

Matthew 6:9-15 – “Teach Us To Pray”

Jesus has been addressing the area of our motives in service. We talked a good deal about prayer last week as Jesus showed us how we can pray with wrong motives. So, after seeing what prayer is not, Jesus now shows us what prayer is to be.

Now what I think is really cool is that in Luke’s gospel where we get this same account of the Lord’s prayer, we read: *“Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray...” (Luke 11:1).*

- After spending time with Jesus, the disciples saw something that was so vital and important in Jesus that they wanted to see it replicated in their life. They didn’t ask if they could learn to do the miracles that Jesus did. They weren’t wanting training in walking on water or multiplying bread. They didn’t ask if they could learn to preach like Jesus. In fact, they didn’t even ask teach us how to pray, they just asked, *teach us to pray*.
- They just wanted to be people of prayer – just as they saw their master Jesus doing.

And before we get into this, Jesus has already told us not to use vain repetition in prayer. And the crazy thing is, this prayer gets used as a repeated, memorized prayer. People are quick to show their religiosity by saying, *“I say the Lord’s prayer every day.”* But this isn’t what’s intended. This is not *what* we are to pray verbatim, this is rather *how* we are to pray, using this as a guide, not a quote.

- Dr. Robert A. Cook has often said, “All of us have one routine prayer in our system; and once we get rid of it, then we can really start to pray!”¹

Again, this really isn’t the Lord’s prayer – that’s seen in John 17. This is more accurately the disciple’s prayer. A model for how to pray.

Notice the nouns here are all plural. When we pray we are interceding for the believers around the world. We come together through prayer. And it helps us realize we are just a small part of the bigger picture. It can quickly shrink some of the problems we stress out over.

- But also, we are reminded to not have any bitterness, or offences with a brother. How could we pray properly as this family unit if there was?

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 26). Victor Books.

We're going to break this prayer down into several different parts:

1. The Person = Our Father
2. The Place = In Heaven
3. The Praise = Hallowed be Your name
4. The Purpose = Your kingdom come, Your will be done
5. The Provision = Give us this day our daily bread
6. The Pardon = Forgive us our debts
7. The Protection = Deliver us from the evil one
8. The Preeminence = Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever

6:9 - *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*

The Person

First of all as we come into the place of prayer we're reminded who we are approaching.

We must never forget that God is our Father. We have a special relationship with Him. The Jews forgot the Name of God thinking it was too holy to write down or say. They never used that term Father (Abba – Daddy). So, what's changed? Did God change? No, but our relationship to Him did through Jesus Christ:

- **John 1:12**, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."*
- **1 John 3:1**, *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"*

Yes, God is holy but we never need to forget who He is – our Father. And we can just praise Him for that.

We don't begin to pray using a tone or voice that is trying to reach an unreachable God. He is our Father.

- When my kids were younger and I'd be working from home, they could come rushing down into my office and bust the door open, knowing that I'm there ready to receive them. They didn't stand at the door and speak in a way to impress me or garner my attention: *"Oh daddy, thou that makest thine home a place of splendour and majesty. I come before thee in awe and reverence at thy mighty hand."*
- We can talk to God like a child talks with his dad.

- **Hebrews 4:16**, *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

The Place

Our Father is **in heaven**. It's not that He's out of touch with what we're dealing with on earth but that He is so completely transcendent over all that is on the earth. He is ruling over all from a heavenly perspective.

And when we pray we get to approach Him and gain that same heavenly perspective over the things on earth.

The Praise

But now in case we begin to take God too lightly or loosely, we are reminded that His name is **Hallowed**, in other words He is holy. A person's name was synonymous with His character. So, it's not just His name, but His very character that is to be revered, hallowed, seen as holy. We are to esteem God highly.

- This is not something we do out of fear, it's something we do out of love. To hallow the name of God would be similar to treasuring it; seeing the great value and worth in the name of God.

6:10 - Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

The Purpose

This is a very important element of prayer. We're not praying to get our will done in heaven, we're praying for God's will to be done on earth.

This is us laying down our own rights and wants to express our desire for God to reign supreme. And this is such a wonderful by-product of prayer – to just come in alignment with God's heart.

- This is what we see so often in the Psalms where the Psalmist will approach God with heaviness or fear or worry, and as they sit with the Father, they begin to have a heart change. What may have begun with panic, ends with praise.
- And as we remind ourselves that our Father is indeed reigning, and that He's coming back again, we begin to have our hearts set on the right things. We're not dwelling on the temporal aspects of this world.

When we pray your kingdom come, we're essentially agreeing that this world is not what it's supposed to be. And it will only be made better when Jesus returns as it's rightful King.

This needs to be our hope and expectation. Your Kingdom come! Yes we want His Kingdom to come in our lives, where He is ruling in our hearts, but we pray also, Lord, may your Kingdom come now to this earth. Come Lord Jesus! With that sort of anticipation we will purify ourselves and be people of prayer as we await His soon and coming return.

But again, this is all centered around the will of God and not our own. Prayer is about time spent with our heavenly Father and getting in line with His will. Our circumstances may not always drastically change through prayer, but if the Lord can change our hearts and attitude in the midst of those circumstances, that will be sufficient.

Notice these first three requests are centered on God. We pray for His name to be worshipped, His kingdom to come, and His will to be done. After tuning our hearts on to God, then we can properly pray for our own needs and the needs of others as we're directed to next.

- Be certain that your prayer time is more than just rattling off your needs, but that you're rather taking time to express your need simply for God. That you look to Him before looking at yourself.

6:11 - *Give us this day our daily bread.*

The Provision

We've already been shown that God knows what we need before we even ask Him (6:8). So why should we pray for our daily bread (which is referencing the needs we may have for that day)?

- Again, God wants us to express our dependency on Him. Coming to God for our daily bread is not to remind Him of what we need, it's to remind us that He is the answer to what we need. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights"* (**James 1:17**).

Now we're not too familiar with the idea of having to pray for our *daily* bread. Many people have full cupboards and pantries. We have supplies ready to meet our needs. It's easy to get complacent and not have to trust the Lord. But He wants us to live that life where we see Him as our daily sustenance and help.

George Mueller wrote in his book, "Life of Trust", about the many times he trusted God for His daily bread. And how God supplied many times even at the point of sitting down for dinner with nothing on the table. It wasn't usually in a

large amount where it covered them for the next month. It was just enough for their daily bread.

- That's the way God loves to work. That's what He did for Israel in the wilderness. Pick enough manna just for that day. Because He wanted His people to stay reliant on Him. If He gives us enough for the month, we tend to get very comfortable and complacent.
- And it goes the same for His word. *"Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord"* (**Deuteronomy 8:3**).
- God just wants fresh fellowship from His people!

6:12 - ***And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.***

The Pardon

When we ask God to forgive us, it's not unto salvation. Our sins have been forgiven and atoned for through the cross. But we of course falter and fail and when we sin today, though it doesn't forfeit our salvation, it does affect our relationship with our heavenly Father.

- My children don't lose their status as my children when they mess up. If they've done something against me, it's certainly going to hurt our relationship, but they don't stop being my kids. And the minute they own up to it and make it right, our relationship is back to where it should be.
- In the same way, we should be walking in repentance, asking our Father to forgive us when we mess up. When we do our fellowship with our Father is restored to what it should be.
- **1 John 1:9**, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

And we're also reminded in this prayer that we're to be forgiving others that have wronged us.

Why should we forgive? Because we've been forgiven an incredible debt.

- **Colossians 3:13**, *"bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."*

The amount that we understand the grace and mercy shown to us by our Saviour will be proportional to the grace and mercy we show others.

- Understand that you were as much of a wretched sinner as the next person and we are all recipients of God's great grace!

6:13 - *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen*

The Protection

We don't pray this as though God is leading us into temptation. God does not tempt anyone.

James 1:12–13, *"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."*

- Temptation speaks of trials and testings. God does allow testings, but it's to approve us not harm us.

This prayer request is more about asking God to keep us strong and safe and to secure us from going down a path that would be to our harm. We are never so strong that we do not need the strength provided by prayer. Jesus reminds us of the humility we must have and the need to rely fully on Him for our daily protection.

The Pre-eminence

This prayer ends in a wonderful crescendo. It brings us back to the One who is in control. The kingdom and the power are yours God! You reign! You are in command of all and over all forever and ever.

This should cause us to walk away from prayer having anxieties lifted, discouragement removed, doubts erased. Prayer is meant to lift us out of the earthly doldrums and to be seated in the heavenlies with rejoicing in the God who is above all. It's where we are reminded of the power of God and that all is happening for His glory.

6:14-15 - *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

Jesus pauses now to elaborate on one part of this prayer – forgiveness. Again, this is not forgiveness unto salvation. God has already forgiven us our sins. But denying forgiveness to others will hinder our fellowship and communion with God. When we don't forgive others we're denying our common ground as sinners in need of a Saviour. That moment we respond with forgiveness, we'll experience the Father's forgiveness in a fresh way.

If we're not right with others, we're not going to feel right with God. And this is an area that will greatly affect our coming to God in prayer. So, you can see the importance of getting this right and the need for emphasis after this discussion on prayer.