

# Merry Christmas

By Rev. Julia Schwert

We know the story. We have heard and read it many times. The Old Testament told us that God's Son would be born of a virgin and this Son would bring man back into right standing with God.

The New Testament tells us about the birth of Jesus, born to the Virgin Mary. It goes on to tell us of His life on the earth: selecting His 12 disciples, teaching people about God's truth, healing the sick, delivering the ones who were bound by spirits when no one could help them, and teaching by example how God wants us to live.

Since Jesus is God's Son who left heaven and the literal presence of God to come to the earth, why did He feel the need to pray so much? When He left the crowds of people, He was exhausted; but instead of sleeping, He would pray. Did you ever ask yourself why? He was God's Son! He knew the Father personally; but He was compelled to pray – talk to His Father about what was happening, about what was going through His own mind, and about everyday situations. He talked to His Father about everything! How do I know this? Look at the example He gave His disciples when they asked Jesus to 'Teach us how to pray.' -- Luke 11:1 and Matthew 6:9-13

**Our Father** – Jesus was telling the disciples (and us) that His Father was also their Father. A father loves, protects, and provides for his family. Jesus knew whenever He had a problem He could go to His Father for advice and direction. Jesus identified with us by saying 'Our Father;' He didn't just say 'my Father' or even 'Father.' He classified himself with us by claiming His human nature in need of a father.

**Which art in heaven** – Jesus knew where His Father was. Even though everyone didn't realize who His true Father was, Jesus knew and He knew where His Father lived. He did not have an absent Father! Since Jesus' Father is our Father, none of us has an absent Father! If your earthly father was

not a good example, you do have a perfect example of a father in God! A Father of LOVE! You can't get any better than that!

**Hallowed be thy name** – Jesus knew His Father was holy and His name was holy. He knew His Father was one to be respected and revered. Jesus wanted His disciples (and us) to realize that God was not only the Creator and their Father, but that God was also awesome and should never be taken lightly. Sometimes we as humans take God for granted. Jesus was saying, 'Don't do that!'

**Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven** – Jesus knew God's plan was for the Kingdom of God to come to the earth. God's kingdom was on the earth in the beginning; however, because of sin, the enemy gained control of the earth. God's desire (that has never changed) was finally going to be fulfilled by sending Jesus to the earth: God's Kingdom would once again reign upon the earth. Just as God reigns in heaven, God created the earth to reign upon. Man was created from the dust of the earth. God's plan is to reign in man, who came from the earth. Jesus wanted the disciples to realize they needed to submit to God's plan. Jesus was their example: He submitted His will to God's will. We are to do the same. God will reign upon the earth – the question is, 'Will you be one that God will reign through on the earth?'

**Give us this day our daily bread** – Jesus knew His Father would give Him each day what He needed. His strength came from His relationship with His Father. Our LOVE Father will never let us down! He will provide every day what we need to get through and to be an overcomer for that day.

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors** – Jesus knew the disciples (as well as we) would face times of making mistakes and sin. He knew there would be times when people would do things against them; Jesus knew the disciples would need God's forgiveness for the mistakes and sins they made. Jesus also knew it was dangerous if the disciples did not forgive

other people's actions or sins directed toward them. Jesus had to forgive the people that talked about Him as He went about doing good. Jesus had to forgive Judas, the crowds that cried 'crucify Him,' the soldiers who beat Him, the soldiers that nailed Him to the cross, the soldier who thrust the sword into His body. Not everyone liked Jesus – the Son of God – who came to put us back into right standing. Remember, Jesus never sinned; however, He still had to forgive others for how they treated Him. Jesus is our example – we must follow.

***And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:*** – Jesus knew there would be times of temptation. He asked for strength so there would be no yielding to temptation. Being **tempted is not a sin**. Being led of the temptation (**following**) is the sin! Temptation comes in many forms: doing things we feel God is telling us not to do and/or ignoring things God is telling us to do. We all know the 10 Commandments, but what do we do when God says give something to someone? Are we tempted to ignore Him and keep what we are being prompted to give? Jesus wanted us to realize we need help to make the right decisions. We need help to follow God's path. We need help so we are not easily led the wrong way or to do the wrong thing. Jesus wants us to be safe.

***For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever*** – Jesus knew the world was created because of His Father God. It is God's Kingdom! It is God's power! It is God's glory! There is no other! God's Kingdom, God's Power, and God's Glory is forever! There will never be an end to it. Jesus ended the prayer with '**AMEN.**' Amen means 'so be it.' As Jesus, God's Son, spoke this prayer for us to use as an example and we speak it, the last word says – "Our loving Father, let it be as we have spoken!"

***"Merry Christmas?"*** Yes, how great a gift God gave us when Jesus was born! **OOOOOOOHHH!** What a **Love Gift** from **our** Heavenly Father! Our Father gave His Son as a gift. His Son, Jesus, gave us the

way to heaven and left us with the key to follow the way – **Prayer**. ***What a gift of love it is!***