

Prayer

Matthew 6:5-15 ⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' ¹⁴ For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Introduction

Many people believe that they cannot talk to God. They either believe they have to recite prayers which they do not know or there is some special way that they must pray.

After leading someone to Christ, I explain to the person that they must read their bible and pray – most people ask me but I do not know how to pray!

This was also the case during Jesus' time when the Pharisees would go before the people and pray long, pre planned "beautiful prayers", or so they thought – Jesus rebuked them and even used this type of praying in a parable found in Luke 18

Luke 18:9-14 ⁹ *To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable:* ¹⁰ *"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'* ¹³ *"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'* ¹⁴ *"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

Most people believed in Jesus' time and today that in order for God to hear our prayers we must pray in a certain format and have certain "godly" words in the scriptures, according to this parable the prayer God heard the prayer of the person who prayed with their emotion, the prayer was a heartfelt prayer and the person meant it. Notice also this man was talking to God in reverence, fear and respect!

The disciples asked Jesus a similar question and in Matthew, chapter 6, during the sermon on the mount, Jesus gives an example on how to pray!

So today we are going to look at Matthew 6:5-15, which is known as the Lord's Prayer and we will take it verse for verse and I will explain what it means.

Just one important fact: When one talks about prayer or praying to God, prayer is a conversation or communication with God, you are actually speaking about or making your requests to God in normal everyday words.

I have heard people pray in many methods which God really does not want us to pray because He wants us to be ourselves:

- I have heard people pray in a special tone, voice or accent! This is unnecessary and will only cause you to become religious!
- I have heard people repeat the same thing over and over! Again this is unnecessary, try to pray a balanced prayer like the ACTS type prayer.
- I have heard people pray in eloquent English language full of thee and thou's – although there is nothing wrong with this type of prayer, God really wants you to be, you with Him!
- I have heard people recite prayers, now this might be okay for praying for your meal and for little children to help them to pray but as an adult you should be praying more than recital.

Before Praying, The Lord's Prayer

Let's look at a few things to prepare before you start praying.

Verse 5

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full

This is what I was explaining a little earlier. When you pray do not try to impress people with your prayers, God wants prayers from our heart, that you mean and that are personal and express how you feel.

Remember God knows you, and He knows all that you need but He wants you to express those needs to Him, because when you do this you operate in FAITH and we know according to Hebrews 11:6 – "without FAITH it is impossible to please God".

So when you pray there MUST be an element of faith. There is not faith in reciting a prayer, or praying a rote prayer! God wants you to express your needs so that He can meet them according to His riches in Glory!

Verse 6

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Here Jesus is showing us where we should pray! Find a place where you can be alone with God. I know this is difficult but find a place where you can pray ALOUD to God without people listening in on you!

Remember God sees everything, and when He see you doing something good in secret, giving someone money, helping a friend, doing something special for your wife/husband or praying! God sees it and will rewards you.

How do you think God will reward your prayers? By answering them!!!!

Verse 7

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

As I said before, God does not want us babbling along praying aimless prayers or unfocused prayers. God want you to concentrate on what you are saying and prayer focused prayers.

Your prayer time is not the time to think about what you are going to eat for supper, what you are going to do on the weekend.

Remember God is listening, concentrate and tell Him what you want Him to do for you.

Here is how people pray:

- Lord I need a car, wow I can take Suzie out to dinner and Lucy to dinner, maybe my family will think I am rich, oh yes God I need a car, please can I get one today!
- Car, car, car, please God I need a car,
- Lord I need a car, You know I need a car so I am trusting You for a car
- Lord where is my car? I asked you the past four weeks and still there is no car!
- Rather say, Lord you know that I need a car to go to work and that I can afford to pay the petrol, parking and insurance but at the moment there is no car that meets my budget so I am trusting You to provide me with a suitable car.

Verse 8

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This is one of the most profound statements and one which you must GRAB by FAITH before you start praying.

God knows what you need before you ask it! But He wants you to ask it from Him so that you will operate in faith! When you operate in Faith He will reward you and give you what you ask for!

Do not be put off by this statement and say, well if God knows why must I even bother asking! God's word clearly says that the unbelieving heart will get NOTHING! So rather stand in FAITH and receive your blessings!

The Lord's pray

Now we are ready to look at the Lord's Prayer, also found in Luke 11:1-4

Verse 9

"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

In Luke 11:1 we see that one of the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Jesus firstly address' His prayer to the one and only God! Jesus actually uses the Greek word "pater" meaning Father or parent. Only God has claimed to be our father and only God lives in the heaven.

So immediately Jesus starts His pray by pointing / addressing His prayer to Our God, the only God who lives in the heavens.

Next He shows respect and fear for the Name of God but saying "Holy is Your Name". We will do well to remember this, when you and I pray to God, He is not some by word, slang word that should not be respected! His Name, is not a curse or swear word!

He is God and He is Holy and in His hands rests our entire lives, all we are and all we hope to be! The entire creation waits to hear Him speak, in a single stand of His hair is more power that the entire universe put together.

He is a fire breathing God, out of His mouth the sun and all we can see and cannot see is created. His Name is Holy and need to be respected, that is why, when you speak to Him in prayer, you must not babble on about trivial things.

When you pray to Him, you come into the very presence of an Almighty God, when you speak His Names, ALL creation listens so be respectful and realise this is not some friend who you can mess with!

Show Him honour and respect that His Names deserves.

Verse 10

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The focus of God's entire plan for man is that His kingdom come. This is the final Kingdom that will exist after the new millennium and beyond. God's entire plan for mankind was to be with Him in His Kingdom to rule and reign with Him.

When we ask God's Kingdom to come we are asking God to bring to completing all the Word of scripture.

Next Jesus asks God's kingdom to be establish on earth as the God's Kingdom is established in heaven. I do not know if what you think this is but this entails the

entire Great Commission of going into ALL, the World and preaching the Gospel to everyone to bring God's Kingdom.

Also it means that you and I have the authority to bringing God's Kingdom on earth through our obedience to God! We do this by:

- When we act like Kingdom people should here on earth
- When we pray God's will on earth
- When we bind things on earth and loose things from heaven
- When we start living like God intended us to

This verse end the focus on God and His Majesty and power and focus now on our needs.

Verse 11

Give us today our daily bread.

Now Jesus asks God to supply all our needs. **Matthew 6:33** say that "when we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness ALL these things will be added to us"

Notice that Jesus does not ask for excessive provision but only what we need for today. The bible says in Romans 1:17, that the just shall live by faith and our faith must be new each day. So each day we need new provision and faith for that provision.

Verse 12

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Next Jesus asks us to repent of our sins. Although this is a short verse this part could take a while as we repent of our wrong doing or sin.

Sin means missing the mark, so every time we have missed God's standard in any area, we need to repent and ask forgiveness.

Next Jesus says another interesting thing, *Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive our debtors.* What this means is that the measure we are prepared to forgive others is the same measure that God will forgive us.

So be very careful to forgive others and do not live in judgement or anger towards anyone.

Verse 13

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Jesus asks for protection that we are not lead astray with temptations which will come from Satan and he also asks God to deliver us from the evil one of Satan's attacks.

We know that **1 Peter 5:8** says that Satan is walking around like a roaring lion looking for those he can destroy and we know that God's word says in **1**

Corinthians 10:13 that God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure but will always supply us a way out.

So we need to always be looking out for Satan's attacks, put on our Spiritual armour from **Ephesians 6**, deal with temptations in a Godly way and defend ourselves against Satan by God's Word!

This verse ends the Lord's prayer but Jesus goes on to clarify forgiveness in more detail.

Extra explanations of forgiveness

Verse 14

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

This is plain and simply put, if you want God to forgive you of your sins, you must give up your rights and forgive others no matter what they did to you, otherwise the Word of God says God will not forgive your sins.

This is serious! Let go of your anger and offence and forgive the person(s) who you hold unforgiveness towards!

Verse 15

But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

If the previous Scripture was not clear, Jesus for a third time said, if you will not forgive, God will not forgive you!

Closing

The whole prayer is compact:

- starts by focusing on who God is, asking Him to bring forth his Kingdom and His will on earth,
- We ask for our daily provision
- We ask Him to forgive our sins as we forgive
- We ask God to help us withstand Satan's attacks

Prayer

As we close this session I want everyone to bow their heads, there are people here today that need to forgive other people! I do not know what they did to you, how they hurt you but God does, and God is asking don't you want to let go and allow God to heal and forgive you. If that is you, you want to get rid of your anger toward someone, you want to forgive people for hurting you. You want to just let go. I want you to stand so that we can pray for you now! I do not want anyone looking around this is something Holy between you and God.