



DOVER DAILY DEVOTIONS

On Sunday we listened to Jesus teach us how we ought to begin our prayers: “Our Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). We considered how that opening address draws us into the shared life of God’s family, rests our confidence on the costly grace of adoption through Christ, and holds together nearness with holy majesty. Our aim was to learn to pray with childlike confidence and reverent awe, coming to God not on our own merits but in the name of Jesus, with hearts widened for the church and steadied under the Father’s reign.

Monday - Our, Not Mine

Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 2:18

Devotional:

Prayer is personal, but it is never private in the sense of being isolated. Jesus puts a word on our lips that gently corrects our instincts: “Our.” Even when the door is shut and the room is quiet, we come to God as members of a household, not as spiritual lone rangers. The Christian does not approach God as a solitary customer with a list, but as a child among many children.

This matters because sin bends us inward. Without noticing, our prayers can become small, circling the same worries, the same frustrations, the same desires. The word “our” interrupts that tight orbit. It reminds us that the Father has other sons and daughters, other burdens, other needs, other sorrows. We do not only pray for ourselves. We learn to pray with and for the people God has joined to us in Christ.

Paul says, “Through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:18). The access is shared because the Savior is shared. The Spirit who brings you is the same Spirit who brings your brother or sister. This shared approach to God begins to soften the sharp edges of our hearts. It becomes harder to keep nursing contempt while asking for mercy. It becomes less natural to pray for forgiveness while refusing forgiveness.

So begin today by letting the Lord widen your prayers. Let “our” teach you to remember names, to carry one another, to stand at the throne of grace with the church in your heart. You are not alone when you pray. You are part of a redeemed people, gathered into one family by the blood of Christ.

Reflection Questions:

1. Whose needs have you neglected in your prayers because you have been preoccupied with your own?
2. Is there a brother or sister you have avoided, criticized, or resented, and how does “our Father” challenge that posture?
3. What is one concrete way you can pray today that reflects shared access to the Father through Christ?

Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you have not saved us as isolated individuals but as your people. Forgive us for prayers that shrink into self-concern and forget the household of faith. Enlarge our hearts by your Spirit, and teach us to carry one another before your throne. Make us quick to seek mercy and quick to give mercy. We pray through Jesus Christ, our shared Savior. Amen.

Tuesday - The Right to Be Called Children

Scripture Reading:

John 1:12-13

Devotional:

The word “Father” can become familiar, and familiarity can dull wonder. But Jesus does not place this name on our lips because it is sentimental or soothing. He places it there because it is true for those who belong to him. Scripture says that those who receive Christ and believe in his name are given “the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). That is not a mood. It is a gift. It is a granted standing.

You did not drift into this relationship. You did not earn it by effort, or deserve it by improvement, or inherit it by nature. By nature we are creatures before the Creator, sinners before the Judge. But God, in mercy, brings sinners into his household through his Son. The name “Father” is given for us to use in Christ.

This changes how we pray in our weakness. Many of us struggle to pray because we imagine God receives us the way we receive people: with impatience, suspicion, or exhaustion. But the Father's welcome is anchored in Christ, not in your performance. When you come through Jesus, you come as a child, not as a trespasser. The Father is not waiting for polished words. He is receiving those whom his Son has purchased.

So when prayer feels hard today, do not begin by trying to manufacture spiritual energy. Begin by taking hold of what God has done. If you are in Christ, the truest thing about you is not your anxiety, your inconsistency, or your fatigue. The truest thing about you is this: you have been given the right to be called a child of God. Pray from there.

Reflection Questions:

1. When you hesitate to pray, what do you fear God will be like toward you in that moment?
2. How would your prayers change if you believed, with simple honesty, that your standing is a gift in Christ, not a wage you must earn?
3. What is one way you can remind your heart today that "Father" is a name purchased for you by Jesus?

Prayer:

Father, we confess that we often approach you as if we must prove ourselves before you will hear us. Thank you for giving sinners the right to become your children through your Son. Teach us to rest in what you have granted, not in what we can present. Quiet our fears with the assurance of your gospel welcome. Help us to come to you simply and honestly, trusting Christ alone. Amen.

Wednesday - Abba, From the Spirit's Mouth

Scripture Reading:

Romans 8:14-17

Devotional:

The gospel does more than change God's posture toward us. It changes our posture toward God. Paul says we have received "the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'" (Romans 8:15). That cry is a new instinct planted by the Holy Spirit. Where fear once ruled, the Spirit teaches the heart to come near.

Adoption is the Father taking those who had no claim and giving them a name, a place, and an inheritance in Christ. The Spirit bears witness that we belong. Not because we are steady, but because Christ is faithful. Not because our hearts are always faithful, but because the Son's work is finished.

This is especially precious when you are conscious of sin. The Accuser loves to tell Christians that their failures have turned them into outsiders again. But the gospel teaches a different movement: when we sin, we do not return as strangers. We return as children who confess. The Spirit does not train you to hide from the Father. He trains you to come to the Father with honest repentance and hopeful trust.

So if you feel spiritually dull today, do not assume you are disqualified from prayer. Ask the Spirit for help. The Spirit is given to lead you to Christ, and through Christ to the Father. Even a small prayer, offered in dependence, is real. Even a quiet "Father, help me" is a Spirit-taught cry.

Reflection Questions:

1. When you sin, do you move toward God in confession or away from him in hiding, and why?
2. What would it look like today to rely on the Spirit's help rather than your own strength to pray?
3. Where do you most need the Spirit to replace fear with childlike trust in the Father through Christ?

Prayer:

Father, we thank you for the Spirit of adoption who teaches us to cry to you. Forgive us for listening to fear and acting as if your mercy has run out. Teach us to confess quickly and to come near with humble confidence, resting in Christ's finished work. Strengthen weak hearts and steady wandering thoughts. Let the Spirit's witness be louder than our accusations. Amen.

Thursday - Calvary Behind the Word Father

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 27:45-50

Devotional:

There is a cost written into the word “Father.” We can say it without fear because Jesus entered fear for us. At the cross, the eternal Son, who had always enjoyed unbroken communion with the Father, cried out in abandonment: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). He endured what our sins deserved so that we might receive what we did not earn.

This is substitution. The Son took our place under wrath so that we might have a place at the Father’s table. He was treated as guilty so that we might be welcomed as children. When the gospel is clear, prayer becomes something sturdier than mood. Your access to God is guaranteed by the blood of Christ.

When shame rises, bring it to Calvary. Shame says, “You cannot pray because you are unworthy.” The cross says, “You can pray because Christ is worthy, and he has opened the way.” When guilt is real, do not pretend it is not serious. Confess it. But also do not treat it as stronger than the atonement. If Jesus was forsaken in your place, then you will not be forsaken when you come to God through him.

So let your prayers today be Christ-shaped. Do not approach God as if you are negotiating a fragile peace. Come as one reconciled by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Your Father is holy, and your sin is serious. But Christ’s work is finished, and that is why you may come near.

Reflection Questions:

1. What do you tend to do with shame, and how does the cross of Christ call you to respond differently?
2. Are you treating your recent failures as stronger than Christ’s atonement, even subtly?
3. What would honest confession look like today, paired with real trust in Jesus’ finished work?

Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, we praise you for the mercy that cost the blood of your Son. We confess that we often approach you as if our sin has closed the door again. Thank you that Jesus was forsaken in our place so that we would never be cast out when we come by faith. Teach us to hate our sin without despairing of your grace. Keep our eyes fixed on Christ crucified and risen for us. Amen.

Friday - Confidence at a Throne of Grace

Scripture Reading:

Devotional:

If God were only tender, we might doubt his ability to help. If God were only majestic, we might fear to approach. But the gospel gives us something astonishing: we are invited to draw near to a throne, and it is called a throne of grace. “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Notice the balance. It is a throne, so we do not come casually. God is not a peer. He is the holy King. But it is a throne of grace, so we do not stay away in dread. Confidence here is not self-assurance. It is Christ-assurance. Our great high priest has passed through the heavens. He sympathizes with our weakness. He has opened a living way by his own obedience and sacrifice.

This is the sort of confidence anxious hearts need. This is not the brittle confidence that comes from thinking we have everything under control, but the steady confidence that comes from knowing who sits on the throne and what kind of throne it is. Mercy is not rare there. Grace is not reluctant there. Help is not delayed because you failed to speak eloquently. The Father receives you for Jesus’ sake.

So take your need to the throne today. Bring what is most pressing. Bring what you are ashamed to admit. Bring what you cannot fix. The gospel does not tell you to become strong before you come. It tells you to come to the One who gives mercy and grace in time of need.

Reflection Questions:

1. What need are you tempted to handle alone because you feel too weak, too ashamed, or too overwhelmed to pray?
2. Do you approach God as a reluctant giver or as a gracious Father who welcomes you through Christ?
3. How can you practice reverent confidence today, coming seriously but not fearfully to the throne of grace?

Prayer:

Father, you sit enthroned in heaven, and yet you invite us to draw near. Forgive us for staying away as if your grace were uncertain or your heart were closed. Thank you for Jesus our great high priest, who has opened the way for sinners. Teach us to come with reverence and real confidence, expecting mercy and grace because you have promised them in Christ. Help us in our time of need, for we cannot help ourselves. Amen.

Saturday - In Heaven But Not Far Away

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 115:1-3

Devotional:

When Jesus teaches us to pray “in heaven,” he is not pushing God into the distance. He is lifting our eyes to God’s dominion. “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases” (Psalm 115:3). “In Heaven” is not a sign that the Father is detached or distant. Heaven is a sign that the Father reigns. The one who loves you is the one who rules all things.

This steadies us because our lives feel so changeable. We wake to news we did not choose, burdens we did not plan, temptations we did not invite. But our Father is not reacting. He is reigning. His wisdom is never limited. His power is never threatened. His purposes are never fragile. And for those in Christ, his sovereignty is never cold. It is fatherly. The hand that governs the universe is the hand that holds his children.

This is why Jesus teaches us to begin with God’s name, God’s kingdom, and God’s will. It is not because our needs do not matter. It is because our needs are not meant to rule us. When we begin with heaven, we begin with reality. We set our day under the Father’s authority and we place our hearts under his care.

So as you prepare for the Lord’s Day, practice this simple posture: come home, and come near. Say slowly, “Our Father in heaven.” Let “Father” comfort you with love purchased by Christ. Let “in heaven” humble you with majesty and steady you with confidence. Then entrust tomorrow, and all the week ahead, to the Father who reigns and the Son who has brought you to him.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is currently ruling your heart with anxiety, and how does the Father’s reign speak to that fear?
2. Where have you treated God as if he were kind but distant, and what would it mean to trust his fatherly dominion?
3. How can you begin your prayers tomorrow by placing the day under God’s name, kingdom, and will before you speak of your needs?

Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, we praise you that you reign with perfect wisdom and perfect power. Forgive us for living as if our fears were more decisive than your throne. Teach us to begin with you, to hallow your name, to seek your kingdom, and to submit to your will with trust. Comfort us with your fatherly love and humble us with your holy majesty. As we approach the Lord's Day, draw us near to Christ and keep us in his peace. Amen.