

The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 6 – Part 2

Lesson #13

I.

A. The Background

1. The Sermon on the Mount reveals the standards of the Kingdom
2. Matt. 5 – the character and witness of the citizens of the Kingdom
3. Jesus concluded chapter 5 by demanding perfection (5:48)
4. Therefore, He warns about the heart's propensity for self-deception (6:1)
5. Be perfect (5:48) but Be careful (6:1)
6. All acts of righteousness must be preserved from showmanship
 - a. Giving (2-4)
 - b. Praying (5-15)
 - c. Fasting (16-18)
7. Chapter 6 deals with religious hypocrisy
8. A hypocrite deliberately uses religion to cover up his sins and promote his own gain – Greek word means ‘an actor who wears a mask’

B. The Model Prayer (6:9-15)

1. To teach us how we should pray not what we should pray
2. Not to be recited thoughtlessly
3. The Disciples' Prayer
4. Not pray in these words but pray in this manner
5. To teach us both the *manner and method* of how to pray and the *matters* for which to pray.
6. Use this prayer as a pattern not as a substitute

C. There are six (6) petitions in the prayer

1. The first three concern God directly
 - a. His Name
 - b. His Kingdom
 - c. His Glory

2. The next three deal with man
 - a. Our daily needs
 - b. Our sins
 - c. Our temptations
3. The prayer deals with both our spiritual and our physical needs.

II. The Prayer

A. The Invocation

1. It is "*Our Father*" not "*My Father*"
2. There are no personal pronouns in the prayer
3. We are part of God's worldwide family
4. We have no right to ask for ourselves anything that might hurt another member of the family

B. The Addressee

1. *Father* – Signifies our oneness with God
 - a. Rarely used in Jewish culture; they used Sovereign Lord, King of the Universe, etc.
 - b. Jesus called Him "*Father*" - Matt. 11:25; 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 23:34; John 11:41; 12:27; 17:1,5,11, 21, 24
 - c. *Abba* - Aramaic for "Papa"
 - d. Jesus is identifying His oneness with God
 - e. Jesus encourages us to pray with the same understanding that we are one with God positionally
 - f. Negatively, the word "*Our*" has reference to believing people which is a death blow to the liberal teaching of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."
 - g. This is only true in one sense – in the sense of creation (Mal.2: 10; Acts 17:22-29)
 - h. The Bible clearly characterizes two families – the children of God and the children of the devil (1 John 3:7-10; Eph.5:8; John 1:12; 2 Peter 1:4)
2. *Father* - Signifies a special relationship between God and followers of Jesus
 - a. Followers are born of God – John 3

- b. Children of God by adoption – Romans 8
 - c. After the resurrection, Jesus said He was returning to *“My Father and your Father, to my God and your God”* – John 20:17
 - d. There is an abundant relationship between God the heavenly Father, and those who have become His children by faith in and obedience toward His Son.
 - e. There is forgiveness, acceptance, inheritance, family and discipline in this relationship.
3. *Father (who art in heaven)* – Signifies His transcendence and richness of His character and nature
- a. By contrast today, we view Him as only warm and personal
 - b. His majesty and sovereignty are sometimes lost in the choruses we sing – *He’s a great big wonderful God*
 - c. They constitute a pattern of irreverence shallow theology, experienced-dominated religious criteria
 - d. Jesus was teaching men who already understood the transcendent grandeur of God’s ineffable exaltation
 - e. Thus to pray *“Our Father”* they would be hushed and humbled at the tremendous privilege of addressing God in such a personal way.

III. The Petitions

A. The First Petition Concerns the Exalted Father

1. *“Hallowed by Your Name”*
 - a. A person’s name is closely related to what he is
 - b. In the Old Testament, God uses names of Himself to reveal Himself as He is
 - c. Examples: *God the Most High, Almighty, I Am,*
2. Hallow means to sanctify, to make holy, or to consider holy; to treat as sacred
3. We are to reverence, honor, consider holy and acknowledge the name of God, and therefore God Himself

4. We are asking our heavenly Father to act in such a way that we will reverence God, glorify Him, consider Him holy, and acknowledge Him.
 - a. Many us “God” and “Jesus” as oaths or an expression of disgust or anger
 - b. We should regard God’s name as so holy that it will be sufficient to incite a spirit of reverence and holy fear.
5. We are asking God to work in others and us so that we will acknowledge His unsurpassed glory always.
6. The highest goal of prayer is not that we are made holy but that God’s name be hallowed, held in reverence.
7. We are not the center of the universe as we think we are and it gives that place to God alone.

B. The Second Petition Concerns God’s Sovereign Reign

1. *“Your Kingdom Come”*

- a. This is not a reference to God’s universal sovereignty being exercised because that is always in force
- b. This is a reference to God’s saving reign which is, in one sense present, but which awaits its future consummation
- c. This is to pray that God’s saving reign will be expanded now and much more that He will usher in the final Kingdom inaugurated by Jesus’ return in glory
- d. The early believers eagerly prayed this thought – 1 Cor. 16:22, 2 Peter 3:13 and the last book concludes with *“Come Lord Jesus”* (Rev. 22:20)

2. We should not pray this phrase lightly or thoughtlessly

- a. Those persecuted for the cause of Christ prayed this with meaning and fervor.
- b. Do we really hunger for His Kingdom to come or do we want t experience what we want first?

C. The Third Petition Concerns the Accomplishment of the Father’s Will

1. *“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”*
2. This is to pray that the kingdom of God might come in its fullness

3. This will be the perfect accomplishment of our Father's will, without rebellion, prevarication, delay, or evil agencies which God works through men's evil (Gen.50: 20; Isa. 10:5-19)
4. Now, Christ-like ethics must be worked out in a context in which evil still abounds
5. In the final consummation of the Kingdom, we will not be tempted to hate, lust, hypocrisy or retaliation (see chapter 5:17-48)
6. The phrase "*on earth as it is in heaven*"
 - a. That God's desires for righteousness will be fully accomplished *now* on earth as they are *now* accomplished in heaven
 - b. That God's desires for righteousness may *ultimately* be as fully accomplished on earth as they are *now* accomplished in heaven
 - c. That God's desires for righteousness may ultimately be accomplished on the earth *in the same way* that they are being accomplished in heaven
7. To pray this means two things for us:
 - a. We are committing ourselves to learning all we can about His will; this means consistent and humble study of the Scripture
 - b. We are pledging that, so help me God, by His grace, we will do His will as much as we know it.

D. The Fourth Petition Concerns the Meeting of Our Physical; Needs

1. "*Give us this day our daily bread*"
2. The word "daily" means "of the day that is coming"
3. Thus, prayed in the morning it means for today; prayed at night it means tomorrow
4. In the time of Jesus, a day's wage purchased a day's food
5. The followers of Jesus were being taught to learn to trust the heavenly Father to meet their physical needs
6. The Scriptures teach that God Himself is the ultimate source of every good, whether food, clothing, work, leisure, strength, intelligence, friendship or whatever - James 1:17; 1 Cor. 4:7.
7. He does not owe us these things

8. Ingratitude is an insult to Deity; our current thankless generation is an affront to Him.
9. We take His gifts for granted, and then when they begin to dry up, we complain and call in question the very existence of this beneficial God
10. In difficult times, it is the follower of Jesus who will take refuge in this petition

E. The Fifth Petition Concerns Our Sins

1. *“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”*
2. Sin is pictured in this prayer as a debt which must be discharged – 6:14
3. This is not referring to a sequence – a tit-for-tat arrangement – do I forgive someone so the Lord will forgive me?
4. It is speaking of an attitude
5. There is no forgiveness for the one who does not forgive because an unforgiving spirit bears strong witness to the fact that there is no repentance
6. Whoever sees himself and his own life as central to meaningful existence loses everything; whoever takes up his cross, follows Jesus, and loses his life, actually finds it.

F. The Sixth Petition Concerns Our Temptations

1. *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”*
2. This is a “litotes” – a figure of speech that expresses something by negating the contrary, i.e., “not a bad singer” means a good one or “not a few” means many.
3. John 6:37 – means that He will Keep us
4. Thus, this means to lead us into righteousness, into situations where, far from being tempted, we will be protected and therefore kept righteous; then, we will be delivered from the evil one.