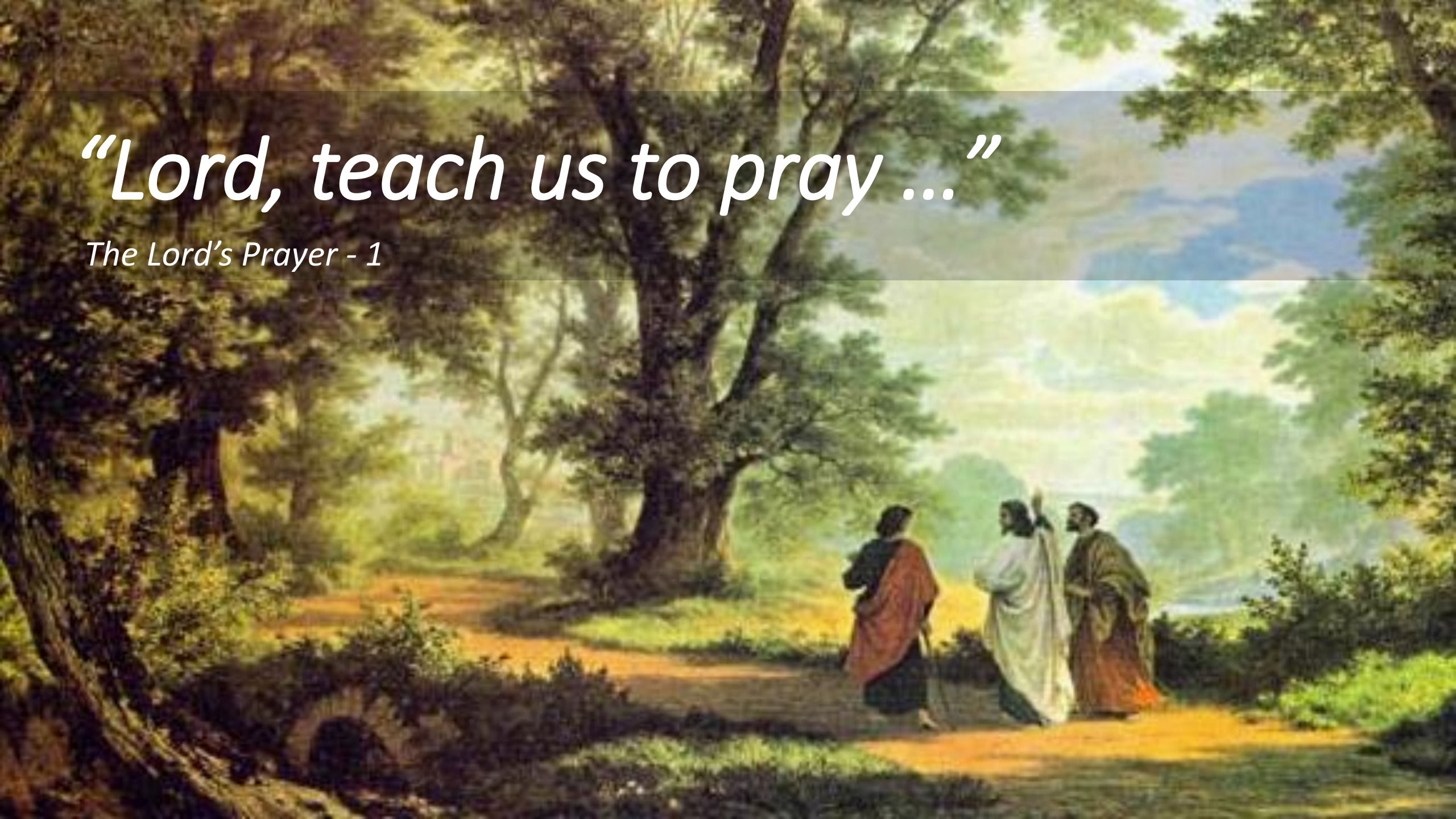


“Lord, teach us to pray ...”

The Lord's Prayer - 1



GREGGS



Been to Greggs lately?

Do we always pray with our own priorities?

- We're in a mess (again), or really want God to do something
- We expect God to rubber-stamp what WE want – and assume it's what HE wants



New series: talking about prayer ...

Basics:

- 1. What IS prayer?*
- 2. Why is it so hard?*
- 3. How does it work?*

Will come back to these questions repeatedly



Q1: What IS prayer?

- Talking with God
- Communication matters



Q2: Why is it so hard?

1. *We don't have time*

- Sharpening your axe
- Living life at 90mph – but a few minutes a day can keep us on course
- “if you're too busy to pray ... you're too busy!”

2. *We don't know how to pray*

- The Lord's Prayer is a great place to start – as a prayer and also as a pattern
- We should also try to develop “prayerfulness”...



Prayerfulness

- *What's "prayerfulness"?*
 - Prayer is something we do but prayerfulness is something we can be
 - Looking and listening for God and dialogue-ing with him

.... Might it be better, rather than imploring our churches to "pray more", that we encourage them to be "more prayerful"? Phil Jump

www.7minutes.net and search "prayerfulness"



Is prayer the same as prayerfulness? The same as mindfulness?

.... or do you pray like the Simpsons?

Read More



Q3: How does prayer actually work?

- *Is it a numbers game?*
 - This is a mystery
 - Asking others to pray is something we believe in – it can also strengthen us and change us, and God sees that
 - But He also hears the single solitary prayer, said in quiet



Q3: How does prayer actually work?

- *How does God answer us?*
 - Sometimes it's obvious and spectacular
 - More often: quietly trusting that God has everything under control – the big picture
 - And we can be the answer to our own prayer

“Teach us to pray”

- If we are serious about our discipleship we want to learn and grow in prayer
- And where better to start ...



MATTHEW 6 FROM V5

‘And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But 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. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,[a]
but deliver us from the evil one.”

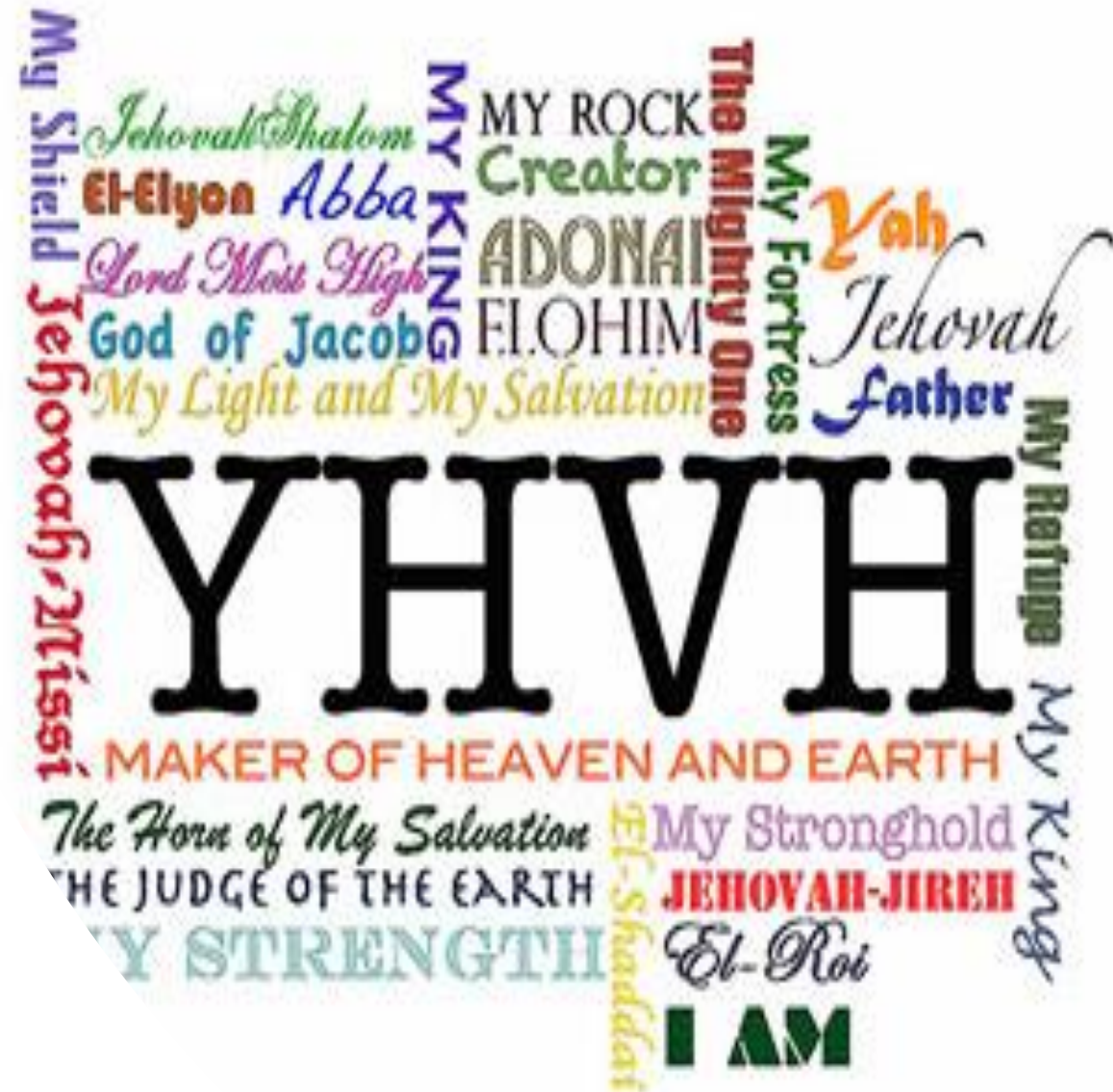
Your name matters ...

- Signing your name – says something about YOU
 - Your character
- God's name says something about GOD
 - His character ...
- To know WHY God's name really matters we need to know WHAT it is
- So what IS God's name?
 - Well > 100 names of God in the Bible
 - Lets look at just 4



Names of God (Old Testament)

1. **Yahweh** (written “YHWH”)
 - Occurs thousands of times
 - A very holy name – orthodox Jews refused to say it or write it
 - Same name as Jehovah
- God’s name is often based on “Jehovah”
2. **Adonai**
 - Means Lord or Ruler
 - A royal title meaning majesty, respect authority
- There are MANY more



Names of God (New Testament)

- Jesus – the Christ – the anointed one
 - Technically different to the OT name of God, and yet it is a name of God
 - A powerful name – the name **“J E S U S”**
- Through familiarity we forget how powerful this name is when spoken by a believer
 - Commonly expressed in our songs – *do we notice that?*

Acts 16: Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”



Names of God (New Testament)

- The last name on the face of it contradicts everything we have said ...
- Not majestic or powerful – but intimate and familiar
- “Abba” ...Father ... Daddy is the name Jesus himself uses in the Garden of Gethsemane ...
- It expresses love and affection between father and child
- And the name Paul uses in several places



A cosmic landscape featuring a bright orange star with wispy orange and red filaments in the upper left. A vibrant blue nebula or comet tail stretches diagonally across the middle. The foreground shows a dark, rocky, and mountainous terrain. The background is a deep black space filled with distant stars.

Calling God our Abba

*Is an outrageous and risky thing to do
... And exactly what Jesus told us to do*

Do you see now why God's name is hallowed?

*“Our Father in heaven may your holy name be honoured
May you be worshipped by your creation
may the entire cosmos resound with your praise” Tom Wright*

- To hallow something is to set it apart, honoured, not mis-used
- “Hallowed be your name” ... is worship

So if God's name is holy, is it possible to mis-use it?



If God's name is holy, is it possible to mis-use it?

- God takes His names seriously:
3rd commandment: "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" Exodus 20 v7
- Orthodox Jews even refused to say "Yahweh"
- We don't need to be superstitious but we must not mis-use it



3 ways we can mis- use God's name(s)

1. Cursing in the name of God – endemic in society
2. Using God's name to sanction what is clearly not of God ... slavery, apartheid, the holocaust
3. Falsely claiming to speak in God's name – "God told me X" can be a way of indulging ourselves at God's expense
 - Even Paul occasionally writes "this next thing is not from God, it's from me"



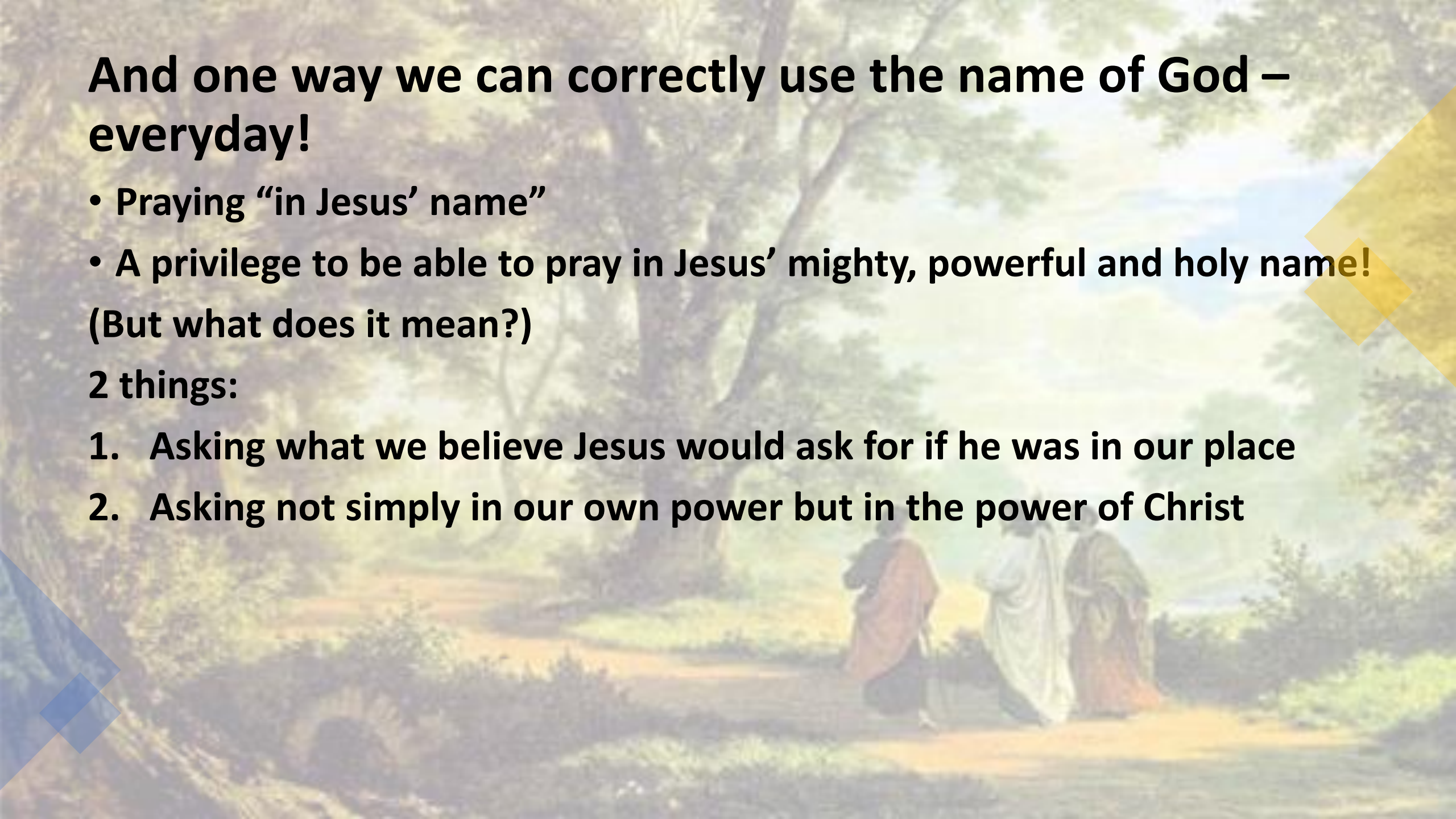
And one way we can correctly use the name of God – everyday!

- **Praying “in Jesus’ name”**
- **A privilege to be able to pray in Jesus’ mighty, powerful and holy name!**

(But what does it mean?)

2 things:

- 1. Asking what we believe Jesus would ask for if he was in our place**
- 2. Asking not simply in our own power but in the power of Christ**



“Lord, teach us to pray ...”

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