

396 *The Lord's prayer as a portrait of God*

Continuing my thinking around the fact (if that's not too strong a word) that God looks like Jesus, it occurred to me: the Lord's prayer actually gives us a pretty good portrait of God.

Our Father – Jesus' life was all about relating to people – so is God's.
who art in heaven – This is not the place God dwells; heaven is simply being with God.
hallowed be your name – We want everyone to know that God is simply wonderful.
your kingdom come – God is totally about restoring people; we want to be part of that.
your will be done – We want to be part of God's work of restoration...
on earth as in heaven – ... right here and now.
Give us (all) today our daily bread – Bread and forgiveness is what God wants for the world.
Forgive us our sins – But it depends on people and nations seeing the mess we've made...
as we forgive those who sin against us – ... and becoming unconditional forgivers like God.
Lead us not into temptation – God doesn't coerce, so we can get it (very) wrong.
but deliver us from evil – Evil is the very real, black backcloth of the picture.

For the kingdom – of unconditional love
the power – of unconditional love
and the glory – of unconditional love
are yours now and for ever. Amen

For me, this is a picture of the perfect Parent. No matter how the child behaves, the Parent goes on loving and loving and forgiving and caring. With a Parent like that, wouldn't you want to absolutely bust a gut to do things to please them, and not hurt them?!

And you will want other people to see a picture of this glorious God (like Jesus). But many have sadly painted a terrible, distorted picture of God, even shown as a bloody tyrant. How can we show them the picture that we can see – this glorious Jesus-like picture?

But God is invisible – unless, unless...

The crunch comes when we realise that the way people see God is by seeing us, God's children.¹ But will they detect the family likeness?!

It's time for me to stop pontificating and pray the Lord's prayer, pray to become more like Jesus, more like God.

And from Jesus' final words before his death:

I'm giving you a new commandment, and it's this: love one another! Just as I have loved you, so you must love one another. This is how everybody will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for each other. ^{Jn 13:34,35}

This is how people will know what God looks like.

Paul Bev. 14.9.25

¹ Yes, of course, we are all God's children; I mean those of us who know we are God's children.