

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

To almost all people in the world, ‘prayer’ is a familiar word (Hutauruk, 2006: iii). They know what prayer is, and most of them pray. No matter how, the instinct of praying is so deep-seated in the human psyche that all men pray at one time or another, consciously, sub-consciously, or un-consciously (Eby, 2006:1). Realizing that prayer is always there in human life, the writer is interested in studying it deeper with a special reference to The Lord’s Prayer as the topic of her project.

Prayer, means differently to different persons in different social contexts. To most early age Sunday school children (who have been informally interviewed by the writer), prayer simply means an activity where they should close their eyes, fold their hands and send their wishes to God. To some youngsters in a Christian youth community, prayer means a way to speak to God about their problems and wishes. To some adult Christians, prayer means asking for God’s favour to solve their problems and asking for His mercy and blessings. To John Calvin, as quoted by the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (1987:866), prayer is ‘the soul of faith through which people can have contact with God and vice versa.’ According to Newbegin (Honest Religion for Secular Man ,1966: 98), as quoted by the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia (1987:835), “prayer is faithfulness before God in life. All our acts are to be acted prayers. We look for answers, not in miracles, not when we come to the end of ourselves, but in the affairs of the secular world.”

There may still be a lot more definitions of prayer expressed differently in different dictionaries in the world, and there might also be thousands to millions of definitions of prayer according to every human's thoughts. None of them is wrong and none of them is absolutely right. Everyone, including the writer of this thesis, may have his or her own definition and opinion of what prayer means. After piles of books to read, a long time to figure out, cassettes of bible study about prayer to hear and understand, and experiencing prayer by herself, the writer then concludes that prayer is the expression of one's faithfulness before God in everyday life and in spiritual union with God; through the Holy Spirit that Jesus puts inside in every believer's heart in the form of worship, praise and petitions to His assistance to fulfil his/her daily needs, such as food, fresh air, blessings, health, etc.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, the writer admits that the Holy Bible is the only book that consists of God's words, a book where she can find the guide of prayer. In the Holy Bible, Wilson (2006), identified eleven great prayers that have been written by many people in the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Those eleven great prayers are:

1. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 5: 5-15).
2. Moses prayer for Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 32: 9-14).
3. Abraham's prayer for Sodom (Genesis 18:16-33).
4. David's prayer for pardon and confession of sin (Psalm 51).
5. David's prayer at the end of life (1 Chronicles 29: 9-20).
6. Hezekiah's petitions for deliverance and healing (2 Kings 19: 14-19, 20:1-7).
7. David's psalm of surrender (Psalm 149).
8. Daniel's confession on behalf of his people (Daniel 9:1-19).
9. Nehemiah's prayer for success (Nehemiah 1: 1-2, 9).
10. Jesus' prayer of submission at Gethsemane (Luke 22: 39-46).
11. Paul's prayers for the Ephesians believers (Ephesians 1: 15-23; 3: 14-21).

One of these prayers, The Lord's Prayer, has attracted the writer's attention to do a deeper study. It is said to be the most appropriate prayer to worship God deeply without hypocrisy (Evangelical dictionary of Theology, 1987:651). This prayer was taught by Jesus, the Son of God, the "Man of prayer" (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1986:1920); it is the prayer that consists of all aspects of life that are needed by every person to live a godly life, and it is the most perfect prayer that has ever been made and taught (Hutauruk, 2006:1). 'This prayer occupied an important place in the life and teachings of Jesus' (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1986:1920). It is 'without a doubt that this is the most widely-known passage of the bible and has been included in the Christian catechisms and liturgies of almost everybody since the days of the Apostolic Fathers, that it is usually known by its first line: Pater Noster (Latin), Unser Vater (Germany), Onze Vader (dutch), Bapa Kami (Indonesian), and so on through the manifold tongues of mankind' (The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol.3, 1976: 972). This prayer also covers the prayer in relation between human beings and God and among human beings. All these claims motivate the writer to unravel the text of The Lord's Prayer to see its components, functions, and meanings to see whether they deserve the claim of making this prayer the most appropriate one.

Although there are two versions according to its writers: St. Matthew and St. Luke, the writer is more interested in St. Matthew's Version because it is the first version that leads her to write this thesis, as the writer hears it at church; besides it is by pattern is more liturgical since it is completed with the doxology part and it is more commonly used in church liturgies. (The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of

the Bible Vol.3, 1976: 973). There are many verses of the Holy Bible's translation verses that exist in Christian community (New International Version, King James Version, Good News Bible, and New International Version), but in this study the writer choose to use the King James Version Bible. This is due to the fact that it is "one of the authorized Holy bible version that are admitted internationally" (Schwarz, 1995: 50), although it was never formally authorized by King James VI or the parliament (Metzger, 1993:760). King James version was translated from the late Greek copies of the original known as Koine (common) which comes from the fourth centuries (Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, 1987: 136). Besides, the King James Version of the Lord's Prayer has the Doxology part which doesn't exist in other versions

To sum up, the writer has decided to analyze the text of The Lord's Prayer because the writer has known and rendered this prayer ever since she learned in her early childhood. Besides, this institution is a Christian-based university of Catholic denomination, where The Lord's Prayer is at the centre of its Christian Civitas Academica. Moreover, so far, she has never seen such a study before, though there have been some studies that analyse a Bible text such as the one done by Erlyana which is entitled 'A Study on Imagery, Figurative Language and Parallelism of King David's Psalms as found in the King Kames Version Bible'. It is under all these considerations, that the writer with all her shortcomings has taken all the courage to analyze this prayer with the objectives stated below.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

In line with the background of the study, the major research question of this study is formulated as follow:

“Textually speaking, what makes the Lord’s Prayer the most appropriate prayer for a Christian to worship God?”

To come to the answer to this major question, one has to answer the following minor questions first. The questions are:

1. What are the key verses of the Lord’s Prayer?
2. What function is implied by each key verse of the Lord’s Prayer?
3. What are the key terms of each key verse of the Lord’s Prayer?
4. What meaning(s) does each key term of the Lord’s Prayer carry?

1.3 The Objectives

In line with the statement of the statement of the problems, the major objective of this study is:

“To find and describe “things” found in its text that make The Lords Prayer the most appropriate prayer for a Christian to worship God.”

In order to achieve this major objective, this study first of all has to:

1. Find and discuss the key verse of the Lord’s Prayer
2. Find and discuss the function(s) of each key verse of the Lord’s Prayer
3. Find and discuss the key terms of each Key verse of the Lord’s Prayer.
4. Find and discuss the meanings that are implied in each key term of the Lord’s Prayer.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to broaden the readers' view about related topic of prayer, especially The Lord's Prayer; and further, build the readers' understanding and motivation in praying appropriately as taught by Jesus Christ and demonstrated The Lord's Prayer. it is also expected that other students might be interested to analyze other topics that are encountered in the Holy Bible, the best book that has ever been written (Henry, 1961: 1).

Dealing with the theoretical issues, it is expected that the findings of this study will bring a new horizon in analysing Biblical texts types of written discourse using the Genre of the Discourse analysis principal.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the theory of Discourse in general which mainly concentrated on the written discourse and the exegesis. Connected with the written discourse, the main analysis are only limited among the relation of key verses and key terms that are encountered in The Lord's Prayer; while in relation to the exegesis, it is more to find the messages of The Lord's Prayer.

Another theory that is used in this analysis is the theory of prayer, the ACTS, an acronym for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication or Intercession. This theory is used by the writer as the parameter in measuring whether the Lord's Prayer is appropriate as a prayer or not.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the key verses and their functions, key terms of each verse and their meanings encountered in The Lord's Prayer. The text is taken from St. Matthew, the King James Version Holy Bible. The script that are used as the main source is taken from the part of the book of St. Matthew 6:9-13, although there are also written the same prayer in the book of Luke 11: 2-4 of the same Bible. This is according to consideration that the prayer that is written in the book of Matthew is more liturgical and commonly used in churches sermon than the Luke version (Hutauruk, 2006).

The analysis of this study focuses not only on religion issues, but also on literature analysis. But, since the text that is used is religious text, the writer tries to present the evidence and the meanings based on the fact taken from the Holy Bible as the main source in analysing Christian Literature. Dealing with the analysis of The Lord's Prayer text, the writer will involve Discourse method that is limited only on its language function; besides that the writer will also use the exegesis theory to support her in finding the meaning.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid ambiguity in understanding the concept of this study, the writer wrote down several explanations of the key terms that might be needed to help the readers to understand the study better; they are:

1.7.1 Prayer

Faithfulness before God in everyday life and in spiritual union with God as the Father; through the Holy Spirit that Jesus put inside in every believer's heart so that they can freely express what's on their mind in form of worship, praise and including asking for His assistance and sufficiency to every day's problems and it is part of the attitude of living.

1.7.2 The Lord's Prayer

It refers to the perfect model of prayer (Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, 1987:651) that consists of a set of petitions and doxology that is recorded in Matthew 6: 9-13 (The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol.3, 1975: 972). It is the prayer that is taught by Jesus himself.

1.8 The organization of the thesis

This study is organized into five chapters, each of which chapter will discuss different aspects. The first chapter discusses about the background of the study or the introduction that consists of the reason why the writer wrote the study. Chapter two primarily discusses the theoretical framework that underlies and supports the study, such as the study of Discourse and Exegesis and as the additional literature background to the study, the brief explanation on the holy Bible and its history, the concept of prayer in Christianity, and The Lord's Prayer text itself that also includes the simple historical review about it. In order to prove that this work wasn't plagiarized from particular experts, the writer also put the former experts' work that has already done such work before. These Experts' view will be put in a table to make it easier to compare.

Next, chapter three discusses the research methodology that covers the nature of the study, the research design, the data of the study, the instrument, the data collection procedure, the parameter and the data analysis procedure. Chapter four, there will be the results and the findings which consist of the analysis of the text and the explanation of the findings. Last, chapter five of this thesis will be completed with the conclusion of the study and suggestions for further study.