

Esther and Emmett: “Teach Us to Pray”

Emmett: Hi Esther! I discovered something!

Esther: Hi Emmett! What did you discover?

Emmett: Well, remember we once talked about that guy Nick who came to talk to Jesus at night?

Esther: Yes, his name was Nicodemus.

Emmett: Right – that’s the guy. Anyway, did you know that he said that Jesus was a teacher?

Esther: That’s right. Nicodemus said that Jesus was a teacher sent from God.

Emmett: So, if Jesus is a teacher, he can teach us stuff, right?

Esther: Yes...is there something you would like Jesus to teach you?

Emmett: Well, I was thinking it might be pretty neat to learn how to walk on water. If I could ask Jesus to teach me one thing, it would be how to walk on water...although, I’d also like to learn how to play the trumpet!

Esther: Did you know that Jesus’ disciples did ask him to teach them ‘one ‘thing’

Emmett: They did! Did they want to learn to play the trumpet?

Esther: No, they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Emmett: How to pray! That’s a good question too! Did he teach them how to pray?

Esther: Jesus did...in fact, he taught them a prayer they could say.

Emmett: Wow! Jesus was a good teacher!

Esther: I think you know this prayer. It begins: “Our Father, who art in heaven...”

Emmett: Oh, I do know this prayer. We say it in church and in Sunday School and at Messy Church. But Esther, can I ask you a question about what this prayer says?

Esther: Sure Emmett. What’s your question?

Emmett: Well, the prayer says “our” Father – ‘our’. Does that mean that there is an ‘our’ Father for some of us, and a ‘your’ Father for some other people?

Esther: Yes, there was. Jesus lived in a region that was ruled by the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire had conquered the land and now many people were poor. Augustus was one of the rulers of the Romans, and he had officially been given the title of ‘father of the country.’

Emmett: Oh, I see. So when Jesus said that God is ‘our’ Father, it meant that God should be in charge, not the ruler of the Roman Empire!

Esther: Right. And the prayer goes on:
‘Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name.’

Emmett: God’s name is hollow?

Esther: Not hollow – hallow. It means we really, really respect God’s name, that God is sacred special!

Emmett: That’s awesome!

Esther: Jesus was saying that God is awesome! Then the prayer says:
“Your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven...”

Emmett: In heaven? Is that where God lives?

Esther: What do you think?

Emmett: I think God is everywhere...oh, wait...so ‘earth AND heaven’ – so Jesus also thought that God is everywhere!

Emmett: Then the prayer says:
“Give us this day our daily bread...”

Emmett: Jesus did that. He was always feeding people.

Esther: The next part is a little trickier:
“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”.

Emmett: Hey, I once saw a sign that said “No trespassing.” Do you think God put up that sign?

Esther: Not likely. We trespass against someone when we treat someone badly. Jesus taught us to learn how to forgive each other, rather than always try to get even with someone.

Emmett: Jesus also told us that God forgives us – like that story he told about the son who left home and wasted all his money, but his father forgave him and welcomed him home!

Esther: Good example!

Emmett: Thanks.

Esther: And then the prayer says:

“Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. “

Emmett: That’s a big ending!

Esther: Yes. We pray that God keep us safe and we remember that this is God’s world and God’s creation.

Emmett: Wait ...that can’t be the end. Don’t prayers end with one more word?

Esther: Oh yes...Amen!

Emmett: Amen