

Title: HOW TO PRAY!

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Take your Bibles, please, and turn to Matthew chapter 6. The Gospel of Matthew chapter 6 beginning with Vs 9. This portion of Scripture is often referred to as the LORD'S PRAYER. But, technically speaking it really isn't the Lord's Prayer. It is really ~~the disciples prayer~~ *instruction concerning How To Pray*. The prayer that the Lord gave is found over in John chapter 17. ~~This is the prayer that we disciples ought to pray.~~ The disciples came to Jesus and ask: "Lord, teach us to Pray?" And in response to that question, Jesus ~~gave~~ *give* this instruction on HOW TO PRAY. So, what we have here in what we often call the LORD'S PRAYER is simply a PATTERN FOR EVERY BELIEVER TO FOLLOW IN LEARNING HOW TO PRAY. And it is this PATTERN OF PRAYER that I want to look at this morning. *OUR Series - What Does The Lord Want us To do - Pray*

Matthew chapter 6 beginning with Vs 9....(READ VS 9-13)

PRAYER

HOW TO PRAY. There are two issues involved. In learning how to pray there are two issues involved.

(1) Number one: the recognition of God's character and ^{sovereignty} sovereignty. When you learn to pray, you are learning how to talk to God. We are not talking to ourselves. We are not talking to be heard by others. We are talking to God. The issue is God. And the focus had better be on God's character and Sovereignty

And that is the very first issue about prayer. People who do not pray well are those who do not focus on God. The thing they focus on is something for themselves. Now, there is nothing wrong with asking God for "things". But, prayer that is the right kind of prayer, according to Jesus, always focuses on God and His character and His soveringty.

NOw, there are three specific things mentioned, here, which demonstrate that you are praying according to God's Character and sovereignty. Three things.

(1) Number one, Vs 9, OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN." What is that saying?

When we say, "OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN", we are talking about the POSITION OF GOD. He is in heaven. He is not on earth. He is observing things differently than we are. He is in control of things differently than we are in control of them. WHY? Because He is in heaven. OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN is recognizing His POSITION. *He is IN Heaven*

Psalms 115 verse 3 says.. "BUT GOD IS IN THE HEAVENS; He does whatever He pleases."

And the point of that verse is not simply to identify His geographical location. Because there is a sense in which God is everywhere. And I feel His presences as I pray. ^{SO} It is not simply to tell me that He is in Heaven. IT IS DEALING WITH HIS POSITION OVER THE WHOLE WORLD. And that He does what ever He pleases.

Psalms 135 verses 5 and 6 says: "For I know that the Lord is great. And that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord, pleases, He does, in heaven and on earth."

So, the first thing I notice about recognizing God's character and sovereignty in our Prayer Life is HIS POSITION. He is in heaven. Not on earth. He is not subject to the problems of man, or controlled by them. God is in heaven controlling all things. Praise God.

(2) Now, the second thing that demonstrates that we are praying according to God's character and sovereignty deals with his purity. WHO HE REALLY IS.

Vs 9 says, "Hallowed be thy name." The name is not a title. The name refers to the character and attributes and abilities of God.

The phrase "NAME OF GOD" is used some 850 times in the O.T. It is used over 200 times in the N.T. "WHO IS GOD" is the issue. And that "name" which is above every name is a name that we are invited to call upon. "CALL UPON MY NAME AND I WILL ANSWER YOU", Jesus said. ASK ANYTHING IN MY NAME, and I will do it."

A lot of the weaknesses of our prayer life is that we forget who we are talking to.

"Hallowed" means "to be Sanctified" or "to be set apart". What we are saying is this: "Lord, set apart for all to see the greatness of your name." The purity and holiness of God is being established. "Holy" in the sense that He is separated from sin. Also, He is separated from everything that He created and all the circumstances of life. Thus, He is able to see them and do something about them.

"Lord! I come to you. And I know who you are. You are in heaven. That is your position. Therefore, you do whatever you please. And I know, Lord, that your name is above every name. And there is nothing too hard for your name to do."

I call upon your character ..your attributes..your abilities. I believe in who you are...

Dear friends, there is a lot more in that simple statement than just repeating the words: HALLOWED BE THY NAME. We are saying: "God, your name deserves to be set apart on the earth. And all people know who you really are. I come to you believing that, Lord. That you are all that you claim to be. And I know you can answer prayer."

Dear friends, this is so wonderful when you recognize God's character and sovereignty.

(3B) But, there is something else here. And this deals with the Plan of God.
Now, Jesus is telling us HOW TO PRAY. And I wonder? Are you interested in the PLAN OF GOD? You had better be! Because God is certainly interested in His own plan. ^(1C) Vs 10 says..THY KINGDOM COME." Lord, I want your kingdom to come.

There is a sense in which God's kingdom is everywhere. God rules everywhere. There is a sense that the kingdom of God is there in the person of the King, himself, Jesus. And Jesus taught this in the Gospels.

There is a sense in which when I am born again, I enter the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom which is a spiritual Kingdom. The rule and reign of God in the hearts of all those who believe in Him.

But, there is, also, a physical manifestation of God's Kingdom. The Bible teaches that one day Jesus will set up his Kingdom on earth. And this prayer is asking that God's rule be established in this world right now.

Lord! Your Kingdom come. Therefore, do this to demonstrate who you really are. That you are in charge. YOUR KINGDOM COME. I want the plan of God to happen. I want that great kingdom to come when Christ rules and reigns over the whole earth. But, I want his kingdom to be manifested in all parts of my life, right now.. I want the world to know that God rules and reigns in my life, right now...Therefore, I come and pray: THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL, OR YOUR WILL BE DONE. One of the most important lessons that any person can learn about prayer is that it is not the will of the one asking, but the ~~will~~^{will} of the one to whom you ask that is the most important.

I hope you got that. Let me say it again. The most important lesson you can learn about prayer is that it is not the will of the one asking, but the will of the one to whom you ask that is the important issue.....(Did you get that? God it! Good! Great!)

It isn't "MY will be done." That is often how we pray. "God, could you change your will so that it conforms to my will." And that, dear friends, is why we have problems in our prayer life. Recognizing God's character and sovereignty. THY WILL BE DONE.

And then, isn't it interesting that it says "ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

You know, there is one place in the whole universe where the will of God is done every single day? There is no question about that. There is no talk back. No one is trying to stop it. And that one place is in heaven. So, when we pray we are to pray, GOD! I WANT YOUR WILL TO BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

So, the recognition of God's character and sovereignty is the first issue of prayer.

Dear friends, I trust that when you pray, you recognize God's character and Sovereignty? It is so important for a meaningful prayer life.

(2)This brings us to the second issue in a meaningful prayer life. This second issue deals with the request we should bring to God. What request should we bring to God? Three basic request.?

(1)Number one: Provision of food. And notice..nothing is in advance. It is only on a daily bases. It says, "Give us this day our daily bread." The bread that we need for today. He is not saying that you should pray: "Lord! I would like a years supply of steak and eggs."

That is not how we should pray. You see, the point behind this is to depend upon the Lord every day in your life. ISN'T THAT A SIMPLE THING? How wonderful that our Lord would take the most basic need of human life..eating.....

And he would say, "Do you know what I want you to do when you pray? I want you to just trust me for those kinds of things in your life." WOW!

But what do we do?

money

Hay, I make the ~~money~~. I buy the food. We have lots of stuff in the old refrigerator. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

27K

Interesting isn't it? God wants us to totally depend on Him every day.

Now, let me tell you what you should do if you have a lot of stuff in your cupboard. And you say, "Hay! why do I have to ask God for ~~that~~? I mean I have it all here. Why do I have to pray? We got it here."

Food

only

I just want to show you something that might open up your eyes a little bit. Turn to Proverbs chapter 30. Proverbs chapter 30. Verses 7 to 9.

Concerning basic foods. And Jesus saying "this is how you should pray. And I find that this is one thing that many of us leave out. We are kind-off, "fox hole" ~~top~~ of ~~people~~ ^{christians} in my way of thinking. You know, in the military that say that there are no athesis in the foxhole. And ^{The Foxhole is} where you are most likely to hear someone pray in the middle of a battle where someone is really facing a crisis ^{of Life or death} in his life. And a lot of us are like that. We have "foxhole" prayer life. We get into a real serious jam and we call upon the Lord. And we should. Because he never gets tired of us calling upon his name.

But, the Lord said, "Do you want to learn how to pray? O.K. Then you pray every day, for even your food."

O.K., but what, do you do, when you have it all? Proverbs 30 verse 7 says.. (read vs. 7-9)

Solomon

Now, what ~~he~~ ^{Solomon} is saying is, "I want my daily needs to be met. But I am not sure I want to be rich in this. Because when I get full, the possibility is there that I might deny you and say 'who is the Lord'? So, I don't depend upon him every day."

But

Now, think for a moment. Why is it that we have to have ^{Things} ~~stuff~~ taken away from us before we depend upon the Lord? ^{Why?}

Turn back to Deuteronomy chapter 8. Deuteronomy chapter 8. According to the Lord's teaching to Israel when they came into the promise of land, they needed to be carefully when God would bless then and supply all their needs.

(G) In Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 10, it says, (read vs 10-18)

You see one of the dangers in this whole matter of prayer is that prayer becomes that last resort. You know? Most of us say.. "Why pray when you can worry" Right? When we should say, "Why worry when you can pray."

But, we don't depend upon the Lord all the time. Especial when your needs are being met. But, wait a minute. Who gave you the ability to have a job, get a salary, have wealth, live in this country, and all that sort of thing? Even when it happens that you are full, God says "be carefull". "That you don't forget to bless my Holy Name."

One of the secrets of a prayer life with the Lord, is a constant spirit of praise and thanksgiving and blessings that flow out of your heart to God whose character is so precious and wonderful. And He has promised to supply your needs. And the blessing of your heart to Him for whatever God has given you. Paul said, "~~I have learned to abound. And I have learned to be abased.~~ ^{learned} I learned to have everything. ^{and I have learned to have nothing} ~~And I went with nothing.~~ But in every state I have learned to be content. And I know that my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." IS THAT OUR EXPERIENCE? ^{Our Daily Bread}

I think more about our prayer life is reveal in times, quote of blessings, then in times of great hardship. We learn more about where our hearts really are between ourselves and the Lord, when we have whatever we quote "need." And the more materialist and the more sufficient a given culture is, the less he senses his dependence upon God. And God warns us about that. DON'T FORGET ME. That is why I think one of the simplest acts, public demonstrations to the whole world that Christians believe, that God is behind everything, that He is the final resource, is when we go into public restaurants and we bow our heads and thank God for ^{our} ~~the~~ food.

You say, "Well, we have so much." Well, thank God for it. And beware lest you forget the Lord. One of the greatest demonstrations that any of us can make to give honor to God and let this generation know what we really believe is to bow our heads and thank God for the food in public restaurants

And by the way, don't do it as a secret service Christian. Don't sit at the table and say, "Let's pray silently so that no one is embarrassed." First of all, don't do that if you are out with me, ^{Now} I might say, "let each of us pray silently." But if you say, 'let's pray silently so that no one will be embarrassed.' Don't do that with me. I mean, I might pray ^{for that} for the whole resturant will hear the Gospel." But, anyway, thank God for your food.

Now, let's come back to ^{verse 6} Luke 11. So, what request do we bring to God? First, you come to God with a daily dependence on Him for every single need. And of course you should expand that beyond food. I know that. But, oh, isn't it wonderful to know that God is there every day. Every day.

It is not only that I need to depend upon him, but it is the availability of God to answer prayer every day of my life. That there is not a day in my life of all that is taking place that isn't important to God. He knows the sparrow that falls from the tree. And every hair of my head is numbaered. He knows all of this stuff. And He is there, available, concerned that we talk to him. Boy that is sweet.

(2) Not only provision of food, but the second ^{request} one is kind off interesting. PARDON FOR OUR SINS. The seond request that Jesus told us to pray for is for forgiveness of our sins.

Now, remember. This prayer is for Christians. It is not for people to become christians. That is not what it says. It says, "Our Father who ^{is} in heaven. " People who have a special relationship already to God. They are disciples. "FORGIVE US OUR SINS.

You say, "Now, wait a minute. I thought you said, many times from the pulbit, that all sins are forgiven the moment one believes in Jesus Christ."

OH, YES, that is true. That is what the Bible calls ^{posternal} ~~positional~~ forgiveness. That means in terms of the penalty of sin. The soul that sins it shall die. The penalty of sin. Death and hell. That has been paid for when Jesus died on the cross in my place. So, forgiveness, the payment of that ransom, and that penalty. That has been done. ^{we have been} ~~And I said~~ forgiven..positional before God.

(8)

But, what do I do as a christian when I sin? There is the matter of practical forgiveness. *This* is often seen in our lives, when someone sins against us and they come to us and confess. And we say, "I forgive you."

The Lord Jesus is applying that to the Heavenly Father. That we should pray and say, "Forgive us our sins."

Now, I wonder, do we pray that way? Our Lord deals with basic every day relationships with Him. And one of the things that can really hurt your prayer life and your christian experience is when you tolerate and entertain sin in your life. You do not confess it and seek the forgiveness of your heavenly father from a practical standpoint. And it is all based on what Jesus has all ready done.

And you know how this works on a human relationship. A father has strained relations with his son. And there is something between them. When his son has done something wrong. And it hasn't been strightened out. And they haven't sought forgiveness. And you as a father love your son. And you techical have forgiven ~~them~~ *him* by way of position. He is your child. He doesn't become unborn. He is your son. But there is something strained in your relationship.

How much more our heavaen Father who loves us far more than any earthly father. David said, "If I entertain sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Sin breaks our relationship with God so that He will not even hear us. Sin blocks the flow of God's power in our life. It blocks the flow of blessings FORGIVE US OUR SINS. So, important, *don't friends*

Now, the next statement says "For *as we also have forgiven our debtors* we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us."

Now, people ask this word "*debtors* indebted" is this the word "sin" or "trespass." Or, the word "debt." And I am sure you know that some folks pray.. "Forgive us or tresspasses", while we in this church pray "forgive us our debts." Which way is it?

9

The story is told about a Baptist church and a Presybertain church that was going to merg. But they were in disagreement on how to say the Lord's prayer. The Baptist said that it should be "debts." And the Presybterians said that it should be "tresspasses." So, the local newspaper, in this little town, reported on the meeting that they had. And said that they couldn't come to agreement. So, the Baptist went back to their debts. And the Presybterians to their trespasses. (ha)

How, foolish we should argue over that. It is not talking about finances. It is talking about sin. There is something wrong in your relationship with someone else. And this reall is an illustration. We are to forgive sins of our brothers and sisters. Why? because God forgives our sins.

And I like the way ^{must} ~~the~~ develops this principle. He contrast the human level with the devine level. Our Lord says, "here is the way it should be on the human level, ^{we should forgive our} why? Because that is the way it is on the divine level.

Forgive our sins. We need to strighten our relationship with God. Otherwise our prayer life is hindered. And when that happens we can ^{not} forgive others.

(3 B) A third request is for protection from temptation and evil.

Now, Luke doesn't record the word "evil" or literally "evil one." But, Matthew does. And really it should be their.

Now, this doesn't mean that God is tempting us. The Bible says that God does not tempt us to sin. ^{So} Now, follow this carefully. Let me translate ~~literally~~ "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliever us." You see, there are two ~~verbs~~ ^{verbs}: don't lead us... ^{but} ~~don't~~ deliever us. From ^{whom} ~~who~~?....GOD?...NO!!! "from ~~the~~ evil one." ^{or the evil one}

So, who is tempting you? The evil one. Not God. Satan is the tempter. The deliverance and being rescued and asking for God's protection is not to fall into temptation. ~~To lead into~~. For example Jesus said, "watch and pray that you enter not into temptation." [Will we be tempted? YES!!! But, don't enter into it. God, don't let us be lead into it. It is much more than simply being tempted. The devil tempts us. ^{But} the prayer is: God I need your protection. I don't want to fall into this thing. And I want to be ~~delivered~~ delivered from the evil one.

The word "deliver" is a military term. It means "to rescue". It is used of a ^{soldier} ~~prisoner~~ who has fallen into the hands of the enemy. God, I have a problem in my life. I have yielded to temptation. The enemy is on me. ^{He has captured me} God deliever me. And Jesus said, "I want you to pray that all the time."

It seems to me what our Lord is saying to us is "be careful that you don't become over confident as a Christian. Be careful that you don't think that you don't need to pray this way every day."

Paul wrote about the Lord who is faithful and will establish us and keep us from the evil one. And I believe it is important that we remember that the devil will tempt us, especially the live fish going ^{to the lake} ~~up~~ stream. I mean, a lot of us may have engnored God in our lives, we are not praying. We are not living for the Lord. ^{And} the devil already has us right where he wants us... apathy and ^{complacence - critical spirit - ego - and fear and a lot of lies} ~~confidence~~. But, you decide to live for the Lord. And the devil is going to fight you with all the guns of Hell. He is going to bring all the guns of temptation he can against you. And here is a pray, daily, in our lives... "God, deliever me. I know that there is a lot of temptation in this world. Lord, I want you to rescue me.' That is so important.

Well, dear folks, that is the pattern of prayer. And it behooves us to pray as the Lord wants us to pray. WHY?

So, that we will be able to say with faith and confidence, "Thine is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory forever." Amen.