

July 16th, 2023 – (full sermon notes)

“How Should Christians Pray?”

Matthew 6:5-15

This prayer focuses on who God is and on the relationship He has with those who belong to Him, those who have been born-again by the Spirit of God into the Family of God, having become children of God, brothers and sisters in Christ, by faith, in Jesus, God’s Son, Lord and Savior.

Read **Matthew 6:5-8...** Our conversations with God should not be filled with “meaningless repetition” like the pagans, who babble on with many words, i.e., we should not make a habit of using the Lord’s Prayer as some kind of mantra we use to get what we want from God.

The Lord’s Prayer should not be recited in a rote manner, i.e., in a mechanical or habitual repetition without really considering the content. Our prayers to God are to be honest, intimate, joyful, meaningful, unceasing, thankful, expectant, and in alignment with the will of God.

Ephesians 6:18, “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”

Philippians 4:4-7, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Colossians 4:2, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*”

1Timothy 2:1-6, “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.”

1Thessalonians 5:16-18, “Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

John 16:23, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.”

Nowhere in the NT is a prayer repeated or used in a repetitious and/or ritualistic manner. Prayer is not a magic formula to be used like a Genie in a bottle, who appears when you rub it a certain way, granting you three wishes. We don't need to try and convince God of a need we have, because (cf. **Matthew 6:8**); He knows what we need, even before we ask Him!

Read **Matthew 6:9-13...** The Lord’s Prayer is given as a guide on how we should pray (**Matthew 6:9a**), “**Pray, then, in this way.**”

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There are six petitions in this prayer; three toward God’s Sovereignty, that being, His Name, His Kingdom, and His Will; and three toward Man’s needs, that being, daily bread, forgiveness, and protection from evil.

Matthew 6:9b... Our Father in heaven:

God is the Creator of all but the Father only of those who come through Jesus Christ, into the Family of God, by faith, as did Abraham.

1Corinthians 12:12-13, “The body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” **27**, “You are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.”

Galatians 3:26-29, “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.*”

What does that mean?

Romans 4:3, “What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’” [cf. **Genesis 15:6**]. **13**, “For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.”

John 1:12-13, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Matthew 6:9c... Hallowed be Your name:

God’s name is Holy and we are to revere, honor and glorify Him in all things (**1Corinthians 10:31**), “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Matthew 6:10... Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven:

We are to pray for God’s will to be done in and through the situations of our daily lives, in order to reflect God’s sovereignty and holiness.

Those belonging to Christ will want God to rule in their lives as He already rules in heaven; although God’s sovereignty in heaven is not presently being exhibited on earth, i.e., men sin, men die, and men go to hell. But it is not God’s will that people sin, die, or go to hell, and so, God commands us to pray that His will be done on earth:

God’s will of purpose [ultimate will] allows sin to run its course and Satan to have his way for a season. But sin and Satan will end exactly when and how God has determined.

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2Peter 3:3-7, “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”

Matthew 25:41, “He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

God’s will of desire is for everyone to repent, believe and be saved, for this is good in the sight of (**1Timothy 2:3-4**), “God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise..., but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” **13**, “According to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

God’s will of command is that His children (those of us who believe in and follow Christ) will obey Him immediately, faithfully, and completely, with a worshipful and willing heart, in all that we do.

God’s will of command embraces the obedient lives of His children. God’s will of desire embraces repentance and salvation. God’s will of purpose embraces the ultimate end of the world and His eternal kingdom. We are to faithfully pray in conformity to God’s will, living in obedience to God’s Word.

Matthew 6:11... Give us today our daily bread:

Bread is symbolic of the food we need for our physical and our spiritual needs. Jesus is the bread of life who has come down from the Father. The source of our provision is the Father. The servant of the Father is Christ. We petition God to supply our needs through Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Lord and Savior.

The schedule for God’s provision is daily. We need to come to Him on a regular, day-to-day basis for our needs. We must rely on the Lord one day at a time, not weekly, monthly, or yearly...but daily.

Matthew 6:12... And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors:

This is not talking about financial debts, it is talking about sin -- our moral and spiritual debt to God, paid in full by Christ.

Sin separates man from God and is man’s greatest enemy. Therefore, man’s greatest need is forgiveness, and that is what God provides when we confess our sinfulness.

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Romans 10:13, “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **1John 1:9**, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Hebrews 10:17, “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

Because the Father is forgiving; His children are also to be forgiving.

Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Matthew 6:13... **And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil:**

This has to do with temptations, through which we are enticed to sin.

God tempts no man, but He does allow us to be tested.

James 1:13-14, “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”

James 4:7-8, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

We appeal to God to place a guard over and around our eyes, ears, mouth, feet, hands, and heart -- so that, wherever we go, whatever we do, we will not give in and do that which is sinful.

1Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

Romans 12:9, “*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor [hate] what is evil; cling [hold fast] to what is good.*”

We are all weak at times, when tempted to sin, and we need God’s help to avoid the traps and snares set by the world, the devil, and our own flesh.

2Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God [God-breathed] and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man [woman, child] of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

2Peter 1:3-4, “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

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We live in a cursed world with evil all around us. Our flesh is weak and we are not equipped in our human resources to combat sin. Therefore, we freely and invariably confess our need for the protection and deliverance only God can give.

This great and divine lesson in prayer concludes with a reminder of how our own genuine and heartfelt forgiving of others so closely exemplifies and illustrates the Father’s forgiving us.

Matthew 6:14-15... For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:

God has forever removed the eternal penalty of sin from all true Christians. However, sin does effect our present joy and ability to serve God, therefore, we confess our sins in order to receive day-to-day cleansing from sins corruption.

Having received God’s forgiveness, we are to forgive others; for an unforgiving spirit is inconsistent with one who has been forgiven so much. And so, our prayers should exalt God’s Name, God’s Kingdom, and God’s Will, at the same time, our prayers should express thanksgiving for God’s daily provisions, always remembering God’s loving and merciful forgiveness and eternal life. For “His is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen!”

Pastor Mike

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