdom come, Lord, your kingdom.

What is your kingdom? All right. God's kingdom is God's people and God's place under God's rule in his presence. In his kingdom, Jesus says, is righteousness, peace, and joy. Man, don't we need some of that, right?

We want to see more of that righteousness, peace, and joy. In his kingdom, there is goodness, there is rightness, there is justice, there is love, there is mercy, there's no sin, there's unity, there's peace.

[8 : 29] Like that's the things we long for in his kingdom. There is no suffering in the fullness of his kingdom. And so we pray for that.

Lord, we want to see your kingdom come on earth just like it is in heaven right now. That would be so amazing. That would be so good. And Lord, your will be done, not ours.

All right? Your will, Lord God. We might even get what that looks like in any particular moment in our life. But we have to say, Lord, I don't get it. I don't fully understand. This is what my will says would be the good and right thing.

And yet I'm going to keep it open-handed and say, nevertheless, not my will but yours be done. And so just from that first little line where God says, you know what? I want a big priority for you in your life as a follower of Jesus.

Like seek first my glory. Seek first my purpose. And so we basically are saying in this prayer, God, you are great and awesome.

[9 : 29] You're a great and awesome Father who loves us. Everything you do is good and right. We want your kingdom, right, to come and your will to be done in its fullness. And so we live, we want to learn to live that way.

We want to learn to hold our lives and our possessions with open hands, right? Everything that we can have. We want to hold on to those things. We count everything that we can gain in this life. The accolades, the wealth, the money, all of those things. We hold them open. And actually in comparison to the prize and the reward of Jesus, as Paul says, we can count them as rubbish. So we, your church, God, want your kingdom, your will, your glory, not ours. That is what that first sentence is saying.

That's what it formed. That's how it informs our faith and our understanding of who God is and what he is up to and what we should desire and seek above all else.

[10 : 28] But then it moves on into another phase. It moves on into God's most important provisions for our lives because he is a good father who cares about our needs too. And he wants to ask for these things, right?

He wants to ask for his best provisions. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Or as another, other translations put it, forgive us our sins and forgive us our transgressions as we forgive those who transgress us.

And lead us not into temptation or lead us not into the test, but deliver us from the evil one, from the Satan. What are God's best provisions?

He gives us the daily bread we need for life. I like what Eugene Peterson says, Lord, three small, three square meals a day. That's what I'm asking for.

Enough to be satisfied. We ask for things in contentment, not for greed and for gluttony. And you can go beyond that, Lord.

[11 : 32] It's not just the daily bread he provides for us, no doubt. Jesus speaking to his audience there would have connected daily bread with the manna that God provided in the wandering in the wilderness.

It was a physical satisfaction, a physical need met that God ultimately showed that pointed to a spiritual reality. So you could say here that actually there's some spiritual nourishment in view here. Lord, give me the things I need for my body to be healthy and to sustain me today. But also, Lord, for me to be a Christian that follows you and glorifies you and to stand up under every difficulty and every adversity that I may face today so that I may be faithful to you.

It's a merciful provision that we're crying out to our heavenly father to give us. And it's an important one.

God cares about our bodies as much as he does our souls. All right. But also, he cares about how we are doing with mercy. And so the next amazing provision he gives us is his merciful provision to forgive our sins and the debt that we owe him because of that.

[12 : 48] But as we recognize that and we stop and we say, Lord, forgive us our debts. We also stop to say, you know what? And we want to be those as we have received mercy to be those who give mercy as well.

So because he is merciful to us, we are merciful to others. And then another great request for God's merciful provision toward us is what we see in the next line.

Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from the evil one. That word temptation means putting to the proof. It's a testing. It's a trial to see, to look at the genuineness of our faith, to prove the genuineness of our faith.

Is it real or is it false? Which means that God will put us into the test to have our faith proved and strengthened and refined. And he does that more than once in our lives.

But think about what this prayer, think about what Jesus is saying. It is saying it is okay to ask God not to do that. We don't go looking for trials.

[13:54] Right? They're going to come. We don't have to go run looking after them. Right? It doesn't make you more holy if you're always ever in the trial. Right? You can pray that prayer.

Lord, I don't know what I'm going to face today. But please, please don't lead me into the test. They're hard to walk through. And sometimes, maybe most times, we fail in the test.

Right? We don't come through with flying colors. And we have to repent. And we have to go to God and trust in his merciful provision of his forgiveness over us. And that he's not going to abandon us to the evil one.

The accuser. See, we have to believe that God has a plan for every trial. But so does Satan. And God's plan, it is for your good and the proving of your faith, which makes it stronger, develops your character to be more like Jesus.

Because Satan's plan is to make you fail the test. So that you may, in your failing, you might get caught up in guilt and shame for that failing. Or you may become angry and resentful for what you deem to be unfair and unjust.

[15:04] God, why are you doing this to me? How dare you? Satan wants you to drift from God. He wants you to abandon the faith. And so he's going to use any tactic he has in his arsenal.

He's a sneaky, schemey little dude. And he always goes, he has a limited playbook. And he goes after that playbook a lot. He's going to say things to you, your sin really isn't that bad.

Your failure wasn't really that bad. You don't need to repent. Or he'll say things like, did God really say that you have to do that? Did God really command you to be obedient in that way?

Or he'll say, oh, I saw that failure. You, who could love you? Like you, like the father doesn't want to see you. He doesn't want to hear from you.

How dare you even think you can come to him and ask for forgiveness? He's going to do all those things. That's how he rolls, right? He's going to get you to minimize sin, adjust the face, get stuck in shame, or try to validate yourself rather than to come to God and fall on his mercies and trust in him that he is a God who will rescue you when you need rescue.

[16:19] That he'll give you strength through the trial, that if you do mess up, he's there with mercy to forgive you, to pick you back up, dust you off, and say, daughter, son, keep going. I love you. Let's do this.

He's going to deliver you from the evil one. He's not going to abandon you to the evil one. He's not going to abandon you to the accuser. See, the more we lean on God's merciful provisions, the more like Jesus we become.

And see, connected with God's best provisions for us, what we've been talking about is God's best purpose for us, which is priority number three. We see implied in this prayer our holiness, that we are more dependent on God.

We are more merciful to others. We are more faithful through the trial. Holiness is talking about the condition of our hearts, the changing condition of our hearts to become more and more like Jesus. He was, Jesus was content with God's simple provisions like food and clothing and shelter, right? He talked about, man, the son of man has nowhere to rest his head.

[17:29] He was a bit of a nomad, right? As he began his ministry, wandered around. He didn't have a place, a home to call his own. He often lived out in the countryside.

But he was content with all of God's simple provisions all around him. He was merciful towards sinners. And he stayed faithful through the trials that he faced.

Whether it was at the beginning of his ministry when Satan came and he was at a weak point after 40 days of fasting and Satan tempted him and he stood up under that test. Or at the end of his life in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he's facing and he's looking forward, he's looking ahead of himself and seeing what he's about to go through with the crucifixion, but also taking upon himself

the wrath of God and the punishment of the Almighty against sin and taking it upon himself. And he's very honest. I am so thankful those verses are in there. Lord, let this cup pass from me. Father, may this cup pass from me. But he says, you know what? Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

He was faithful through the trials. To know what matters to God is important as followers of Jesus. It's important if we are wanting to follow our Savior as his disciples.

[18 : 53] And this prayer teaches us that, informs us. But God just doesn't inform us. It doesn't just teach us. He uses it to transform our minds, to think like Jesus thinks, and to change our hearts, to want the same things that Jesus wanted.

See, the Lord's Prayer, in a wonderful way, what it does, it joins us to Jesus. That's a marvelous thing to think about. Your Savior, who lived and died and rose again, who's ascended into heaven, seated on the throne, enthroned in power, ruling and reigning through his church, bringing about God's redemptive purposes until the end of the age when he's going to come and he's going to make all things right.

He's saying to us, you can pray his very words. You can pray his very mind. You can pray his very heart. You don't have to wonder what that is.

As Christians, we have the privilege of praying to our God, who listens and cares for us. But in addition to that, we have the joy of getting to pray with him.

That's what this prayer is telling us. Now, I'm not implying this is the only prayer that you should be praying. No other prayer is good enough. God doesn't rank our prayers, but it does mean that this prayer joins us to Jesus in a unique way that other kinds of prayers don't.

[20 : 17] It is a surefire way to connect to his will and his desire that is for us and beyond us. Think about it this way. As disciples, you and me, our purpose is to become more like Jesus, right?

Jesus puts in this prayer all the things to pray toward that end. And praying the Lord's Prayer, it joins you to Jesus because it's praying for those things that we have covered already.

Knowing the Father, longing for his kingdom, surrendering to his will, being fully dependent in the big and small things of life, knowing our need for God's mercy and becoming a person of mercy. We do those things.

We pray those things and we become, it starts to get into us, we become more and more like Jesus. It's becoming like him. It's seeing the things that Jesus desired and the way that Jesus lived.

So I think that's why Jesus gave us this prayer because when we begin to pray like Jesus, we're gonna start living more like him. R.C. Sproul says it this way, prayer does change things, changes all kinds of things, but the most important thing it changes is us.

[21 : 25] As we engage in this communion with God more deeply and come to know the one with whom we are speaking more intimately, that growing knowledge of God reveals to us all the more brilliantly who we are and our need to change in conformity to him.

Prayer changes us profoundly. Now, you may argue, Jess, I just can't do scripted prayers. This feels like a scripted prayer.

It doesn't really feel like me. It doesn't feel like, I just wanna be authentic and bringing what I got to God and I totally get that. And God actually would never discourage you from praying in that way. What's at the, just come to him with what you got.

What's at the top of your heart? What's at the top of your mind? He wants the true, honest, vulnerable self. He wants you to bring that to him. But also, stepping back from that and say yes and amen to all those things, but also I wanna add to that, let's consider that you are, in God's redemptive plan, you are his workmanship.

You are a masterpiece of beauty and glory that he is crafting slowly in love and patience. He is about the business of transforming us, not into a better you.

[22 : 38] He is transforming us into the likeness of his son, Jesus Christ. So if the Lord's prayer doesn't feel like you, I gotta say, in kind of a way, you're absolutely right.

It's not the prayer in line with who you are now, but it's the prayer of that future you that God is changing you into. And the more regularly you pray the Lord's prayer, the more it feels right, the more it feels like yours.

It starts to feel like yours more and more and more. It just does. And the more you start to feel connected with how Jesus is heart and Jesus is mind. And that's been my experience.

And actually that's been the testimony of countless other people who use this prayer and pray it very often. And it's not just people who live today, it's people's testimony over the centuries, which is actually a really cool thing to think about.

And maybe another encouragement for you to think about with praying this prayer, the Lord's prayer, it unites God's children across time and place. Think about that. One of the earliest Christian writings we have is called the Didache, or the teachings of the 12 apostles.

[23 : 48] And it was something that was written in the first century or something maybe the early second century. Either way, it was something that was being utilized in many of the early churches as a manual for Christian living and as a catechism for new converts, right?

Catechism just means teaching. Teaching for new converts as they prepared for their baptism. And so when you read that, it's got a lot of cool stuff in there. And you're just like, oh yeah, this is a good summation of the gospels and a lot of good summation of Jesus' teaching and good Christian living. And the instructions on prayer that they have, it says, memorize the Lord's prayer. This is it for instructions on prayer. And this is again, people learning how to be a Christian. Memorize the Lord's prayer, pray it three times a day.

That was the instruction. That was most likely being passed around to most of the early churches to help people learn how to live the Christian life and follow Jesus. When you pray the Lord's prayer, what you are doing, you are uniting with the prayer of God's people, past, present, and future.

You cannot imagine how many people have prayed this prayer. You are praying the same prayer probably as the first century Roman convert learning the ways of his new faith in Christ. You are praying the same prayer with Blandina, the young French slave girl who was martyred at 15 years old in the second century because she refused to recount her faith.

[25 : 11] You pray the prayer of the single mom in Brazil, the teenager in Yemen, the grandparent in Nigeria, the farmer in Asia, and all the rest of God's people scattered throughout the globe today. Praying the Lord's prayer unites us.

But you know what else it does? It locates us back into God's big story. It expands your world and it enlarges your vision. It roots you into God's local and global family.

It reminds you that discipleship is in us as much as it is a you, right? It is not my father in heaven. It's our father in heaven. Hallowed be your name.

And it goes on. It uses plural pronouns throughout. It's an us prayer. It informs you. It connects you. And here's another thing it does. It also directs you. The Lord's prayer recalibrates us back to the way of Jesus. It is like the Google Maps for discipleship, okay? The Lord's prayer, it's not a shortcut to maturity.

[26 : 14] It's more like a compass keeping you headed in the right direction. N.T. Wright says it this way. When Jesus gave his disciples this prayer, he was giving them part of his own breath, his own life, his own prayer.

The prayer is actually a distillation of his own sense of vocation, his own understanding of his father's purposes. And I think right is right.

That prayer joins us to Jesus and what it's all about. And that prayer, Jesus gave us that prayer because he was answering his disciples in a way that was more than they bargained for.

He gave them a prayer that is basically the gospel in a few lines, as G.I. Packer puts it. He says, every word of the Lord's prayer reflects the Lord's vision of what our lives should be.

It's a prayer that is the essence of the way that we are to walk in. Do you feel at times lost, confused, or ignorant about Jesus's vision for your life?

[27 : 18] This prayer is for you. This prayer is for anyone that is serious about following Jesus. This prayer is for everyone that wants to become more like their savior. This prayer is for anyone that wants to see God's redemptive purposes realize more and more in our church, in our city, in our nation, and across the globe.

My encouragement to you City Grace folks is make it yours. Pray it as often as you pray. Maybe you open up your prayer time that way or you close your prayer time that way.

But pray it. It could only help the church if more of us prayed this prayer because the more the Lord's prayer gets into us, the more Jesus shines out of us.

The more connection and conviction the church has to the heart and mind of Jesus, the more we will bear witness to him wherever we are and in whatever we're facing.

We want to see God's grace at work in us, in our families, in our neighborhoods, in our jobs, in our schools, in our nation, and to the ends of the earth. We want God to use us to minister hope to the vulnerable and the powerless, to help lift them out of the pit.

[28 : 37] We want to see some kingdom wins in our lifetime. Right? Well, Jesus taught us his jump shot. So let's use it. Challenge this week.

Pray the prayer. Every time you pray, just tag on the Lord's prayer. It's not going to add much time to your day. Or you can just make it the only thing you pray for your prayer time.

If you don't pray that much and pray it in the morning, first thing or at night, as you lay your head on your pillow, just find a time to do it. It won't take that long. And kind of what I want to do is I just want to start right now.

Now, let's get going right now together. We're going to pray the Lord's prayer. It's going to be up on the screen. I want to practice it this morning. We're going to pray it straightforward and simple as it is.

We're going to experience that together. And then after that, we're going to keep our eyes closed. Well, if you need to read it, keep your eyes open and pray it. But after that, we'll close our eyes.

[29 : 44] I want to pray it in the way that a lot of people pray it that have been praying it for a time. Not for to impress you or my own glory. I just want you to see what happens when it gets into you.

As the band comes up, if we can get that prayer on the screens, let's pray it aloud together.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Let's bow our heads. Father, our Father in heaven, you are exalted. Almighty, all powerful.

[30 : 46] Lord, I ask that in your church, in my life, in my family, in City Grace, that your name would be hallowed.

It would be held most sacred. It would be cherished and revered that we would live in awe and wonder about who you are in your very nature.

That we would come to know and grow in the knowledge of our Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ. And Father, I ask that your kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven.

Lord, may your church long and live toward that reality. May we long to see your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Lord, may we begin to experience that more in our own lives and in our own churches as we gather together on Sundays or in small groups.

[31 : 47] That we would see more of your kingdom breaking in. More kingdom realities happening. We would hear and see your Holy Spirit moving and acting in powerful, uncommon ways. That we would see healings like we saw, like we see witnessed in your life and through the hands of your apostles.

That we would see more and more people come to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ and to know Him. We want to see your kingdom come and break in on earth just like it is in heaven.

And Lord, humble us. Teach us humility. Teach your church humility. We are so arrogant at times. We want our way and we want our will. And teach us what it means that your will be done.

Lord, may your kingdom come and your will be done. that we wouldn't be a church of as many agendas as there are people in the seats. That there would be one purpose, one agenda that unites us all.

That is your will and your purpose. That you are revealing through your church the manifold wisdom of God, the mystery that has been locked up for the ages but has finally been revealed in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[33 : 00] and Lord, teach your church dependence, humble dependence.

Teach us contentment. It's contentment in your beautiful, wonderful, marvelous, simple provision.

Lord, I know for us in the Western church, three square meals a day is kind of just a given.

we don't think about that but that's not so for many of our brothers and sisters elsewhere. So we think about them that you would give them their daily bread.

Meet them where there is lack. Lord, we pray for our spiritual needs as well. Give us our daily bread.

nourish our souls that we may be strong in you, strong in your truth. Lord, we and I ask that your church could be humble again and that we are confessors.

[34 : 28] That we are those who know how sinful we are and yet understand the depths of your grace. that we wouldn't hide our sin from you or from others.

We wouldn't be those who are self-righteous and look down on others. And as we come to you and confess our sins and know that in you they are forgiven and washed away that we would be people of great mercy because mercy triumphs over justice.

and Lord, lead us not into the test. I think of my brothers and sisters in this room and my brothers and sisters all over this world.

They are facing trials of various kinds and various severities. and for every adversity we may be facing every adversity we may meet that we would find in you the strength that we need to stand up underneath it.

The strength to say no to sin the strength to say yes to following you in righteousness. For those that are suffering we pray that you they would you would give them the strength in that time of suffering.

[35 : 44] and the hope that they need to carry them through. Lord, do not abandon us to the evil one who wants to destroy us who wants to destroy our faith.

Do not abandon us to him. Deliver us from him. Fight on our behalf in ways that we can't see and we can't know and we can't understand.

deliver us from the accuser. Silence his voice. In your name I pray.

Amen.