

Greeting by Masaaki-sama

“The true Lord’s Prayer”

World Church of Messiah – Meishu-sama’s Birthday Service

Grand Nikko Tokyo Daiba, Tokyo, Japan

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Hello, everyone.

We just heard “The reading of ‘The life of faith I have walked.’” What a truly difficult life Meishu-sama lived, don’t you think? Although it was about his encounter with Omoto Church, in truth, I believe it was a story about his encounter with God.

For us, when we think about Meishu-sama, we think about the great existence that was born anew as the Messiah. But if you heard the reading, Meishu-sama really suffered, just as we do—actually, more than we do—every kind of suffering and worry of this world. He was bereaved by the death of his first wife, and he endured countless illnesses and financial difficulties. I listened to the reading thinking that if this Meishu-sama ultimately became a child of God, this means that we, too, who carry the troubles of this world in the same way, can become children of God in the same way. Listening to the reading, I felt that hope and the strong desire to walk this path that Meishu-sama is now revealing to us, together with all of you.

As we just heard in President Narii’s greeting, now there is this issue of the Lord’s Prayer, right? He said that the entire ministerial staff of World Church of Messiah and all lead ministers of churches wanted to offer the Lord’s Prayer, and they all wanted to receive Kyoshu-sama’s permission to do so. Then he said that the request was made, and Kyoshu-sama approved that request.

In regard to this Lord’s Prayer, how are all of you receiving it?

Some of you may be thinking that since Meishu-sama says World Church of Messiah will “work in concert with Christianity” and “become extremely close to Christianity,” offering the Lord’s Prayer is to be expected. On the other hand, there may be some of you who feel resistance.

There may be some of you who are resistant and think about what exactly the relationship between Meishu-sama and the Lord's Prayer is, or what the Lord's Prayer has anything to do with Meishu-sama.

And there, exactly, is the important part. When all of you offer the Lord's Prayer, what really is the connection between Meishu-sama and the Lord's Prayer? This is the most important point.

The Lord's Prayer begins with "**Our Father in heaven.**" For anyone with resistance, it would already begin from this first line. You might be thinking what "Heavenly Father" has to do with Meishu-sama; that there is no relationship. But actually, quite the contrary, as I have quoted before, Meishu-sama says in his hymn,

"Jesus Christ preached God the Father. / I preach the Lord God. / My followers, know this as I do: / Jesus and I are preaching the same God!"

So whom Jesus calls God the Father or Heavenly Father is Lord God, that is, the God of Meishu-sama. Meishu-sama is saying that the God he calls Lord God is the same God whom Jesus calls Heavenly Father. He is telling us members to know, "Jesus and I are preaching the same God"—he recognized it in this way, so he is telling us to do the same. Meishu-sama also says in his Sacred Word that "what the Heavenly Father does is what I do."

So "Our Father in heaven" shouldn't be something we have resistance to, don't you think? Rather, this first line, "Our Father in heaven," is very much connected to Meishu-sama.

Next comes "**Hallowed be your name.**" This "name" is generally known as God; Jehovah or Yahweh, honorific titles for God used in Judaism and Christianity. But in religions such as Judaism, it is said that people should not say the name of God in vain, and that is why God's name is not used here and instead, the expression "Hallowed be your name" is used.

On this too, Meishu-sama clearly says that the God of World Church of Messiah is "the God of Christianity, Jehovah." In short, the God we worship is Jehovah. It is Yahweh. When we stand in front of the altar, such as in front of the *Daikomyo* (Great Divine Light) divine scroll, we stand in front of God the Father, of Jehovah. Even today, we are holding this service under Jehovah, under Yahweh. Have we ever thought like this before?

Don't we want to have as many people as possible know about the gospel of salvation we were made to know, become members and receive the *Daikomyo* divine scroll? Don't we want as many people as possible to pray in front of the divine scroll and worship Jehovah God? If so, for us members of World Church of Messiah, there *should* be no problem saying, "Hallowed be your name," right? There *should* be no problem for us to want to sanctify the name Jehovah or Yahweh, because this is the name of God we believe in. I mean how can a follower of Meishu-sama be resistant to saying these words? That's how I think.

After that, the prayer continues, "**Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**" In other words, we are praying for the glory of heaven to come on earth. But these words, too—isn't this exactly how Meishu-sama's divine work is?

Meishu-sama said that by the Transition from Night to Day, the sun of the spiritual world has already risen. And his wish is to project this light of heaven on earth and construct that wonderful world on this earth, too, right?

There is the following hymn of Meishu-sama:

"This, O God, is Your divine work: / To project the garden of heaven onto this earth—
/ To project heaven, where flowers beam and birds sing, onto this earth!"

He says that it is his task to project the "garden of heaven," this beautiful world, onto this earth; he wants to do that divine work of God. So "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven" are words that are very much related to Meishu-sama.

Now, here, there is a very important point that we must think about. When you say, "Your will be done, on earth as in heaven" and "Your kingdom come," where are you? Are you saying these words as someone who belongs to the earth or heaven? Which one is it?

Are you praying for His will to be done on earth while being on this earth? Or are you praying for the betterment of the earth while being in heaven, where His will is already done? Which one is it? This is a grave point.

For us, we have never thought of anything like this before, but Meishu-sama is teaching us that we are existences that actually belong to heaven. He is teaching us that our true self exists in heaven—so heaven is where we actually need to turn our hearts to.

In "The uniqueness of the salvation of our Church," Meishu-sama says, "In order to save people, *you first need to climb up to heaven and become its residents. You then can pull people up to*

heaven and bring them salvation.” This is what Meishu-sama says.

Or in his hymn, he says,

“In order to save the people of the world into heaven, / First, before anyone else, / I will become a resident of heaven!”

Wishing to save the people of the world into the wonderful heaven, he says, “First, before anyone else, I will become a resident of heaven!” Here, we have to pay attention to how he puts this. He says, “First, before anyone else.” Can’t we see how Meishu-sama is implying to us, “Even though I will go first, you, my followers, have to follow me and be residents of heaven”?

I want you to know that “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven” doesn’t mean that we are wishing for the wonderful world of heaven somewhere above to come to this earth we are on.

And Meishu-sama says that this way of climbing up to heaven first and then saving people is a point “different from all other religions. Rather, opposite of other religions.”

So what do all other religions, including Christianity, think? They think they belong to the earth and wish for heaven to come one day to the earth they are on. That’s how they say the phrase, “Your kingdom come,” eagerly waiting for the glory of heaven to arrive on earth, too.

But we are different. We are not wishing for heaven to come on earth as residents of earth. We say “Your kingdom come” as residents of heaven, wishing for the wonderful glory that exists in heaven to be projected onto earth, too, *while being in heaven*. What a huge difference, don’t you think?

“Your will be done, on earth as in heaven”—we do not pray this as a resident of this earth, wishing for this chaotic world to somehow become a better place. Rather, we pray this as a resident of heaven where God’s will is done, wishing for the same on earth.

Even when we say, “Our Father in heaven,” we are not actually yelling out somewhere up above from the earth, “Our Father in heaven!” We are already in heaven! So we say to the Father directly, face to face, “Our Father in heaven” as residents of heaven.

And actually, when we say, “God, I acknowledge that you are alive,” from Words of Prayer, we do not say it as someone here on earth. Same thing for “Within me, You are alive”—we do not say it as someone here on earth, confirming that God lives within our

earthly selves.

That is not it. Rather, the soul that we received from God is in heaven. In heaven, God is alive. So we must first climb up to the heaven where our souls exist, then as residents of heaven, we pray, “Within me, You are alive.”

When we say, “May this blessing be shared with all,” we do not say so as residents of this earth thinking, “I hope that somehow, many people can receive God’s blessing.” That’s not it. Rather, we say this as residents of heaven thinking, “May the blessing of this heaven where I belong also be brought to the people of the world.”

It is the same for “Please use me as You wish.” We certainly are asking God to use us as He wishes in our daily lives here on earth. But it’s not only that. Actually, God is advancing the salvation of humanity in heaven, so “Please use me as You wish” means to “Please use me in Your work of heaven.” So remember, you offer Words of Prayer as residents of heaven.

Now, I believe 99.9 percent of the two billion people around the world said to be Christians do not offer the Lord’s Prayer as residents of heaven, wouldn’t you say?

The only ones in the world who would offer the Lord’s Prayer in this way are you, members of World Church of Messiah. So, in a way, to say that by offering the Lord’s Prayer, we’re somehow getting too close to Christianity, is completely untrue.

Next, there is “**Give us today our daily bread.**” Of course, this means we would like to receive our daily meals from God, doesn’t it? No doubt, we ask God for this. But the spirit precedes the physical, right? So, just as there is physical food, there is spiritual food. And it is this spiritual food that really nourishes our life and makes us grow. In the Bible, too, there are verses that say that physical bread is not the true meal, but rather, it is the words that come from the mouth of God—that is the true meal.

But we members of World Church of Messiah go beyond that. We do not just ask God to nourish us through His meals, be it physical or spiritual. The crucial question is, *for what purpose do we receive God’s spiritual food?* This is *the* question we must ask ourselves when we say the phrase, “Give us today our daily bread.” And the answer is very clear for us, isn’t it? We receive God’s spiritual food for the purpose of being born anew as God’s children, as Messiahs. This is why we receive God’s nourishment.

In Christianity, they definitely do not explain it like this—I mean, to them, Jesus Christ

is the only Messiah, right? So when we pray, “Give us today our daily bread,” let us do so with the thought, “O God, may we be given the spiritual food for us to be born anew as Your children, Messiahs!” But, to be honest, don’t we also want to receive actual, physical food daily? So we can also say to God, “God, please provide us with our daily meals so that we can serve in the divine work of being born anew as Messiahs.”

Christians definitely do not have this kind of thinking when they say this phrase. So the only ones to be offering this phrase with the kinds of thoughts I just mentioned would be you, members of World Church of Messiah. In fact, you would be the only ones on earth to do so.

Then we have “**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.**” Well, what is clear is that God has already forgiven those who sin against us. That is, God already forgave everyone around us. What remains is our own sins, whether we ourselves want to receive God’s forgiveness or not. God is asking us, “What are you going to do with your sins? Do you want to receive My forgiveness?” This is what God is asking us from that phrase.

And here, it doesn’t say “me.” It says, “Forgive *us* our sins.” It says “us,” doesn’t it? So what is this “us”? Who is this “us”? From what we have been taught, doesn’t this “us” include all of humanity and all of its ancestors? When you look at the phrase “Forgive us our sins” with these thoughts in mind, don’t you feel that this part is actually praying for the salvation of all humanity and its ancestors that are connected to each one of *us*? Don’t you think that this part of the Lord’s Prayer is literally talking about what we have been taught on surrendering and the practice of *sonen*?

Every day, we have all kinds of thoughts and feelings, don’t we? We may have feelings of hate or jealousy or suchlike. And what Kyoshu-sama is teaching us is that those are not only our own feelings. Connected to “me” are our ancestors and all humanity. That is why we catch their thoughts and feelings and are made to feel them. And the truth is that all those feelings have already been forgiven. But that doesn’t mean that we can be arrogant and think like, “If we’ve already been forgiven, why do we have to repent and ask God for His forgiveness?” Rather, we should always be humble before God and say to Him, “Forgive us our sins.” That way, the forgiveness of God can truly be completed within us.

The various feelings we feel in our daily lives are not ours! They are the feelings of all

humanity and its ancestors. They surge in our hearts because they want to receive salvation. And to intercede on their behalf and say to God, “Forgive us our sins,” is in itself a work of salvation! Do you think that Christians say this part of the Lord’s Prayer in the way I just explained? No, they don’t.

So “Forgive us our sins”—this phrase from the Lord’s Prayer is not just a phrase begging for forgiveness. For us who believe that all humanity and all ancestors exist within *us*, this phrase is one that leads to the salvation of all humanity and the ancestors of all humanity. And the only people who offer this part with that in mind would be all of you, members of World Church of Messiah.

Then follows “**Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.**” This would mean, being on this earth of course, asking for protection from various occurrences. But it is not only that. Even though we are actually residents of heaven, our hearts are caught up in matters of this world and its strong temptations. When we come in contact with worldly matters, our thoughts end up being dragged down to this world. That is why we say, “Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil,” with a feeling of, “O God, protect me so that I will not be tempted by earthly matters! May You, O God, allow my heart to remain in heaven, my true home, always!” I believe that there are not a lot of Christians who think like this, but if there are, we should be walking together with them, don’t you think?

And finally, the last “**Amen.**” It means “so be it.” This word, too—let us not say it as ones who live here on earth, but as ones who live in heaven.

Now, I want to be clear on one point: Christians do not offer the Lord’s Prayer in the way I just explained. And, to tell you the truth, there is a world of difference between how Christians offer this prayer and how we offer it. We do not need to say this to Christians of course, but there is a world of difference.

And actually, the will embedded in the Lord’s Prayer that Jesus imparted to his disciples two thousand years ago, what Jesus was wishing for, I believe, were these kinds of thoughts I just mentioned. But this will was not passed down for two thousand years. Of course, there is no question that the Christians have inherited and passed down the actual prayer for the last two thousand years, but Jesus’s true will of why he left the Lord’s Prayer has not been inherited. It has not been inherited to this day. But through Kyoshu-sama who receives

the heart of Meishu-sama, we have now come to know this: God's true wish of why He entrusted the Lord's Prayer to humanity through Jesus.

So when we say, "Work in concert with Christianity" or "World Church of Messiah will become extremely close to Christianity," you might worry and think something like, "What's going to happen to our faith in Meishu-sama we have had until now?" There's simply no need to worry.

Rather, God is trying to entrust to us, World Church of Messiah, His very own true will, right now.

So in that sense, to tell you the truth, we members of World Church of Messiah have a mission to awaken Christians to the true path. Of course, we shouldn't say this kind of thing with arrogance, but, truly, to awaken all Christians; to spark a great revolution in Christianity; and to bring a true salvation to Christians and humanity—this is what you are entrusted with. This is what we are entrusted with. Didn't Meishu-sama say that we are going to "save Christianity"? He said that all Christians will become members of World Church of Messiah one day, right? Is this just an imaginary story or not? It is not. The day will come when this happens. I believe in this.

And think: if our activities were completely different from those of Christians, wouldn't it be quite difficult for them to just suddenly become members of World Church of Messiah?

For that reason, through things that are familiar to Christians like the Lord's Prayer or the "Hallelujah" chorus, God, Meishu-sama and Jesus want to guide Christians to the true path in some way or another right now. They want to use the Lord's Prayer as a starting point through which they advance the salvation of Christians and all humanity, wouldn't you say so?

So do not think that we are now going to offer the Lord's Prayer only because all the ministerial staff wanted to or only because Kyoshu-sama approved it or something like that. Rather, the reason why we are offering the Lord's Prayer now is only because Meishu-sama is wishing it and saying to us, "Offer the Lord's Prayer," "Offer it to save Christianity" and "Offer it for your own faith." If he wasn't wishing this, wouldn't it be impossible for this course of events to be happening now?

So our Lord's Prayer is this: the Lord's Prayer that leads to the salvation of the

Christians in the truest sense; the Lord's Prayer that reminds us of where we truly belong—heaven; the Lord's Prayer through which we intercede on behalf of our ancestors for their salvation; and the Lord's Prayer that leads us to be born anew as Messiahs.

What Meishu-sama is entrusting to all of you is something truly extraordinary. He is really expecting a lot from you. Some may think, “Oh, what is going to happen now that we are going to offer the Lord's Prayer? Aren't we getting too close to Christianity?” Well, you may certainly think like that, but you know what? There is something much more important than us worrying about that. And that is, the salvation of humanity! To save humanity—saving Christianity in the truest sense and saving humanity—this is our mission, your mission, isn't it?

And you know what will be extraordinary? That is if some Christians come in contact with the true meaning of the Lord's Prayer we believe in and if even just one of them accepts it; that is, in saying “Forgive us our sins,” they understand that it actually means the thoughts and feelings of their ancestors have come to their hearts seeking salvation, and they must be surrendered to God. And if they come to believe that “daily bread” is the food that nurtures them to be born anew as Messiahs. This would be truly extraordinary.

So for the salvation of humankind and in order to respond to the wish of Meishu-sama, we need to put everything aside, discard everything—absolutely everything—and offer the Lord's Prayer.

In that sense, I believe we have an enormous responsibility. So if any of you decides to offer the Lord's Prayer, do it for the salvation of humanity, and do it with a burning desire and passion in your heart, just as we heard in Meishu-sama's “The life of faith I have walked.”

Because we have this responsibility and we are being allowed to participate in such a wonderful work, let's offer the Lord's Prayer with great pride—responsibility and pride. And I too will offer the Lord's Prayer with those same feelings together with all of you.

Thank you.