

## Considering the Jesus Prayer: Living with Faith

Ricky Bobby, the NASCAR driver played by Will Farrell in the comedy Talladega Nights is an over-the-top caricature of the Southern Good Ol' Boy. He is living out the American Dream of getting rich quick. He is also, apparently, a Christian. This scene from the movie reveals a bit about Ricky's beliefs about how prayer works, and about who Jesus is.

Watch a You Tube clip from the movie "Talladega Nights" .

Ricky tells the people at the dinner table that he prefers the Christmas Jesus- the little 8 pound, 6 ounce baby in golden fleece diapers, with tiny balled up hands, who does not even know how to speak, and yet is somehow all powerful. I wonder why he likes this Jesus the best?

I wonder if it is that the baby makes him feel safe- a baby does not judge us. We have this sense that babies are vulnerable, and innocent.

His wife and father-in-law are impatient with his insistence on praying to Baby Jesus. One of his sons would like a Ninja Jesus. His best friend seems to want Jesus to be more like a guitar hero.

How do you think about Jesus? What image of Jesus comes to mind for you?

In the video clip, Ricky addresses all of his prayers to Baby Jesus. In the portion of Matthew's Gospel that comes right before the moment that Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer, Jesus instructs his followers to "pray to the Father".

I don't get the sense that Jesus was asking us to pray to him, but rather to the same God he prayed to, that he referred to as "Father" or "Abba".

When you pray, who do you pray to?

We can look to the Lord's Prayer for a glimpse not only of how Jesus taught us to pray, but for a glimpse of how Jesus thought about God, and our relationship to God.

**Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

Our father- I spoke last week about the intimacy, and the tenderness of the word used for father in Jesus' prayer. Abba is more like "Daddy". It also indicates that Jesus was not praying to himself.

Hallowed be thy name- or "holy" is God's name. This suggests reverence, respect, awe, for something beyond us.

We might question the celestial geography suggested by the prayer. We no longer live in the layer cake universe, and we can't point to a physical place for God. It may be enough to say that God exists in a reality that includes ours, and goes beyond what we can imagine.

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven:** Thy kingdom come is a lot different from- please God, give me exactly what I want. It is saying, God, my life is in your hands, and you know what would be good for me. It is also a commitment to God, to help bring about God's hopes and dreams on earth. It is not just us reaching for something more, for ourselves, it is using our hands, our efforts, to help.

**Give us this day our daily bread:** This is about living day by day, and not desiring, or expecting, or asking for more than we actually need. We can contrast this with Ricky Bobby asking to win another race, to add to the 21 million dollars he's already won that year.

This is not placing an order for a loaf of bread at the bakery, or for a sandwich at your favourite restaurant. This is more like a statement about our essential dependence upon God for all that we really need to live. It is a reminder about humility.

I am going to look more closely at the trespasses and forgiveness parts next week. They deserve a session all to themselves.

The prayer ends with a reminder about who is really in charge. I have heard it said that our prayers are meant as much for ourselves, as they are for God. In sorting out what we really mean to pray, we can get a better sense of who we are, and how we relate to God.

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

I will pray the Lord's Prayer out loud, and ask you to listen for the word or phrase that grabs you this morning, and then we will take some time in silence, to pray just that part. I will break the silence by beginning the prayer again, and you can join with me in saying it then, as we did last week, slowl, one line at a time.

Time of Silent Reflection

Praying the Lord's Prayer slowly, a line at a time.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen**