

# offene kirche

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# elisabethen

**Nadia Bolz Weber, Predigt/Talk anlässlich der theologischen Tagung «Frisch und Weise», Basel, 26.-28.4.2019**

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One of Jesus' disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray" Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Let your dominion come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial but deliver us from evil

I have not known how to pray for the last couple years. So, for me, it feels like a good time to pray as Jesus taught us

So here we go.

Let us pray,

**Our Father**, Our Mother, Our Holy Parent, The Source of All Being from whom we came and to whom we return, God whose goodness and love transcends the complexity and perhaps even the pain of our relationship with our own parents, God who transcends and perhaps even heals the failings we ourselves have as parents. You who knows us better than we know ourselves. Jesus called you Abba and so shall we, even as we may have an ambiguous relationship with parenthood - Be to us our Holy Parent, the one who loves without condition.

**Our Father who art in heaven...** Our Father who art in everything. Our Father who are in every place we say we can feel your awesomeness and every place we claim that you have forsaken. Our Father who art in orphanages and neonatal units, who art in jail cells and luxury high-rises, who art in law offices and adult book stores, who art in rooms alone with suicidal people. Our Father who art in the halls of Congress and the halls of tenements.

**Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name.** Holy is your name. Ever since Adam blamed (not his own sin) but blamed *you* for giving him the woman who "made him sin", ever since Jacob claimed it was your goodness and not his deceit that allowed him to steal his brother's blessing. Ever since the beginning we have attributed our own sin and ego and wishful thinking and greed and malice and racism and ambition and manipulations of others to you and to your name – and yet your name remains holy. When others or ourselves have claimed that you "laid it on our heart" to shame someone – even then when we have used your name in vain, your name remains holy. For generations we have used your name to co-sign on our hunger for power and domination over others – we print "In God we trust" We print– in your holy name we trust on the US dollar and then worship that dollar and the power that dollar brings us, and we enact policies that ensure that 1% of the population maintains most of those dollars that we print your name on– and yet your name remains holy.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come,** - Thy kingdom – thy way of seeing the world, thy way of loving the world – come to us now. May thy undoing of our ways and the in-breaking of your ways – the way things really are—appear

before our eyes. Brother Martin Luther reminds us that your kingdom comes with or without our asking for it but it in this prayer we ask that your dominion, your kingdom come among us. But right now, God, right now we think we might just skip over the asking for it and move right to the begging for it if that's ok with you. So, we beg you to bring more than just a small measure of heaven to earth because this place is a mess. Lord, the vulnerable are even more vulnerable and the wealthy are even more wealthy, and we've developed weapons that do unspeakable things and we've developed economic systems that rely on those weapons continuing to be made and protected and it's hard to see a way out, Lord. Our country is divided, neighbor against neighbor, world-view against world-view and we are so sure we are right, and they are wrong. It's a mess down here, Lord, So, we need your Kingdom to speed the hell up. And if that's not possible then open our eyes to where your kingdom already is taking root and growing among us, turn our eyes from our despair to any amount of light your kingdom is spreading, however small.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.** Thy will and not ours be done.

Show us that your thoughts are not our thoughts and that our thoughts are not your thoughts. God, I'm so guilty of trying to align your will with mine rather than praying to align my will with yours that it is almost ridiculous, but you are God and I am not. Yet have mercy on us Lord when it starts to feel to us like you aren't paying attention. Forgive us when we use prayer as a self-help technique by which we can get all the cash and prizes we want out of your divine vending machine if we just kind of bug you to death through ceaseless prayer, because when it comes down to it, we know better. You are our Father whose name is holy and whose love is boundless and who wants as our holy Parent to hear our prayers – to hear what troubles us, you want to know the longing in our hearts and the hurt in our lives and the thankfulness in our being.

**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 today our daily bread.**

Give us today our daily bread, our daily naan, our daily tortillas, our daily rice.

Lord, give us real bread, even when we keep reaching for those literal and metaphorical Krispy Kremes. Give us this day our daily touch, our daily laughter, our daily kindness our daily humility, our daily freedom.

As you did with your people who you freed from slavery, grant us that which we need just for this day. Help us to be in *this* day Lord and to know that all we have comes from you. Give us the gift of enough-ness. When we long for more than what is enough, soften our hearts and teach us to give more. May our response to perceived scarcity always be increased generosity for we are your children and from you we receive everything. Give us today our desire for the neighbor to be fed. Give us today a desire for a good that is held in common. It all belongs to you and you let us have so much.

**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 sins. As we forgive those who sin against us.**

Forgive us when we hate what you love.

Forgive us when we would rather anesthetize ourselves than feel anything.

Forgive us when we squander the grace and freedom you have given us

Forgive us for our self-centered lives

Forgive us for the pride we exhibit in our political life together

Forgive us for how much we resent in others the same things we hate in ourselves

Forgive us for the terrible things we think about our own bodies, bodies you have made in your image.

Forgive us for thinking we know the hearts of our enemies.

God, we praise you that your grace and mercy and forgiveness toward us is the one true source of our forgiveness toward others. Forgiven people forgive people and God we thank you for guiding the way toward this kind of freedom. You who perfected enemy love have given us your own heart. May we more and more become what we receive and love as you love, forgive as you forgive, embrace as you embrace.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, 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 sins. As we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

Deliver us from the inclination that we too do not have evil in our hearts. Deliver us from religious and national and sexual and gender exceptionalism. Deliver us from addiction and depression. Deliver us from greed and Nationalism. Deliver us from self-loathing. Deliver us from self-righteousness. Deliver us from high fructose corn syrup. Deliver us from western individualism. Deliver us from fear. Deliver us from a complete lack of imagination about where you are in our lives and how you might already be showing up. Deliver us from complacency. Deliver us from Complicity.

As Jesus taught us, we are throwing this bag of prayers <sup>1</sup>at your door, ... We are not asking nicely, Lord. We are your children and we are claiming your promises as our own tonight. Some of us are holding your feet to the fire, some of us don't know if we believe in you, some of us are distracted and just going through the motions, some are desperately in love with you.... but all of us are your children.

Use these prayers to hammer us all into vessels that can accept the answer when it comes<sup>2</sup>.  
**For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.**

And the children of God say,  
AMEN.

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<sup>1</sup> Yep, Luther.

<sup>2</sup> That's a Fred Craddock line.