

What About Prayer • Part 2

Matthew 6:9-11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *In Tomato Sauce*

1. A father was trying to teach his young daughter how to say grace before meals.
 - a. he taught her to say thanks for what was before her,
 - b. and to end her prayer with the words, "In Jesus name, Amen."
2. After a few weeks of coaching, he decided she was ready to say grace all by herself.
3. She started out fine, thanking God for her mommy and daddy and brother and sister and for the rolls and the salad
4. Then she ended with a big, "And thank you, God, for the spaghetti!" and lifted her head.
5. So the father prompted her by saying, "In . . ."
 - b. at first, she was a little confused.
 - c. but then she brightened and exclaimed, "In tomato sauce. Amen."

B. *Learning To Pray*

1. Learning to pray - that's what we're about this morning
2. This is the second week in our series on Prayer
3. And today we're picking it up we're we left off last week - in Matthew 6 where Jesus is teaching the disciples how to pray
4. Last week we saw that we are not to *pretend* in prayer
 - a. we are not to use prayer as a pretense for *preaching* to others
 - b. no - we are to be sincere in our prayers and talk to God!
5. We also saw that we are not to use *vain repetitions* in our prayers, as though the sheer volume of our words will force God's hand
6. God is not impressed by great swelling words - but genuine sincerity and attention to God does catch His ear

C. *The Disciple's Prayer*

1. Today, we pick it up at v. 9
2. And as we do, we come to what is classically known as "the Lord's Prayer"
3. But really, this is a misnomer as we will see

II. TEXT

A. *Vs. 9*

{9} "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

1. Here's why we should call this the *Disciple's Prayer* rather than the *Lord's Prayer*

- a. Jesus is telling His followers this is the manner in which *they* should pray
 - b. the title *The Lord's Prayer* should probably be reserved for Jesus' prayer to the Father we see recorded in John 17 -
 - c. that great prayer He prayed after the Last Supper, right before they headed for Gethsemane
 - d. *this* is the Disciple's Prayer
2. Now, we immediately run in to a problem
 - a. in the verses just before this, as we saw last week, Jesus warns the disciples not to pray automatic, rote prayers
 - b. it's probably safe to say that almost all of us here thing morning know this prayer by heart and have prayed it word for word many times
 - c. it has become a rote prayer - so is Jesus contradicting Himself here?
 - d. No!
 - e. notice carefully what He said, "In this *manner*, therefore, pray . . . "
 - 1) He did not say, "Pray these words"
 - 2) He said, "Prayer after this fashion"
 - 3) "Model your prayers after this example"
 3. Friends, we err when we just slavishly repeat the words of this prayer
 - a. Jesus never intended that we would just memorize the bare words -
 - b. and then recite them as some kind of magical incantation that unlocks the doors of heaven
 4. Jesus is giving the disciples a framework for prayer
 - a. He is showing them the confidence they can have in prayer
 - b. and the kind of things they should bring before the throne of God
 5. We should memorize this prayer only so that we might use it as the framework we can pour specific requests in to
 6. Now, notice how our prayers should begin . . .

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name

7. Prayer rightly begins with praise!
 - a. it begins by solidly fixing our hearts and minds on God
 - b. by remembering who and what He is
 - c. He is our Father
 - 1) more than Creator and Sustainer of the universe
 - 2) more than perfect Judge
 - 3) through the Work of Jesus Christ, He has become our Father
 - 4) with all the goodness and tenderness that perfect fatherhood means
 - d. He is our Father *in HEAVEN*
 - 1) He is not an *earthly* father, subject to error and prone to selfishness
 - 2) He is our Father in heaven, and He is Perfect!
 - 3) not with a perfection that is cold and unapproachable
 - 4) no, His Fatherhood is perfect, which means He is present, He is here, to shower the benefits of His love and provision on His children
 - 5) His perfection is not the judgmental perfectionism that some of you encountered with your earthly Fathers so that whatever you did was never good enough and you always felt inadequate
 - 6) our heavenly Father loves and accepts us completely in Christ

- 7) and He accounts His perfection to us through Christ!
- e. so the God we pray to is intimately concerned about us because we are His children
- 8. What an important place to begin our prayer - with a careful consideration of whom we are speaking with
- 9. And no sooner do we see who and what He is, than our hearts respond with praise and worship

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name

10. In Psalm 100 the psalmist declares,

Come before His presence with singing. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

- 11. It's so easy to enter in to prayer full of our cares and burdens
 - a. as we begin to prayer, we are thinking of all the problems we want to see God solve
 - b. we are weighed down with anxiety or guilt
- 12. The problem is that if we fail to begin with praise, setting our attention on God and His greatness, then our problems may actually *eclipse* the Lord
 - a. the sun is a huge ball of light, hundreds of thousands of miles across
 - b. yet I can block out the sun with my puny little thumb - all because the sun is far away and my thumb is as close as I chose to make it
- 13. Our problems are *puny* compared to God
 - a. but because they so close to us, they can easily eclipse Him and His power
 - b. that's why we must begin with a steady gaze on God
 - c. as we praise and worship Him, it puts our lives and our problems in the right perspective
- 14. "Hallowed" is a word we don't use today, except when we are saying this prayer!
 - a. it simply means "holy-fied"
 - b. if something is *hallowed* it is *made* holy
- 15. Jesus is saying that our first concern in prayer, the very first thing that should occupy our attention is the Person and Nature of God
 - a. we must know and own Him as our Father
 - b. then we must worship and praise Him
 - c. it must be our first priority that the honor and glory due Him is given to Him before anything else
- 16. You see, this is not only a call to begin with personal praise; it is the most important request the people of God can make
 - a. before ever we begin to list off our *personal* needs, we pray for the most important need in all of Creation
 - b. that God's Name be *hallowed*
 - 1) first in our lives
 - 2) and then in others
 - c. friends, if God's named were hallowed is it ought to be, the problems of this world would evaporate!

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name

17. Begin your prayer with praise!

B. V. 10

{10} Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

1. After praise, we move to *intercession*
2. *Intercession* is simply prayer for the needs of others
3. And as Jesus reveals here, the real focus of our prayers as we pray for others is that God's will would be done in their lives
4. Now, the ultimate expression of God's will is His rule over all the earth
 - a. so the appropriate place for us to begin is to pray that Jesus would come again and set up His throne
 - b. think about how many issues that are troubling our world today will be immediately vanquished and banished when Jesus comes!
 - 1) injustice, abuse, inequity
 - 2) pollution, war, poverty
 - 3) all these will be overcome in His coming
 - c. so our first priority is to pray for His kingdom to come
5. But there is another way that the Kingdom can come *before* the visible return of Christ
 - a. you see, the kingdom of God is where ever God rules, -
 - b. where ever His kingship is recognized and honored
 - c. while we wait for Him to come, we can pray that His kingdom would come into the individual lives of those around us
 - d. that they would surrender to Him and own Him as their Lord and Sovereign
6. We can pray that His will would be done on earth, in their lives right now, just as it is being perfectly lived out in heaven every moment
7. Now clearly, we aren't to just slavishly repeat these words
 - a. we are to get *specific* with them
 - b. "Lord Jesus, I pray for your will to be done in my children's lives"
 - 1) "Please open my son's eyes to Your truth and show Him how to choose wisely in the selection of his friends."
 - 2) "Lord, at work, please give my boss the wisdom to not lie about our project but to tell the truth because I know you do not honor deceit."
 - c. we are to get *specific*, as specific as we can, about the situations around us, whether they are close or afar
 - d. "God, please deliver the President from the fear of man and the lust for power and bring him the wisdom and insight he needs to govern this country righteously."
8. This is how we are to pray the words . . .

{10} Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

C. V. 11

{11} Give us this day our daily bread.

1. After intercession, we move to *petition* which is praying for our *own* needs
2. And I love the way Jesus teaches us to pray about them

- a. it's so simple - "God, give us food to eat!"
 - b. there's no pretense, no flowery words
 - c. like a child who calls out to it's mother in the night for a glass of water
 - d. there is the confident certainty that all one has to do is ask, and God will answer with what is *needed*
3. But note that -
 - a. God gives us what is *needed*, not necessarily what is *wanted*
 - b. He has promised to meet all our *needs*, not our *greeds*
 - c. we are to pray for our *bread*, not *croissant*, not *chocolate donut* or *Egg McMuffin*
 4. And also notice the frequency of this prayer - "Give us *this day* our *daily* bread."
 5. We would like to pray, "Give me this day my *monthly* allotment of bread, and a freezer to store it in, and a house to put the freezer in."
 6. Why didn't Jesus *economize* and teach us to pray more *efficient* prayers?
 7. Why bug God *daily* for our needs?
 8. Here's the answer - and get it because it's absolutely critical: GOD ISN'T BUGGED BY OUR PRAYERS!
 - a. He tells us to come to Him daily for our needs because, quite frankly -
 - b. just as our bodies have daily needs, so does our spirit
 - c. in fact, while our bodies can go for several days without food,
 - d. communion with God is the very *breath* of the spirit
 - e. we can no longer thrive spiritual without prayer than we can survive more than 2 minutes without air
 9. Friend, God is not bothered or pestered by your daily requests for help
 - a. on the contrary, your needs are sent by Him to draw you to Him
 - b. none of us is independent - everyone is dependent on God
 - c. the man or woman who thinks he or she doesn't need God is a fool!
 - d. we all live in the midst of a delicately balanced universe where everything is intimately connected to everything else
 - e. life is a fragile and precious gift - and apart from God's protection and grace, we would all be dead
 - f. it is He that keeps the planets spinning in their orbits
 - g. it is He that keeps the sun shining in the sky
 - h. it is He that keeps our feet in contact with the earth instead of spinning of into space
 10. This God, who already does for us a million things we've never even noticed, invites us to come to Him daily, and ask Him to give us what we need!
 11. And like a child has the confidence of knowing that it's father will provide what is needed, we can have the same confidence
 12. Though the prayer is a simple one - it looks to a God who is unlimited in His power to answer
 13. Some years ago a tired-looking woman entered a small corner grocery store and asked the owner for enough food to make a Christmas dinner for her children.
 - a. when he inquired how much she could afford,
 - b. she answered, "My husband was killed in an accident. Truthfully, I have

- nothing to offer but a little prayer."
- c. although the man was unmoved at first, he thought of a clever response to the woman's simple request.
 - d. he said sarcastically, "Write your prayer on a piece of paper and you can have its weight in groceries."
 - e. to his surprise, she plucked a folded note out of her pocket and handed it to him saying, "I already did that during the night while I was watching over my sick baby."
 - f. without even reading it, he put it on one side of his old-fashioned scales.
 - g. he said, "Well, let's see how much food this prayer is worth."
 - h. to his dismay the scales didn't move when he put a loaf of bread on the other side.
 - i. but he was even more upset when he added other items and it still would not move.
 - j. finally the scale was full and there was no more room
 - k. in disgust, he handed her a grocery bag and told her to load it herself
 - l. with a tearful "Thank you," the lady went on her way.
 - m. the grocer later discovered that the scales were out of order
 - n. something had jammed the mechanism and frozen them, though they had worked fine for the customer just before her
 - o. oh, by the way - that night, when cleaning up the shop after closing, he picked up the note with the woman's prayer that she had left behind
 - p. it simply read, "Please, dear Lord, give us this day our daily bread!"

D. Calvary

1. This brings me to something the Lord has laid on my heart that I want to share with you
2. As we have built this building, we have incurred some tremendous debts, as you can well imagine
3. We've been faithful as leaders to let you, the members of Calvary, know what they are
4. We've taught on the issue of stewardship and giving and sound biblical finances
5. And today, we still have some significant debts to pay for the construction
6. As I have asked the Lord for wisdom in all this to know what to do, I believe I've heard clearly from Him
 - a. we've been faithful to teach the truth about giving
 - b. we've been faithful to state the need to the fellowship
 - c. now, we need to stop talking to man, and we need to talk to God
7. So the elders and pastors are praying, "Lord, give Calvary Chapel this day, it's daily bread."
8. Lord, we look to You - You are our Provider
9. We don't ask you for petty wants - Lord we bring You our needs
10. Now, let me be frank - If I understand God right; He is going to provide *through* the gifts of His people
11. But *we* aren't going to ask them to give - We are going to ask *Him* to give -

- How He chooses to answer our prayer is not our concern
12. What I *am* going to ask is that just as you pray for *your* daily needs, you would include in that the needs of your church - Pray for the Lord's provision for our needs

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Moody*

1. We're only half way through this model for prayer, but we'll have to save the last half for next week
2. DL Moody is recognized as one of the greatest evangelists in the history of the church
3. He was a gifted and powerful speaker
4. But Moody knew the real secret of power was not in speaking to man; it was in speaking to God
5. He said, "I'd rather be able to pray than to be a great preacher. Jesus Christ never taught his disciples how to preach, but only how to pray."

B. *Teach Us To Pray*

1. May the Spirit teach us to pray
2. And may we catch a vision for what God can do if only we would give ourselves completely to Him
3. Not trusting in the cleverness of our own devices and plans, but casting ourselves on Him
4. Join us tonight as we come together to praise, intercede, and petition the throne of grace