

Pray like Jesus

Part 2, Matthew 6:9-10

Martin Luther when asked about prayer by his barber Peter Beskendorf, he wrote to him with a “Simple Way to Pray”

He spoke about the Lord’s Prayer and explained how each petition may be expanded effectively into personal prayer.

He said

“To this day I drink of the Lord’s Prayer like a child; drink and eat it like an old man. I can never get enough of it. To me it is the best of all prayers”.

Charles Spurgeon said this of prayer in general:

“My own soul’s conviction is that prayer is the grandest power in the entire universe, that it has a more omnipotent force than electricity, attraction, gravitation, or any other of those secret forces which men have called by name, but which they do not understand”

Praying is a miracle – it is not a dull routine. In this dissertation in Matthew 6, Jesus first tells the disciples about what not to do and a practical how to manual – and then the prayer itself.

I have a question – what is God looking for in today’s world and has been since salvation history began?

- He is seeking the lost (Luke 19:10)
Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost”
- He is seeking true worshippers (John 4:23)
“Yet a time is coming, and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks”
- He is seeking spiritual fruit (Luke 13:7, John 15 1-8)
“I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch that does not bear fruit”
- He is seeking people to stand in the gap (Ezek 22:30)
“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one”
- He is seeking intercessors (Isa 59:16)
“He saw that there was no one, He was appalled that there was no one to intervene: ...”

In another translation Isaiah wrote that the Lord was “astonished that there was no one to intercede”

Our daily life centers round these facts of life that can only be wrought through a prayer relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

In Acts Chap 6:4 the early church focused their ministries on the Word of God and prayer. Prayer was not an option as it might seem to be in some churches today – even - how often is the Lord's Prayer said in church?

"The Didache" – maybe the oldest non-canonical book of Christianity (150AD). "The Teaching of the 12 Apostles" makes it clear that amongst other things the Lord's Prayer was always used in public worship.

The Lord's Prayer is central to the Sermon on the Mount – our part today is the opening of the prayer.

Matthew 6 9-13.

For the Oldies let us just look at the King James version for a moment. Somehow to me it has grandeur in the language and great reverence and statement about God.

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed by thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

I want you to see – the opening verses are a positional statement about God and speaks about how we should see Him.

What is, was, and is to come

God has a plan for life – a praying life is a journey – you get to know God

"You can't have a good story without tension and conflict, without things going wrong. Unanswered prayer creates some of the tensions in the story God is weaving in our lives. When we realize this we want to know what God is doing. What pattern is God weaving?" Paul Miller

The scripture that God gives to me for life

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria' and to the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8

This was a result of waiting on God in prayer – it is also important to maintain this power relationship with God and Jesus - it is only way that communion with God will work.

In your life you may not perform miracles – the effective ministry of the early church was that they had faith and attended the Word and prayer – that is our first calling also.

Today as we look at the beginning of the prayer – please note that it is a family prayer – *our, we, us* – It is not a singular prayer although obviously we do pray this in our quiet time. This is a prayer of togetherness.

Let me also say at this time – if you have a problem getting to pray then use the Lord's Prayer – pray it and then expand on it as Martin Luther suggests. Jesus gave us the prayer through his disciples as a building block for our prayer life.

Another worthy point is that this prayer is straight to the point – it is not a wordy prayer and there is no repetition.

Story of D L Moody with a brother who prayed so long – “As our brother finishes his prayer, let’s sing a hymn”

Let us look at the components of the first verses of the Lord’s Prayer

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

What we first need to focus on with our scripture today is that the Prayer begins with a relationship – ours with God, the Father.

I want to say that God is Spirit and therefore He is not like our natural fathers or mothers. God is a person – Jehovah – this is an awesome being and Father. The mystery is the Spirit nature of God who is everywhere. He is uncreated and eternal – we are created and finite.

There are some tremendous moments in the Gospels that describe God, the Father through Jesus – this is how we really know God.

John 14 8-9

“Phillip said, “Lord show us the Father and that will be enough for us”
Jesus answered, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father”

John 8:19

Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”
“You do not know me or my Father” Jesus replied, If you knew me then you know my Father also”

Matt 3:17

And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son whom I love, with him I am well pleased”

John 1:18

“No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known”

In this way Jesus is saying “In my life and my ministry, I have revealed the Father to you”

The Jesus of the New Covenant reveals the Jehovah of the Old Covenant

Our Father in Heaven

God – our Father – speaks of God’s nearness to us. He is our Father – Jesus introduces this personal relationship with God.

At the same time the phrase “in heaven” speaks about the distance from us. This distance should be overcome when compared to the Old Testament – through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We cannot live as God wants us to with a distant view of Him.

Millard J Erickson writes “the question of whereness does not apply to God. He is not a physical being: hence he does not have spatial dimensions of location and extension”

Technically the terms are the *immanence of God* (he is near us) and the *transcendence of God* (he is beyond us). This simply means he is uniquely and wholly “other” than everything else, far above His creation - but He has chosen to be near those who trust Him and seek to do His will.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

To hallow something means to set it apart as special, to dedicate it, to consecrate it to God for his special use.

The Greek word is *hagiozo* – used in John 10:36 and John 17:17 meaning Jesus being “set apart”

Abraham Lincoln used the term in his Gettysburg address – today we used the word in Halloween – the evening before All Saints Day – once sacred but now something else.

“Hallowed by your name” reflects majesty – in our church services do we reflect His majesty? – let us not trivialize God and Jesus. Prayer is a communication with God not a chat with “that guy Jesus” – balance is everything in the way we see God – closeness yet reverence.

In Tit 1:16 it says - “They claim to know God but by their actions they deny him” – this is not where we want to be.

Prayer and worship go together.

Our desire should not be “the glory of the church” or just crowds of people seeking religious entertainment – it should be the desire to glorify God

David in Ps 14 1-2

“May my prayer be set before you like incense, may the lifting up of my hands be like an evening sacrifice”

The opening of the Lord’s Prayer emphasizes the glory Jesus wants to give to the Father – it is awe, reverence, respect, and majesty that come to my mind

THY KINGDOM COME.

The Lord wanted Israel to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” – they defied Him and called for an earthly king – there were 3 rejections of God as king that ultimately brought about their destruction and dispersion – but today we see God does not fail them – but still a disobedient nation (personal opinion)

In 1 Peter 2:9 we are called to be a “chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession” – are we living up to this?

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever”

Rev 11:15

It is important to realize that Jesus said – “my kingdom is not of this world”

His kingdom is based on

Love

Humility

Sacrifice

Forgiveness

His message was filled with paradoxes

The way to rise higher is to go lower

The way to lead is to serve

The way to receive is to give

The way to succeed is to seem to fail

Someone said “The secret of happiness is to have someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to”

This in my belief that it can only be eternally achieved by looking to Christ and his Body of Believers

Jesus practiced what he preached!! He died a king in full control of the situation

“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews” Matt 27:37

Death did not take him: he willed his own death and in that death defeated death for ever. By the grace of God, Jesus tasted death for everyone (Heb 2:9)

An old hymn says

“Lifted up was he to die
“it is finished was his cry;
Now in heaven exalted high
Hallelujah! What a Savior”

The essence of our faith is the coming again of Jesus and the fact that God will reign directly over the earth. Without this promise what do we have? The coming of Jesus provides us with hope for the future – this is not just for ourselves but for our children and those who come after us.

The question must be asked – is the church imitating the virtues of Christ or is it imitating the world? Are we shining the light of Jesus in its fullest sense to the world.

Are we waiting with excitement and anticipation for the coming kingdom

THY WILL BE DONE

Think about the words of Jesus

“Not my will but yours be done” John 18 10-11

Isaiah said “Here I am, send me” Before this he saw God seated on a throne,
High and exalted – Isa 6

God had said “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

If you read Romans 11:33 to 12:2

“Oh, the depth and riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God
How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out

Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

You find the following

- Don't try to explain God's ways v33
- Don't try to change God's mind v34
- Don't try to buy God off v35
- Don't try to steal God's glory v36

Our task is to be a part of God's will that is being achieved on earth. I could summarize quickly and say this is exercising the fruit of the Spirit.

ON EARTH

We are surrounded by a world of iniquity and disobedience – it is easy to call this the “norm” – we need to listen to God to judge what is right in his eyes.

We have the Word as a guide - bigoted history is not where God is – history itself is evidence of this – Godlessness has prevailed so often in history and is only defeated by maintaining the faith that we are called to.

Paul says we have “God within us” so this is the guide that applies to us – but only through prayer and closeness to God can this happen. For God's will to be done on earth it requires faithful people of God to have that relationship and truth deep in their spirit to follow His teachings.

Only through the Holy Spirit and Prayer can this be achieved on earth – the alternative is separation from God

IN HEAVEN

All of us have a choice in how we perceive and meet God – nothing has changed in the ages.

The struggle of man between what God wants and what Satan tries to put in front of us has always been there.

This is the contrast to the place where God reigns. Everything happens in heaven!

Heaven is the place of ultimate peace and the outcome of life here is a life in heaven – everything we do in this life leads us to the opportunity to spend eternity with God.

In closing let me tell you a story that has really spoken about prayer and unity in prayer as a people of God

“The Silent Minute” – prayer together

When we meet times of trouble then we naturally seek God – that is fine – except God is waiting every moment of the day to have us seek Him.

My final word of encouragement is the only prayer where Jesus prays for us.

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

John 17:20-23 (NLT)

The only time Jesus prays for us in Scripture, he prays that we would be one. He doesn't intercede for us about money, health, happiness, knowledge, close-knit families, big churches, or good jobs. He prays for unity.

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer of unity of believers – an all-embracing prayer.

Let us pray.