

Sermon on the Mount: Called to Prayer 1 (Matt 6:5-13)



The structure of the Lord's Prayer is as follows:

- i. Address
- ii. 3 Petitions (God centred)
- iii. 3 petitions (Our Need centred)
- iv. Doxology

A. Address: 'Our Father in Heaven'

The challenge of serving with our hearts connected to God in prayer.

- a. Jesus introduced a revolutionary thought combining the common Jewish emphasis of *the majesty of God as the Creator* and *the tenderness of the Father's love* – joining of the heavenly power with the fatherly love. (C.f. Rev 4:1-5 – *God's Person; God's People; God's Power; God's Presence.*) A.W. Tozer said, 'A low view of God has been the biggest problem in the Church in every generation.'

Jesus brought into one the heavenly power and the fatherly love, unlike Greek gods. The majesty of God gives us faith in God who is greater than all our problems. The tender love of the Father helps us to draw close to Him in intimacy. C.f. 'Transcendence of God' and 'Immanence (Intimacy) of God.' The Father's heart is always predisposed to compassion. Our heavenly Father wants relationship and partnership with us and our Father has a specific plan for us as a father has for a son.

- b. Need for extended time of exposure of our soul to God - We need to 'settle our soul' before we begin our petition. Small coins can block out the entire sun if we put them on our eyes. Strikingly the very first word in Greek is 'Father'. E.g., A man lost in a foreign city repeatedly said, 'Father' until the peace of God came over his heart. C.f. 'Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.; (Ps. 131:2)
- c. 'Our Father' – heart connection to God and awareness of all our brothers in heaven and earth. We are all so different from one another. Yet it is the Father's love that creates a family and unites us as one.

B. 'Hallowed be Your Name'

The goal of every believer's life.

- a. What is in God's name? God's 'honour', 'character' & 'authority' = 1st petition! The adoration & veneration (= make holy) of His name. 'To hollow' means higher than merely 'to honour' His name. 'Hollowing' is what Seraphim & angels around the throne do forever! – "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Rev. 5:8). This is a statement of worship & the confession of our life goal! There is nothing higher than achieving this goal in life.
- b. The entire angelic orders in God's universe honour & worship God except for the devil & rebellious human race. Hence, the outworking of this prayer is the salvation of the souls.
- c. What is more, is that we have been given His name – an awesome privilege and responsibility! (C.f. John 16:24). E.g., Aaronic blessing was an act of putting God's name on His people (Num 6:27). However, God says that Israel profaned His name among the nations (Ezek. 36:22-23). Now, we represent the Father's name. A retired minister: The life of impact or the life of pleasing God?

C. 'Your Kingdom Come'

Gk. 'Basileia' = 'rule & reign' – The goal of every ministry on earth.

- a. The kingdom of God is coming in the future, and yet the kingdom of God is a reality here & now. Wherever the hearts bow to acknowledge the King and whenever God's presence is manifested by the Spirit. E.g., salvation, healing, deliverance, and the exaltation of Jesus. 'Seek first the kingdom of God' (Matt 6:33) – i.e., the priority of every ministry on earth is to manifest God's kingdom.
- b. The dual focus of the kingdom of God represents the 'believer's hope' for the coming kingdom and the 'expression of our faith' for God's kingdom here and now. The pastoral application of the truth of 'now &

not yet' tension is profound. Many people's faith is shipwrecked because they lose the vision of the kingdom of God and the tension that exists between the now and not yet. We are looking for the city whose builder & architect is God (Heb 11:10). *Every ministry must have a clear vision of manifesting God's kingdom on earth now and wait for the Father's reward in the coming kingdom!*

D. 'Your Will be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven'

How to glorify God and manifest God's kingdom.

- a. Jesus glorified the Father by doing His will on earth. C.f. *'For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him who sent me.'* (John 6:38); *'My food is to do the will of Him'* (John 4:34). *'Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done.'* (Lk 22:42) 'I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.' (John 17:4). C.f. 1 John 2:17.
- b. *'as it is in heaven'* – how is the Father's will carried out in heaven? Wholeheartedly. Without hesitation. Completely. So also we ought to pray that God's will be done in my life the same way!

E. 'Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread'

Physical Needs – Present Need

- a. Praise God, He does provide our physical needs as we seek His kingdom first! What spiritual good would we be if the Father doesn't take care of our physical needs? But the Father already knows what we need even before we ask Him (6:8). Then why do we still pray for our needs? Not to inform God, but to actively receive through spiritual fellowship. Receiving our needs from God greatly enriches our relationship and our dependence on Him. [Note: Prayer does not free us from work.]
- b. There is another important reason for daily praying for our personal needs. To build a defence against ingratitude by thanksgiving, especially since we live in an era of abundance. We also remember we are part of God's answer to the poor of the earth who pray this prayer every day. *'There is enough food in the world, but there is a great problem with the distribution!'*

F. 'Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Forgive Our Debtors'

Relational Needs – Past Sins & Relationship

- a. Relational issues are both vertical & horizontal. Look at the wisdom of the Lord: *Not 'Lord, help me to forgive my brother's ginormous sin...'*, But 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive...' - *The Lord reminds us of our need to receive 'His forgiveness' before we focus on our need to forgive others. The ability to forgive an offence is a concrete demonstration that we understand how much we have been forgiven!* The refusal to forgive a small offence against us shows that God's forgiveness no longer touches our hearts. And that our *relationship with God which is based on forgiveness, is no longer real to us.* Jesus' emphasis (6:14-15).
- b. Yet the Lord already forgave us in Christ completely. We do not earn God's forgiveness by our forgiveness. Then why should we continue to pray this prayer? This prayer builds in us 'humility' and 'gratitude' for His grace and forgiveness. It inspires us to live a lifestyle of 'holiness' and 'repentance' now.
- c. The true mark of spiritual maturity is demonstrated in relationship. Note: 'Trust' & 'forgiveness' is not the same. Trust is earned, but forgiveness is unconditional.

G. 'Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil'

Spiritual Need – Future Guidance

- a. Why pray not to be led into temptation? When God never tempts us? 'perazo' means 'temptation to avoid' or 'tests to overcome' depending on the context. It is true that we become stronger through trials and tests (C.f. James 1:2-4). But we do not enjoy the times of trial. *It is very important that we do not deny our true feelings but give them an honest voice in our prayer like our Lord Jesus! 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass by me. Yet not my will, but yours be done.'* When our human frailty & our true feelings are denied in prayer, it is a dangerous sign. It is not real, and therefore not healthy.

- b. What is the most neglected prayer? It is the **Pre-temptation Prayer**. It is also a prayer against *demonically energised storms of evil hitting us in our times of weakness*.

'He [the devil] departed from Him until an opportune time.' (Luke 4:13)

'Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation, (Matt 26:41).

'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail...' (Lk 22:31-32)

'Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless...' (Ps. 19:13)

'God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but ... will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.' (1 Cor. 10:12-13)

- c. Time of testing coming upon the earth: geopolitical tensions (US/Russia/China), science technology (genetic engineering, AI robotic, surveillance technology), religion/ethics (ME conflict, rise of Islam), world economy (sovereign debt), Prelude to WW3?

Jesus: 'Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape...and to stand before the Son of Man.' (Lk. 21:34-36)

H. 'For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.'

Doxology

The temptation of the devil included the kingdom, glory, and power (Matt 4:1-11). These rightfully belong to God and to His Son Christ forever in glorious worship (Rev 4:11; 5:12). It is also the statement of our assured victory with Christ. Amen.