

VIDEO SALUTE / The godfather

Though you may not have seen any of the films from the Godfather series, you more than likely have a concept of what a mafia boss is. He is sometimes referred to as a “**Crime Lord**” or a “**Don**” or the “**Capo Famiglia**” (*head of the family*) who typically has absolute control over his subordinates. He is greatly feared by them for his ruthlessness in taking out anyone he feels may hinder his influence. The Godfather greatly profits from the criminal endeavors in which his organization engages. Even the logo for the film – a puppet master’s hand - indicates a manipulative, controlling force.

In the first film, **Marlon Brando** plays the part of Don Vito Corleone. Here are just a few of his better known lines from the film...

“I’m gonna make him an offer he can’t refuse.” Translation? *“If he doesn’t agree, he’ll be sleeping with the fish.”*

“A man who doesn’t spend time with family can never be a real man.” And ***“The only wealth in this world is children, more than all the money and power on earth.”*** Of course, his definition of “*family*” might not totally agree with ours – and if his children ever crossed him, they’d also be “*sleeping with the fish.*”

Now, enough about that Godfather – let me tell you about **“Our God-Father.”** I’ll be concentrating this morning on **Matthew 6:6-13**, the passage that contains what so many have come to call the Lord’s Prayer. Listen to what Jesus teaches us about Him...

6 “When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

Our God-Father does not need henchmen to keep an eye on us. He sees all we do and hears every word we say. He even knows our every thought. Yet, though it is true that we will one day give an account for our words and deeds, **our God-Father** does not keep a vigilant watch over us to condemn us – but rather because He cares about us. He knows what we need and intends to reward us. We need not be afraid to approach **our God-Father** or be concerned that we will not have the words to convince Him to help us – or some favor or offering to use as a bargaining chip. All we need to do is ask. In fact, Jesus even gives us instruction about how to do that. Consider now the familiar rendering of the text in the **KJV**. **9 This, then, is how you should pray...**

'Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.' *Our God-Father* does not demand our respect, but He certainly deserves it. And the more than we realize just how much He deserves it, the more we freely give it.

"*Hallowing His name*" refers to recognizing His reputation and praising Him for it. He's holy, awesome, and powerful. And thankfully, **He's also a good, good Father.** Jesus continues, urging us to pray for God's reign to grow, beginning in us. Listen carefully...

¹⁰ **"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."** Soldiers of the Mafia Don do his will out of fear of consequences. But those who truly know *the God-Father* willingly choose to please Him, understanding His commands are not burdensome and are for our good. (**1st John 5:3**) After all, **He's a good, good Father.** The key to a victorious, blessed life is our surrender to *our God-Father's* will. So many people resist His will because they do not understand what a *good, good Father* He is. Reading on...

¹¹ **"Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."** Those who call on *the God-Father* find provision of both physical and spiritual needs. In Haiti, I saw with my own eyes children who were so hungry that they gobbled whatever they were offered – for it might have been the only meal they would get that day. Through your kind gifts, we fed over **1200** hungry people – many of them so desperate and so afraid that they might not get a plateful of the rice and beans we served that they literally mobbed us for it. (**Luke 11:11-13 / Romans 8:32 / 1st Timothy 4:4-5 / James 1:17**)

Yet, more importantly, *our God-Father provides forgiveness of our debt.* What debt? The one we owed for our sins. That's why many versions translate this as **"forgive our trespasses..."** Our God-Father had every right to have us swimming - not with the fishes, but with the devil and his angels in a lake of fire. Yet, He chose instead to send His one and only Son Jesus to pay the price we could never pay. (**John 3:16**) *Our God-Father is a good, good Father.* Jesus goes on...

¹³ **"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:"** *Our God-Father* offers us His perpetual guidance and protection. I often pray for safe journeys when I'm traveling a distance, but Jesus urges us to pray for a safe journey for every step we take. The good news is that He can and will give it. The problem that we so often have is that we refuse to follow His lead. The deliverance from evil is in choosing which kingdom we are going to reside in. (**Colossians 1:13**) The very next words are **"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."** "Amen" means "so be it" – or "may it be so." So, if you believe as I do today, that *our God-Father is a good, good Father*, then **pray with me...**

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Now, let me *make you an offer that is hard to refuse...* **(Ephesians 2:8-10)**