

A Christian Worldview

Book 5

On Earth as it is in Heaven

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On Earth as it is in Heaven

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	v
Chapter One: The Talents	1
Chapter Two: Good and Faithful Servant	9
Chapter Three: What is Prayer?	16
Chapter Four: Does God Really Answer Prayer?	23
Chapter Five: Who Do We Pray To?	31
Chapter Six: How Often Should We Pray?	40
Chapter Seven: The Lord’s Prayer, Petition One.....	48
Chapter Eight: The Lord’s Prayer, Petition Two.....	55
Chapter Nine: The Lord’s Prayer – Petition Three	62
Chapter Ten: The Lord’s Prayer – Petition Four	68
Chapter Eleven: The Lord’s Prayer – Petition Five	76
Chapter Twelve: The Lord’s Prayer – Petition Six	84
Chapter Thirteen: Does God Really Do “The Miraculous” through Our Prayers?.....	90

FOREWORD

Have you ever had your Bible open, but your mind somehow felt distant and disengaged- maybe like, “God’s Word wasn’t quite sinking in?”

Sometimes, all it takes is a simple quiet prayer. When God’s Word doesn’t connect whisper something like, “Lord, open my mind and my heart,” in that moment and I promise you the words will come alive.

That is the power of simple, sincere, heartfelt prayer. Nothing dramatic needed. Nothing loud required. When we study the Bible, we’re not just simply opening; a book---we’re opening our lives and hearts to God.

Prayers invite the Holy Spirit into your study time. Prayer helps us focus and understand and live out the truths found in scripture. Prayer also softens our hearts. But it also clears our minds. Without prayer, even the familiar verses can oftentimes feel dry and empty and meaningless. Oh, but with prayer, even a single word or a single line has the ability to change everything about our day; about our life; about our perspective; and about our spiritual journey with the Lord.

The book you hold in your hand has been written by my staff at First Baptist Church Leander. It will provide you with thirteen (13) weeks of study on talents and prayer. It is designed to encourage you. It is designed to help you understand the truth of scripture. It is designed to help you open your heart and your life to the beauty and power of greater prayer. Staying faithful to the journey will pay dividends to your Christian faith; will foster your spiritual growth and provide tremendous guidance and comfort in building a sincere and effective and heartfelt prayer life.

Stick to it and enjoy the journey,

Pastor Tim C. Moore

INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth book in A Christian Worldview series. The series was conceived to give the Biblical outlook of the Christian Worldview in the 21st Century. Has the Christian Worldview Changed in the past 2000 years or is Jesus the same yesterday, today and forever? Throughout this study we have examined that very question and many others. If this is your first view of this series, I encourage you to get the previous four for insight into how Christ wants us to live for Him today.

The life of the Christian can be difficult, but it has eternal rewards. Conversely, if one will live by the principles upheld in the Bible for these 2000 years, one will find the life of the Christian to be exciting and, remarkably, easy to live for Jesus. Even though the struggles of the world are the same for everyone, God gives Believers the ability and courage to live the abundant life.

This is not an “end all” series. Rather, prayerfully, it is a catalyst to get into deeper study to discover and understand the promises given to all who call on the name of Jesus with a contrite heart. Read this study as you would the Bible, with an open mind. God’s grace will lead you to His truth; His Word will lead you to the power you possess in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit of God.

- Pastor Rick Hertless -

Chapter One: The Talents

By Rick Hertless

Matthew 25:14-19:

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

“And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

“Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

“And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

“But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. “After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

I believe it is impossible to draw out all the richness of the above passage in this one simple chapter. But we will go as deep as we dare to try to remain within the brevity of the context.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

“The Man” referred to here is Jesus. He knew He was going to be leaving soon and He wanted the disciples to know what they had in their hands. He wanted them to know the power that was available if they would only trust God. “The Man” in the above

passage is trusting his servants to handle His affairs while he is away. He was passing on instruction, not only to His disciples, but for the ages to come including the age we live in today.

“And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

One Talent = 6,000 denarii. One denarius was a day's wages. Therefore, considering what a day's wage is today, one talent would be approximately \$1,000,000. More important than the amount was the trust that was given to the servants for such a huge responsibility.

The man expected his servants to use the talents in the same way he would have done. He gave them the same authority he had to be able to increase his territory.

Jesus has left us with “talents” that He expects us to use in His authority. Matthew 28:18-20 says, “All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me, go therefore . . .” The Great Commandment gives us the same authority He has to give the Gospel to a lost and dying world. He does not expect us to hide it or hope someone will recognize that we are Christians. He expects us to invest in His Kingdom and not bury what He has given to us in the ground.

In fact, it can be said, by the parable, that if we are not giving His Gospel in Spirit and Truth, do we truly know the Savior?

Jesus said in Matthew 10:33, ““But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

James said, “Faith without works is dead.” In other words, are you proclaiming God’s grace in your life or burying the truth. Are you burying your treasure? Are you burying your “Talent” or reinvesting it into the Kingdom?

Kingdom of Heaven

Notice also, the man did not leave the servants alone without power. He gave them the power to make decisions in the man’s name. He gave them the power to reinvest the money in the master’s name. The authority of the master remained with the servants. Otherwise, they would not have had the ability to do business with the locals to gain more wealth for the man.

The “Kingdom of Heaven” is mentioned 32 times in the book of Matthew (NKJV). Each time mentioned, The Kingdom of Heaven references relationships established between Man and God. These relationships are always growing and always being cultivated. They represent growth by the believer and separation by those who would not heed the warning.

God’s desire is to be with His children for eternity. Even so, we must come to Him by His rules, not our own. We cannot pick and choose how we will live for Him or in which way we believe suits us and our culture best.

Many believe stating that “God understands me” will suffice to be able to spend an eternity with God. But by the above parable, one can see that this is not the case. The man who buried the talent assumed he would be “ok.” After all, he did not squander the money. He kept it for “safe keeping.” But the master’s decision showed that he had no faith in the master. Out of fear he chose to do nothing. Simply accepting God’s gift and doing nothing with it does not please God. He expects His children to do His will. You might be asking, “What is His will?” Simple. God’s Word tells us! Spread the Gospel in whatever talent God has given you to do so.

Maybe your talent is not preaching, but you can give the Gospel in whatever it is that you do. Recently, I had an ambulance ride to the hospital. On the way, I struck up a conversation with the attendant. Then, I gave him the Gospel. He did not accept Christ then and there, but I gave him something to think about. It was not hard. It came up in conversation. I began with me asking him, “What church do you attend?” It ended with him considering Jesus as Lord.

Accounting for God’s Gifts

“Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them and made another five talents. “And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. “But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money. **“After a long time the**

lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them (*emphasis mine*).” – Matthew 25:16-19 –

Notice, the man in the parable did return. The Scripture says, “After a long time . . .” Jesus has promised His return. He has not told us when. We all know it has been a long time; roughly 2000 years, but He will return. He is returning for His Faithful.

He is returning for those who have refused to bury their talents, afraid they might make a mistake. The man with one talent was afraid of making a mistake, afraid he would lose his lord’s money. Therefore, he thought the safe way was to do nothing. God expects us to use the talents He has given. God expects us to trust Him with our gifts and our finances to further the Kingdom of Heaven. He does not want us to hold back our giving because we don’t trust Him to take care of us. Neither does He want us to be in charge of our life in other areas. Throughout the Bible God has told us that He wants to be our God and King. That means, He is in control of every aspect of our life. Not so He can make your life miserable, but to ensure that you have the abundant life He planned for you since conception.

Make no mistake, God is to be feared by those who have not obeyed, but to His Elect, He is a loving and gracious God. He has not placed heavy burden around our necks. He simply says, “Tell people that you love me. Do not be ashamed of me.” That is His message to believers.

Are you one of His chosen? If so, you will not be ashamed to call Him yours. The parable says, “After a long time . . .” It has been a long time and God will make His return. By looking at all that is going on in the world, it would seem the time is short. Matthew 25:13 says, ““Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” Matthew 24 tells us that we will not know “the hour” or “the day,” but we will know the season. So be ready, because it appears as though we are in the season. The signs are becoming more and more clear.

Giving

Something that cannot be ignored about the above parable is the importance of giving. God has given us 100% of everything we have. He asks that we return 10% to Him to honor His blessings. While I believe the above parable is much more than about money, God used the example of a “talent” for a reason. We work hard for our money, and it is a very personal thing. That is one reason many have such a problem trusting God with it. Nevertheless, God is trustworthy. He is much more trustworthy than the banks, or stock market, or even the boss that you trust to provide you with your income.

The truth is, the only one who provides you with an income is God. He is the only trustworthy one. He tells us, if we trust Him, He will provide for us. If we trust in anything, or anyone else, we cannot be assured of the provision. I suppose the problem is,

God does not always provide in the way that our flesh desires. His provision includes needs more than wants.

Wants generally bring distress and heartaches, whereas needs bring growth and satisfaction. God is your provision. Trust Him to give you what you need. Without trust, you are outside the will of The Father. Outside the will of The Father is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Notes

Chapter Two: Good and Faithful Servant

By Rick Hertless

Matthew 25:20-30

“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ “He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

‘And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’ “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ‘So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

‘Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who

does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there is more to this story than that of money. But we are going to focus more on the money aspect in this chapter, because it is a topic that many want to avoid. It is an uncomfortable topic that has been disputed by many. In this chapter we will discuss the tithe.

Is the Tithe Still Valid Today?

Matthew 5:17 says, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Matthew 23:23 says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."

God has not made everyone wealthy, but He has given the same mandate to His children; take care of the Church! The parable of the Talents is a good example of how God expects His children to maintain the organization of the Church in which He has entrusted to us. Some He gives more and others less, but maintenance of the Church is the mandate.

I have never talked with anyone who argued about the tithe who was actually tithing. The argument always stems from an excuse

not to tithe. In fact, most give very little. Many believe that if they give \$50, the average cost of a family movie, they have given their due for the entertainment of the church. That may be a right sentiment if you are looking at the church as entertainment. But to those who are seeking to worship a worthy God, that is far from enough.

God wants us to honor Him in everything we do, including our giving. God can do His business without your giving, that is true. But His desire is to bless His children through their obedience. The fact remains, if you do not trust, you will not obey. If you do not trust God to honor His promise to bless a cheerful giver, then you will not give. It is that simple.

Notice two of the faithful servants trusted their master. They wanted to please him by obeying his wishes. Without thought, they went about the business he had tasked them with and were blessed.

However, the third operated in fear only. Not understanding the trust that had been placed in him. He did not understand the confidence that was placed in him to obey what had been given to him. Therefore, feeling fear alone, he was derelict in his duty and failed.

God did not revoke the tithe, he placed it in our heart instead.

Hebrews 10:16-17 says:

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

God says that the Law has been written on the heart of the believer. It does not sound as though He has done away with the Law, instead, He made it a part of us. I believe, even those who deny the tithe know that God is asking them to give to Him more. You might ask, “Why?” Because His desire is to bless His children. His blessings come from obedience to His Word and obedience comes from trust.

In the Old Testament, the Jews rarely actually trusted God. They acted out of obedience only. Because they lacked full trust, they disobeyed time and time again. Full obedience can only happen when you believe beyond a shadow of doubt that what has been told will happen. Therefore, if you trust God, you will give.

“For to everyone who has, more will be given . . .

For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ‘And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- Matthew 25:29 -

I do not believe that giving is a salvation issue necessarily, but the heart issue is. The above parable is used because money is

such a personal issue. The parable of the Talents is used by Jesus to demonstrate the heart of the third man as opposed to the other two. His heart was not focused on pleasing his master, only to protect himself.

Many today are looking for a “Get out of Hell Free” card. You may have heard it said, “Me and God are good” or “God understands me.” God does understand His children, but He understands them in such a way as to explain that they are only good with the acceptance of Jesus Christ and obedience to His commandments. That obedience only comes through trust. And when He is fully trusted, obedience comes as a by-product of that trust.

This parable makes it very clear that without trust in Jesus, your soul is in jeopardy.

Psalm 111:10 says:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do His
commandments. His praise endures forever.

But notice, fear is only the beginning. Understanding comes through obedience and obedience only comes through trust. God is not interested in robots. He is interested in relationships. He is wanting those to come to Him out of love. That has always been His will. Israel missed God because they never realized the true love He had for them. One day, they will return to Him in Spirit and in Truth. What about you? God’s plan for your life is to

be blessed. Will you allow Him to bless you or continue to run from His blessing. Will you trust today or merely continue in the fear of the Lord. God is only to be feared by those who do not trust and obey Him. Today is your day to begin a new relationship with the Father, through His Son, in the power of Holy Spirit.

Notes

Chapter Three: What is Prayer?

By Rick Hertless

Matthew 6:5-8

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

Prayer is Communication

Prayer is “a two-way street.” Most people think of prayer as something to be done in the time of turmoil or struggle. But in reality, it is communication between the Believer and The Creator of the universe. God is not looking for a one-way relationship. His desire is to commune with His children.

If you have children, you realize that it is not pleasing for only one to be speaking and the other never answers; or one only comes in a time of need. The relationship between father and child is one of sharing good times and bad times. It is about reciprocating conversations that lead to a closer bond.

As we look into the Lord’s prayer, we will better understand that God is looking for a relationship. He is not the “Genie” that grants all requests. Nor is He sitting on a throne waiting for us to “mess

up” so we must get Him to fix it. He is our loving Father who wants us to come to Him in need and in plenty. He wants to share our defeats and our victories. Prayerfully, this study will help you better understand the power God has given to all who will come to Him and trust Him.

But When You Pray

Jesus is not saying “if” you pray. He is saying “when” you pray. The assumption is that Believers will pray. Why? Firstly, because we have been given eternal permission to come into the very throne room of God and speak with the Creator of the universe, the Great I Am. This privilege cannot be overstated. All other religions are forbidden to come into the presence of their god. They must go through a priest or mediator. But God has given us the privilege to come into His presence because of Jesus. He was and is the eternal mediator who has given us the privilege of speaking with God, The Father.

Truthfully, I find it to be an oxymoron to reference other gods. Other gods are mere imaginations made up by those who want to feel as though they are protected while living a life contrary to how they are supposed to live. Nevertheless, the Bible mentions other gods as a way to express the powerlessness of those who rely on such things to help them accomplish what they are seeking.

The problem is, if you are praying to little gods to accomplish what you are seeking, you are really only trying to get what you crave in your flesh to accomplish outside of what God wants for you in this life. You might be asking, “What does God want for me in this life?” Well, the specifics I cannot answer, but overall, He wants you to have the abundant life of His promises. His abundance resides in the trust and faith that you place in Him.

God has always desired His children to trust in Him. Those who trust, experience His abundance. Those who do not trust, experience hardship. Even so, I must clarify the previous statement, because sometimes, those who trust are tested to help them move to the next level of their relationship with God. So, even total trust in God does not ensure a pain-free life. You might be thinking, “That doesn’t seem fair?”

God does not want us to become dormant, mindless, followers of Him. He seeks our relational growth to Him to be able to experience all that God has for us. When we experience trials and come out on the other side better, we understand better the love The Father has for us.

The reality is, most of us trust from time to time and then other times, follow our own desires. Paul experienced this in his own life. Romans 7:15-17 says:

For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it

is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

So, when you begin to trust more, you begin to pray more. Conversely, if you are not praying, God may allow hardship so you will come to Him. It is His desire to communicate with His children.

Pray in Secret

It is not necessary to have long prayer sessions for God to hear your prayers. Paul said, “Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).” That means being continuously in an attitude of prayer with God on your mind always. It does not mean you have to remain on your knees twenty-four hours a day.

Once, my wife, Frances, and I were at a wedding. We were helping decorate and clean for the wedding all day and into the night. My wife had been having back troubles and being on her feet all day was excruciating by the end of the night. As we lay down in the bed that night she let out a little shriek in pain. I quietly reached behind me and said, “Lord heal her.” Then, I fell asleep.

When I awoke the next morning, she asked me if I prayed for her. At first I said, “No,” because I had done no elaborate prayer. But then I remembered I had done that small appeal for God to heal her. She said, “I thought so. I was healed.” For many years afterward she had no back pain.

It did not take some extravagant prayer for God to hear me. It took praying continuously to remain in the presence of God. The relationship with God does not happen on Sundays alone. It is an everyday relationship that is cultivated over time.

Pray Out Loud

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him (Matthew 6:7-8).”

Many use the above Scripture as a reason not to pray in public. But that is not the intention of the Scripture. Jesus is warning those who pray openly and loud for their own gain, for their own attention. These people pray so that others think they are spiritual, when in reality, they are self-serving and manipulators. Matthew 18:19-20 says:

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

How can the two agree if one does not know what the other is praying? God is not interested in loud prayers that draw attention away from Him, but He is interested in believers praying for one another in agreement and fellowship.

Conclusion

When we read the Word, it is important to study the Bible in its entirety, not with one Scripture alone. God’s Word was not given

one Scripture at a time, rather as one love letter at a time. His Word was intended to be consumed in its entirety to understand the love He has for His children. Do not try to break it up to fit the culture or the way you want it to read to fit your lifestyle. Each word was carefully chosen for us to know of the miraculousness of God's love. The context of God's Word leads to eternal life.

Notes

Chapter Four: Does God Really Answer Prayer?

By Glenn A. Beard, Jr.

1 Kings 9:1-3

And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, 2 that the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3 And the Lord said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

BLUF

I will begin this lesson as I usually do; I will start with the bottom line up front (BLUF). The BLUF for the question "Does God really answer prayer?" is unequivocally, "Yes, God really does answer prayer." After Jesus cursed the fig tree for not having figs the Disciples were surprised to see the fig tree had withered. Then, Jesus guaranteed His Disciples that their prayers would be answered as well in Mark 11:22-24:

²² So Jesus answered and said to them, "²³ For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴ Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Our Redeemer clearly proclaimed to His Disciples that if we ask and believe, our requests or prayers will be answered. We must have faith in our requests, and there is one caveat; “His answers are not always yes.” He may also answer, “No,” or even “Wait” or something better. However, in this lesson we will speak primarily to prayers in which the Lord God answers affirmatively.

Prayer for Salvation and Righteousness

God answers our prayer for salvation from our sin and the righteousness of Christ. This is the most important prayer anyone will ever utter. Paul clearly testifies in his letter to the church in Rome: “For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved’ (Romans 10:13).” However, before any of our other prayers are answered, a sinner must call on the name of the Lord. For our prayers to be answered, a sinner must be washed by the righteousness of Jesus and become sons and daughters of the Most High.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name . . . (John 1:12).” For when we put our faith in Jesus’ saving grace, God imputes His righteousness upon us. For “Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him (John 9:31).” John tells us, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and

to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).” When we have done this, our sin is gone; we are righteous because He has paid the price. Now, we can petition Him for our appeals. God answers everyone’s prayer who calls for salvation.

Prayers for Accomplishment

God answers our prayers for the accomplishment of our labor.

As quoted in 1 Kings above, God answered the prayer of King David’s heir, Solomon. God had previously answered King David’s prayer to build the Temple in the negative. In 1 Chronicles 17, David went to the prophet Nathan to inquire about building the Temple so the ark of the covenant would not be under a tent. Instead, the Lord told King David that because:

“ . . . You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name . . . a son will be born to you . . . He shall build a house for My name . . . (1 Chronicles 22:8-10).”

Instead, David gathered and made ready the building materials:

“ . . . to make preparation for it.’ So David made abundant preparations before his death (1 Chronicles 22:5b).”

David would not be allowed to build the temple, but God would allow his son to do so. In accordance with God’s promise to David, the heir to his throne would be allowed to build the

Temple to house the Ark of the Covenant. God heard King Solomon's petition and allowed him to complete the Temple:

And the Lord said to him: 'I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

- 1 Kings 9:3 -

God answered Solomon's prayers for accomplishment.

Prayers for Healing

God answers our prayers for healing of our illnesses. 2 Kings 18 tells us that King Hezekiah "did what was right in the sight of the Lord." Likewise, we are told that the Lord was with him, but after great victories through the power of God, the King of Judah fell mortally ill. The prophet Isaiah went to tell King Hezekiah that the Lord had said that he would not live. Hearing this, the king turned and prayed, weeping "profusely," and beseeching the Lord to remember that he had done what is good in His sight. Before Isaiah left the middle of the king's courtyard, the Lord God spoke to him saying:

Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: 'I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will save you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will protect this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'

- 2 Kings 20:5-6 -

God heard the prayer and saw the tears of his faithful servant King Hezekiah. The Lord granted the king's request for healing and added fifteen years to his life. God answered King Hezekiah's prayer for healing.

Prayers for Deliverance

God answers our prayers for deliverance from our enemies.

When the valiant men, descendants of Joseph's eldest brother Reuben, ". . .made war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab," they called upon the Lord and He delivered them from their enemies (1 Chronicles 5:19).

. . . and they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were delivered into their hand, and all who were with them, for they cried out to God in the battle. He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him.

- 1 Chronicles 5:20 -

God answered the prayer of the sons of Reuben, the Gadites, to deliver from their enemies.

Prayers for Peace

God answers our prayers for peace from our anxiety and fears.

In life we experience emotional pain, frustration, and fear, but if we are walking with the Lord, these encounters do not need to concern us. Paul experienced difficulties far beyond what most can even imagine yet he was able to find peace through his

prayers and worship. In his letter to the church in Philippi, he declared: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice (Philippians 4:4)!” He continued in verses 6 & 7:

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Through Paul, the Lord our God tells us that in all circumstances we may ask whatever we wish, and He will give us peace that can only come from Him. God answers the prayers of those who ask for peace.

Conclusion

We can be confident that God answers the prayers of a righteous person. James, the half-brother of Jesus, tells us, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16b).” We must first call upon Jesus in faith to save us; He will always answer this prayer: “And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved (Joel 2:32a.).” Then, just as Jesus proclaims in Mark 11:23, “For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” In our prayers, after we have received righteousness through faith in the grace of Jesus’ sacrifice, we

can ask for accomplishment, healing, deliverance, and peace
and be wholly confident that our prayers will be answered.

Notes

Chapter Five: Who Do We Pray To?

By Robert Lederman

John 16:23-24

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

We Pray to God, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A Promise of Direct Access to the Father

John 16:23-24 stands as a profound declaration by Jesus during His farewell discourse to the disciples, a speech recorded only in the Gospel of John. It is part of a larger narrative where Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure—His arrest, crucifixion, resurrection, and ultimate ascension to the Father.

This particular verse encapsulates a transition in the relationship between God and humanity, ushered in through the work of Christ. It speaks of a future moment when believers will experience a new intimacy with the Father, made possible through Jesus' name. To understand the depth of John 16:23, it is essential to examine its context, theological implications, and relevance for believers today.

John 16 is part of an extended conversation between Jesus and His disciples on the night before His crucifixion. Beginning in

John 13, this discourse covers themes of comfort, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of His departure, and the promise of future joy. In John 16:16-22, Jesus speaks cryptically about His leaving and returning, confusing the disciples. He then promises that their sorrow will be turned to joy, likening it to a woman experiencing labor pains that lead to the birth of a child.

Line 23 opens with the phrase, “In that day,” indicating a future time when the resurrection has taken place and the full understanding of Jesus’ mission has been revealed. “That day” refers to the new era inaugurated by His resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost—a new covenant relationship between God and His people. This is the time when believers will no longer need to rely on Jesus’ physical presence to communicate with God, because they will have direct access to the Father through Him.

The first part of John 16:23 can be confusing at first glance. Jesus says, “You will no longer ask me anything.” Does this mean believers should no longer pray to Jesus or seek Him for guidance? Not exactly. The Greek verb used for “ask” here can also mean “to question” or “to inquire.” Jesus is telling His disciples that after His resurrection and the arrival of the Holy Spirit, they will understand the truth of who He is and why He came. Their confusion and need to ask questions will fade because the Spirit will guide them into all truth (John 16:13). This

promise addresses the spiritual clarity that will come through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, rather than the cessation of prayer.

Powerful Promise . . .

The second part of the verse is a powerful promise: “My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.” This marks a major theological shift in how people relate to God. Under the Old Covenant, communication with God often came through priests and sacrifices. But now, Jesus proclaims a new way—one of direct access to the Father, through Him. Praying “in Jesus’ name” is more than a formulaic ending to a prayer; it signifies alignment with Christ’s mission, authority, and will. When believers ask in His name, they are invoking their relationship with Him and submitting their requests to His lordship.

This promise also underscores the unity between Jesus and the Father. Asking in Jesus’ name is not a way to manipulate God into granting selfish requests, but a spiritual act of communion, whereby the believer seeks God’s will in alignment with Christ’s purposes. The assurance that “the Father will give you” reflects God’s generosity and openness toward His children.

John 16:23 reveals the heart of Christian prayer: access to the Father, mediated through the Son, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. It presents the fullness of Trinitarian involvement in the believer’s spiritual life. The verse highlights that the Father is not distant or indifferent; rather, He is receptive to the prayers of

those who come through Jesus. This eliminates the need for any intermediary apart from Christ, fulfilling the role of the High Priest described in Hebrews 4:14-16.

Also, the verse teaches that the resurrection of Jesus marks a turning point in redemptive history. Because of His victory over death, believers now enter into a new relationship with God—one characterized by boldness, intimacy, and clarity.

For Christians today, John 16:23 serves as both a comfort and a challenge. It invites believers to approach God with confidence, not because of personal merit, but because of the name and work of Jesus. It also challenges believers to pray not just for personal gain, but in alignment with the heart of Christ.

The verse encourages a life of faith that is rooted in communion with God. Prayer becomes not merely a religious obligation but a relational privilege. It reminds believers that they are never alone—Jesus has made the way to the Father open and sure.

John 16:23 encapsulates the transformative power of Jesus' death and resurrection. It speaks of a day when believers will understand, when questions will cease, and when access to the Father will be made clear through the name of Jesus. This promise is both theological and practical, shaping how Christians view prayer, relationship with God, and the work of Christ. In a world full of uncertainty and confusion, this verse offers profound

hope: that through Jesus, we can come boldly to the Father, knowing He hears and responds in love.

Philippians 4:6-7 says:

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 understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:13 says:

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The Epistle to the Philippians, written by the Apostle Paul while imprisoned, is a letter filled with encouragement, gratitude, and profound spiritual truths. Among its most quoted verses are Philippians 4:6-7 and 4:13, which speak directly to the believer's experience of anxiety, divine peace, and the empowerment that comes from Christ. These verses encapsulate key elements of Christian living—faith, trust, peace, and perseverance—in a world full of trials and uncertainties.

Philippians 4:6-7 speak directly to the common human condition of worry. Paul exhorts believers not to let anxiety dominate their hearts but instead to bring every concern before God through prayer. Importantly, he adds the qualifier “with thanksgiving,” suggesting that even in difficult circumstances, gratitude should accompany our prayers.

Paul's instruction is not a call to passive acceptance of hardship, but an invitation into active, trusting communication with God. Prayer and petition become tools to refocus the mind and heart on God's faithfulness. The result of this posture is not necessarily the removal of the problem but the reception of divine peace. This peace is described as surpassing all understanding—it is not derived from logic or circumstance but from the very nature of God. It functions as a guard, protecting the believer's heart and mind from the destructive effects of fear and doubt.

In Philippians 4:13, Paul makes a bold declaration: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

This verse is often cited in moments of personal challenge or ambition, but its meaning is most profound when viewed in context. In the preceding verses, Paul discusses how he has learned to be content in every situation—whether in need or in plenty. His secret to contentment and endurance is not rooted in self-sufficiency, but in Christ-sufficiency.

The Greek word used for "strengthens" implies an ongoing empowerment. Christ is not a one-time source of help but a continual wellspring of strength. Paul's use of the phrase "all things" should be understood not as a blank check for personal desires, but as a testament to enduring all circumstances—especially suffering, hardship, or lack—with unwavering faith in

Christ's sustaining power. It is a call to resilience rooted in relationship with Jesus, not self-confidence.

Taken together, Philippians 4:6-7 and 4:13 offer a complete vision of Christian resilience. Verses 6-7 address the mental and emotional struggles that often accompany life's challenges, urging believers to exchange anxiety for prayer, and worry for peace. Verse 13 then affirms that beyond mental peace, believers are also given divine strength to act, endure, and persevere. The Christian life, according to Paul, is one where the mind is guarded by peace and the body is empowered by Christ.

These verses remain deeply relevant today. In a world where stress, fear, and uncertainty dominate the cultural landscape, Paul's words call believers to a higher way of living—one marked by continual communication with God, gratitude in all circumstances, and a daily reliance on Christ's power. The promise is not that life will be easy, but that we will not face it alone or unprepared.

Moreover, these passages challenge modern believers to redefine strength and peace. True peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of God amid it. True strength is not self-made determination but Christ-enabled endurance. In a society that often glorifies independence and control, these verses point to the power of surrender—to bring everything to God and to rely wholly on His strength.

Finally, John 16:23-24, like Philippians 4:6-7 and 4:13, provide a blueprint for navigating the pressures of life with grace and strength. They teach that anxiety can be met with prayer, that thanksgiving can change perspective, and that the peace of God can guard our inner being. They also remind believers that, through Christ, they are capable of enduring all things. Paul's words, written from a prison cell, continue to inspire and empower Christians today, not because of his situation, but because of the Savior he trusted.

Notes

Chapter Six: How Often Should We Pray?

By Glenn A. Beard, Jr.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:

16 Rejoice always,

17 pray without ceasing,

18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

BLUF

To begin as I usually do, I will start with the Bottom Line Up Front or the BLUF. The BLUF for the question “How often should we pray?” is simply, we should be in a constant state of intimacy with our Father in Heaven through His Son in His Spirit, or as Paul tells us, “. . . pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).” As believers, we should always be in a prayerful, reverent state before the Creator. The Brave browser AI describes it this way:

To pray without ceasing means to cultivate a continuous spirit of dependence on God that permeates all aspects of life, where one is constantly aware of His presence and relies on Him in every situation. It does not require constant verbal or mental prayer, but rather signifies a recurring and often repeated practice of prayer, maintaining an attitude of openness and connection with God throughout the day. This involves turning to God instantly in moments of temptation, gratitude, or trouble, and allowing all thoughts, deeds, and circumstances to become opportunities for communion with Him.

Although this description comes from an artificial intelligence program, it gives an excellent description of what “pray without ceasing” means.

Where Should We Pray?

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” - Matthew 6:6 -

Jesus tells us to “. . . go into your room, and . . . shut the door. . .”

This is absolutely the best place to pray when it is possible. We can be alone with God praise and worship Him, confess our sins, petition Him, and seek His strength in our weakness. Quiet, out of the way, places contribute to an atmosphere of reverence that allows us to communicate worshipfully with our Father.

Guidepost.org suggests the following places might be conducive to personal prayer: churches, parks, cemeteries, hotels and airports, gardens, and outdoors at night

(<https://guideposts.org/prayer/how-to-pray/7-inviting-places-to-pray/>).

However, there are times when we are unable to get to one of these quiet places.

In reality, we can pray anywhere. Silently, we can petition the Creator on a crowded airplane or train; we can lift our voices to him from our cars; or we can thank Him and ask Him to bless our

food quietly in a crowded restaurant. We can pray anywhere; Jonah likely prayed from one of the strangest places in all of history: “Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish’s belly (Jonah 2:1)”. Yes, the best place to pray is a secluded place where we can avoid distractions and might communicate with our God in private. However, there is nowhere on this earth where a person cannot call out to the Lord. John boldly tells us: “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us (1 John 5:14).”

How Should We Pray?

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

Before Christ established Himself as our eternal Priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7), the children of Israel needed priests to confess their sins and seek atonement through sacrifice. However, the Son of God broke down the barrier for those who had surrendered to Him as their Lord and Savior. With the new covenant established through the redeeming sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we may now boldly approach the throne to obtain mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:16). 1 John 5:14-15 also tells us:

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

And Jesus tells us in Mathew:

5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. (Matthew 6:5 & 7)

In short, we may approach the throne of grace boldly, and when we pray, we can have confidence that He hears everything we ask in His name. However, we must not pray "...in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they [we] may be seen by men. . . [or] use vain repetitions. . . (Brave AI)." Our prayers are a means of communication between a believer and the Father, not a performance for those around us. We should not only pray in our closet or a secluded place, but we should maintain ". . . an attitude of openness and connection with God throughout the day (Brave AI)."

Why should we pray?

Why should we pray? Because our Father in Heaven tells us to. As Jehovah told Jeremiah while he was in prison: “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know (Jeremiah 33:3).”

Prayer is a large part of how we grow in our relationship with our Savior. Would anyone expect to grow closer to a friend without communication. Prayer is a method of communication with God; it is two-way. We can grow closer and learn more about the Lord reading His Word but of utmost importance, prayer is the path to salvation. Subsequently, it is how we are able to communicate our thankfulness, confess our sin, make petitions, get answers, seek guidance, ask for solace, gain courage, find peace, and be granted perseverance.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, encouraged us:

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:13-16)

Similarly, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul instructed us to:

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

And in his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul tells us that we should be “. . . praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Ephesian 6:18).”

After the Messiah had cursed the fig tree and it withered, His Disciples were confused.

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God.

23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:22-24)

We should pray in faith to communicate with our Father and to grow in our walk with him. Just as personal, honest, and frequent dialogue with a friend cultivates a stronger relationship, communication with our Creator is imperative if we want to grow in our walk with our Lord and develop a stronger relationship with

Him. We must constantly study His word and “. . . pray without ceasing.”

Conclusion

As believers, we must strive to “. . .cultivate a continuous spirit of dependence on God that permeates all aspects of life, where one is constantly aware of His presence and relies on Him in every situation (Brave AI).” Through our Redeemer and High Priest, we can boldly approach the throne of grace and go before our Creator with our thanksgiving, praise, fear, doubt, appeals, and anything else. Not only can we approach His throne, but we can be confident that if we ask anything in His name, He will grant our petition.

Notes

Chapter Seven: The Lord's Prayer, Petition One

By Steve Young

Matthew 6:9

“In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

First Petition: Hallowed Be Thy Name

There are six petitions to the Lord in the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer, also known as the Disciples' Prayer, is a model for believers, not just a set of words to be recited.

According to Dr. David Jeremiah, it is a pattern for prayer, highlighting the importance of aligning one's heart with God's priorities. We are encouraged to use the Lord's Prayer as a guide to focus on prayer and deepen one's relationship with God.

The first petition of the Lord's Prayer is, “Hallowed be thy Name.”

What does it mean to pray “hallowed be your name” as Jesus taught in Matthew Chapter 6? What does “hallowed” mean? It is not a term used in 21st Century language outside of Bible study. Simply put, it means “Holy.” It is reverence and praise to an All-Mighty God who deserves our praise.

Matthew 6:9-10 In this manner, therefore, pray: “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Notice how “Heaven” frames the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. We want God’s name to be hallowed, we want His kingdom to come, and we want His will to be done “on earth as it is in heaven.”

God’s name is hallowed in heaven when the angels cry out “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory (Isaiah 6:3)!”

The worship in heaven will never end. In Revelations 4:8 we read:

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”

Revelation 15:3-4 also says:

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgements have been manifested.

That’s the picture in heaven. God’s name is honored, praised and adored in unceasing worship.

Now let's look at the picture on earth. In Isaiah 52:5 God says through the prophet Isaiah:

Now therefore, what have I here, says the LORD, "That my people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them make them wail," says the LORD, "And My name is blasphemed continually every day. Therefore, My people shall know My name; Therefore, they shall know in that day That I am He who speaks: "Behold, it is I."

This picture on earth could not be more different from the picture in heaven. In heaven, God's name is honored and the angel's worship without ceasing. On earth, God's name is despised and blasphemed all day long. And so, into that great divide we pray the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. To pray "hallowed be thy name" is asking God to let His name be worshiped, adored, and honored on earth just like it is in heaven. We are basically asking God to move and act in this world so that people will worship and treasure Him above all else.

Will this prayer be answered? I don't believe that our Lord taught us to offer futile prayers. I believe that each petition of the Lord's prayer will be answered. When we model our prayers around the Lord's Prayer then we can always be confident that we are praying in the will of God. Why? Because this is how the Lord taught us to pray.

I believe that each petition of the Lords' Prayer will have a "then" and "now" answer.

When Christ comes back in power and glory, God's name will be glorified, exalted, honored and hallowed. Habakkuk 2:14 says, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

Righteousness will reign over the whole earth. Never again will God's name be blasphemed. Instead, God's name will be honored on earth as it is in heaven. All of God's people will worship Him, adore Him, love Him, and bow down to Him forever!

How can this prayer be answered here and now? Especially in a world that despises God and blasphemes His name all day long like we read in Isaiah 52.

I believe when we pray "Hallowed be thy name," it is a prayer not for a change in God but for a change in us. God is already infinite, perfect and complete. We are asking God to raise up here in earth, people who come to know Him, love Him and value Him more than life itself. We pray so that in a world that despises and blasphemes God's name, His name may be honored.

Some definitions I think are important:

- Hallowed – to set apart as something special, to make holy, to treat as sacred.

- Your Name – In the Bible names often represented the character or reputation of a person. So “Your Name” in the Lord’s prayer represents God’s character and all that He is.

This petition in the Lord’s Prayer is making a declaration that God’s name is to be held in the highest regard, and His character is to be honored and should have the ultimate authority in our lives.

Exodus 20:3 says, “You shall have no other gods before me.”

This first commandment relates directly to the first petition of the Lord’s prayer. They both emphasize that God alone should be worshipped, and His name be exalted.

This first petition is our call to action. Our lives should reflect the holiness of God in everything we do. When we speak of God, we should speak with reverence. We should always make Him the priority in all our decisions.

As Christians, we should be able to pray to God as if we were talking to a friend. God desires communication and relationship with His children. I think Psalm 8 is a great way to get into the mindset of worshiping and glorifying God’s name.

Psalm 8:2-9:

O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth
of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy
and the avenger. When I consider Your heavens, the work of
Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have
ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, And the son
of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little
lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory
and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the
works of Your hands; you have put all things under his feet, All
the sheep and oxen-even the beasts of the field, The birds of
the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of
the seas. O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all
the earth!

What a mighty God we serve, Hallowed be His name.

Notes

Chapter Eight: The Lord's Prayer, Petition Two

By Glenn A. Beard, Jr.

Matthew 6:10:

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

BLUF

When I was in the Army I gave many briefings to senior officers, subordinates, and sometimes my peers. Typically, I would establish the objective of briefing by starting with the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF). Then, I would give details and develop the intended topic. Likewise, to begin this lesson I will begin with the BLUF about the second petition that Jesus included while He was teaching His Disciples how to pray. The second appeal of the Lord's Prayer is:

Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- Luke 11:2b -

Background

Both Matthew and Luke included the Lord's prayer in their writings, and both included this appeal. However, the setting for Christ's teachings about prayer was different in each of these

accounts. In the testimony of Matthew (the changed former tax collector who became one of the Savior's twelve apostles and witnessed the events), he tells of Jesus's teaching on giving to the poor, then about praying, and he concludes by telling His disciples to "Pray, then, this way . . . (Matthew 6:9a)." On the other hand, Luke (a highly educated doctor who accompanied Paul on many of his missionary journeys and wrote his book based on the testimony of those who witnessed the events of Christ's life) testifies that Christ had ceased praying and, ". . . one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples' (Luke 11:1b)."

Matthew and Luke came from different backgrounds and likely had very different perspectives, yet both men were inspired by the Holy Spirit to give accounts of this well-known prayer, and both included the appeal "Your kingdom come. Your will be done . . ." found in Matthew 6:10 and Luke 11:2.

Petition Two

While teaching His disciples a template for effective prayer, our Lord related six petitions that we should include to facilitate an effectual prayer life. In this lesson we will elaborate on the second one; this appeal relates to our yearning, as believers, for God's will to be done. Both Matthew 6 and Luke 11 include the phrases, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Some have incorrectly understood this to mean that somehow, we could bring the glory of heaven to the current,

flawed earth, foregoing the events prophesized in Daniel, Revelation, Matthew 24 and other Scriptures. While others have interpreted this plea to mean that we should be “passively waiting for God's will to be revealed or accepting whatever outcomes occur without action (Brave AI).” Still others have construed it to mean “. . . that God's kingdom is only a future event or that our good works can build it (Google AI).”

Each of these interpretations is inconsistent with the other teachings of Christ and the inspired word of other passages in the New Testament. We don't have to wait for a future date for His kingdom to come. Jesus told us in John 5:19, "I only do what I see my Father doing." His life was the example of the will of the Father. Additionally, He proclaimed, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. . . I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:9-10)." The Savior came to redeem us, but in doing this He lived a perfect life setting the absolute example of how we should live, thereby showing us how "Thy will be done." In his final command to His Disciples and believers, the resurrected Christ conveyed to us His direction called the Great Commission: Matthew 28:19-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen

Our Redeemer not only charged each of His followers with this directive, He gave us the promise that we would never be alone, but that He would be with us always. In addition to his promise to remain with us forever, Jesus lifted up His Disciples in prayer asking the Father to sanctify by the Truth of His word (John 17:6-19). Then, our Savior said a prayer for all believers:

20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word (*the disciples*);

21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me (*Italics added*).

- John 17:20-21 -

Those of us who have, in faith, accepted the Lordship of the Resurrected Christ are given the power to bring the Father’s Kingdom to earth in us and to do the His will just as it is in Heaven, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Disciples of Christ strived to do the Father’s will by sharing the Good News of salvation in Christ. They worked diligently to give as many as possible, the opportunity to respond to the Spirit and be in one accord with Christ’s followers to do the will of the Father on earth. Luke wrote of Philip’s efforts:

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized (Acts 8:12).

Likewise, the good doctor shared Paul's fruit: "Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him (Acts 28:30-31)."

Finally, in His second letter to the church at Thessalonica Paul beseeched his brothers and sisters in Christ: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you (2 Thessalonians 3:1)."

Conclusion

Since He only does the will of His Father, "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me (John 5:30)." We know that everything thing He did or tells us to do advances the will of the Father. In Matthew 7 following the account of the Lord's prayer in chapter 6, Jesus shared great wisdom; He elucidates how we may only achieve life through the narrow gate.

Next, the Savior explains that true believers will be known by their fruits. Then, He tells us in verse 21, "**Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven** (*bold emphasis*

mine).” John tells us, “And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another. . . (1 John 3:23).” We must obey Him and imitate Him, under the control of the Holy Spirit.

For the appeal “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” advocated in the Lord’s prayer to be answered. We, as believers, must submit our will to His. We must die to ourselves and let the Holy Spirit live in us. Christianity.com explains it this way:

The will of God may be said to be done by us, when our wills are resigned to his; when we patiently submit to every adverse dispensation of providence; when our hearts and actions are, in some measure, conformed to his law; when what is done, is done in faith, with a view to his glory, and without dependence upon it; of which such only are capable who have a spiritual understanding of the will of God, believe in Christ, receive grace and strength from him, and are assisted by his Spirit.

(<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/thy-kingdom-come-thy-will-be-done-bible-meaning.html>)

Ultimately, having His will done “On earth as it is in Heaven” we must willingly submit to Him; die to our flesh and allow His Spirit to live through us.

Notes

Chapter Nine: The Lord's Prayer – Petition Three

By Steve Young

Matthew 6:10:

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

The Lord's Prayer is a model of Christian prayer given by Jesus to His disciples. It contains a declaration in the phrase "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." These words are not just a petition but a declaration that reveals the heart of God's redemptive plan for us all. This petition has very deep implications for believers today, both for how we understand God's kingdom and how we are called to live here on earth in the light of His kingdom.

What does it mean for God's kingdom to come?

The kingdom of God is a present reality and a future fulfillment.

"Thy kingdom come" is a profound expression of longing and hope. Jesus frequently spoke of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament.

Mark 1:14 says:

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, "The time

is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

Luke 6:20: “Then He lifted up His eyes towards His disciples, and said: ‘Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God’.”

In one sense, the kingdom of God is already here, having arrived in the person of Jesus Christ. He Himself said in Luke 17:20-21, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, See here! Or see there! For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you’.”

Through the life, death, and resurrection, Jesus brought the Kingdom into the history of humanity. The Kingdom of God is characterized by the reign of Christ where His lordship and His rule is working today in the hearts and lives of all believers.

The future Kingdom is made clear to us in Revelation 21:1-4:

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

When we pray “Thy Kingdom come.” We are not just asking for the Kingdom to continue here on earth through the work of the Holy Spirit in us, but we are also praying with desire for the final consummation of God’s reign. We long for the day when Christ will return. A time when the brokenness of this world will finally be healed perfectly.

“Thy will be done.”

When we pray this, we are recognizing and agreeing with God that His will is supreme. We are asking God to align our desires with His and telling God that we agree with Him and want God to have His way in all the aspects of our life.

Our description of God’s will is that His purpose and plan are sovereign overall. His will is unfolding throughout history and absolutely nothing can thwart it. In the face of human pain, rebellion, suffering, and sin, God’s will ultimately, and absolutely, prevails. His plan of salvation through Jesus can never be undone. In essence when we pray “Thy will be done,” We are agreeing with God that He is in control and that His plan for salvation will be fulfilled.

God’s will also refers to moral will. The commands He gives to us, His people.

Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

When we pray this petition, we are committing ourselves to obedience to God's revealed will. Jesus Himself showed us this willingness to submit Himself to His Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:42 "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

This example of submission to The Father's will should be the model for every believer. It acknowledges that God's ways are higher than our ways and that His purpose will always bring about the best possible outcome, even if we can't see it or understand it.

On Earth as it is in Heaven

The last part of this petition "on earth as it is in heaven" challenges us to be dramatically transformed with the world around us. In heaven, God's will is perfect and accomplished because there is no sin in heaven. To pray for God's will to be done here on earth as it is in heaven, we are praying for a reflection of a perfect heaven to be brought to our broken world.

In essence we have not just a future hope of heaven, but also it is our present reality. When Jesus ministered here on this Earth

through His teachings, healings, and confronting evil, He was demonstrating the power of God's Kingdom breaking through into our world. When we pray "on earth as it is in heaven" we are praying that God's Kingdom can be seen in our lives every day in the world around us.

What does that look like? To name a few, working for justice, peace and reconciliation in our relationships, pursuing holiness, loving our neighbors and being the active agent of change. Bringing light into a very dark world. I know we cannot make the world perfect, but we can reflect the Kingdom of God in our actions and attitudes.

These principles also hold true for the church. A pastor of mine, Ron Hart, used to always say "The church is not a hotel for saints, it's a hospital for sinners."

There is a lost and dying world out there that need to hear the good news about God. As a church we should be actively engaged in God's mission for the world. As we pray "Thy Kingdom come" we are praying for the advancement of the Gospel and the building up of the church as God's instrument in the world.

Notes

Chapter Ten: The Lord's Prayer – Petition Four

By Glenn A. Beard, Jr.

Matthew 6:11: Give us this day our daily bread.

Luke 11:3: Give us day by day our daily bread.

BLUF

If you have read any of the lessons I've written recently, you will know that I usually start with the Bottom Line Up Front, or the BLUF. I will briefly define the BLUF of this lesson, then go into more detail and expound on the objective. According to Matthew, the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer is: "Give us this day our daily bread (Matthew 6:11)." However, Luke reports it a little differently: "Give us day by day our daily bread (Luke 11:3)."

The November 5, 2020 edition of Learn Ligonier explains:

This petition of the Lord's Prayer, then, teaches us to come to God in a spirit of humble dependence, asking Him to provide what we need and to sustain us from day to day.

(<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/what-does-give-us-day-our-daily-bread-mean>)

Background

Jesus teaches us to pray that God would give us daily bread (Matthew 6:11). Obviously, Jesus was not telling His disciples to pray only for bread. But bread was a staple in the diet of the

Jews and had been so for many years. Furthermore, bread was a powerful symbol of God's provision for His people in the Old Testament. God promised to ". . . rain bread from heaven (Ex. 16:4)." The next morning, when the dew lifted, there remained behind on the ground "a small round substance, as fine as frost . . . It was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16:14, 31)." When God miraculously fed His people from heaven, he did so by giving them bread.

Following his description of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew, the transformed former tax collector, reported on the Lord's teaching of the "model prayer." In his account he shared the Lord's instruction on prayer. Jesus first tells His disciples how not to pray,

Matthew 6:5-7

5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

In short, Matthew shares the Savior's words in this manner:

Jesus tells His followers not to be like the hypocrites, praying for

everyone to see. Likewise, He communicates that we should not be as the heathens using “vain repetitions.” Furthermore, after denouncing unacceptable prayer, Yeshuah tells us, “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray . . . (Matthew 6:8-9).” In Matthew’s version, the Son of God imparts the petitions of the consummate prayer without inquiry from His followers.

On the other hand, Luke, the educated Gentile physician and friend of Paul, imparts the account of the Lord’s teaching of the model prayer directly after writing about the Messiah’s sharing of the parable of the Good Samaritan and an incident of jealousy between Martha and Mary (Luke 10:25-42). In Luke’s account, he shares, “He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples’ (Luke 11:1).” In Luke’s report, one of His disciples asked Him to teach them.

Petition Four

As Jesus instructed His disciples on the petitions of and effective prayer, the fourth of which was:

- In Matthew’s version – “Give us this day our daily bread (Matthew 6:11).”
- In Luke’s account – “Give us day by day our daily bread (Luke 11:3).”

In the record of this account, there is a slight distinction between these two versions. In Matthew's report, he used the Greek word "sēmeron (pronounced: say'-mer-on), which means "this day." Luke, on the other hand, was led to use the Greek words "kata hēmera" (pronounced: kat-ah' hay-mer'-ah), which translates to "each day" or "day by day." However, the message relayed by both authors remains the same; we are to petition our creator for our desires. As described in the Ligonier quote above, we are not to simply ask for our food, but all our needs.

(<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/what-does-give-us-day-our-daily-bread-mean>)

In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul tells us, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19)." Since His word tells us that He will provide all our needs, why must we petition the Lord for our requirements? When we make this inquiry, we are expressing our submission to His Lordship. We are acknowledging His sovereignty and surrendering our will to His.

Later in the chapter in which Jesus shared the prayer, He goes on to tell His followers:

31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:31-33).

The Lord tells us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).” There is much more to life than our physical needs, and when we earnestly seek His will, we will receive all our needs. Jesus knew there was more to our existence than just what is needed for our physical bodies. When He was tempted by the devil in the desert, the King of kings responded with the wisdom of His Divinity using the Scriptures:

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

- Matthew 4:1-4 -

Additionally, in the process of our surrender to Christ as Lord, we will learn to recognize that our needs and desires will change. We learn that the desires of the flesh and the things the world craves are temporary and provide no real satisfaction. They may seem to bring short-term happiness, but in the end they will all be destroyed. After demonstrating to His followers how to pray, our Savior continued to educate them telling them to lay up treasures in heaven.

Matthew 6:19-21,24

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

In our earnest petition to ask for our daily bread and our needs, we are showing our desire to serve only God. We must yield to Him and put Him first in our lives.

Conclusion

In His Word, our Savior taught us everything we need to know about how to walk with Him and live our lives for His glory. In the sixth chapter of Matthew and the eleventh chapter of Luke, two of the men God chose to transcribe His Word were inspired to provide an account of an ideal prayer. It provided six petitions to facilitate our communication with the Creator of the universe. The fourth instructs us to ask the Lord for our needs. We are to submit to His will, recognize and acknowledge our complete dependence on Him, and surrender wholly to His Lordship. Because of His mercy and grace, we can understand and know that He will provide all our needs.

Matthew 7:7, 8, 11

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Notes

Chapter Eleven: The Lord's Prayer – Petition Five

By Glenn A. Beard, Jr.

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

Luke 11:4a

And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

BLUF

As usual, I will begin this lesson with the Bottom Line Up Front, or the BLUF. I will give the direct answer to the question, “What is the BLUF of the lesson?” Then, I will elaborate. The BLUF of the lesson is:

Matthew’s version: “And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:12).”

Luke’s account: “And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us (Luke 11:4a).

Background

As I shared in the lesson on fourth petition of the Lord’s model prayer, Matthew, the former tax collector who left his wealth to follow his Redeemer, reveals the teaching of the Savior with the following detail: he tells of Jesus’s giving His followers instructions on how not to pray. He tells them not to be like the hypocrites, praying for everyone to see. Furthermore, He informs them that we should not pray like the heathens using “vain repetitions.” Then, once He denounces improper ways to pray,

our Lord communicates to us, “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray . . . (Matthew 6:8-9).” Matthew shares this version of the Lord’s teaching, where the Messiah provides the example of an ideal prayer without being asked.

In Matthew 6:12, the Greek word “opheilēma” (*pronounced of-i'-lay-mah*) for the English translation of “debt.” The Blue Letter Bible “Outline of Bible Usage” defines this word to mean: “that which is owed; that which is justly or legally due, a debt; offense, sin.” This word is only used one other time in the New Testament: Romans 4:3-4 says, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt (opheilēma).”

On the other hand, Luke, the educated Gentile doctor and author of the Biblical books Luke and Acts, shares the account of the teaching of the model prayer by the Savior after he had written about Yeshuah’s sharing of the parable of the Good Samaritan and the incident of Martha’s jealousy towards Mary as she sat at Jesus’s feet while Martha served their guests (Luke 10:25-42). Luke prefaces the event like this, “He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ (Luke

11:1)” Luke explains that one of His disciples had asked Him to teach them how to pray.

Luke uses the word sin, more commonly used in the New Testament, with a similar meaning. He used the Greek word “*hamartia*” (pronounced *ham-ar-tee’-ah*). According to the Blue Letter Bible’s “Outline of Bible Usage,” this word is used to mean: “to be without a share in; to miss the mark; to err, be mistaken; to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honor, to do or go wrong; to wander from the law of God, violate God’s law, sin.” This word occurs over 170 times in 151 verses; the word used in the prophecy of the first chapter of Matthew when the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph. “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).” Additionally, it is used for when John was baptizing the people in the Jordan, “. . . confessing their **sins** (Matthew 3:6).” Likewise, this is the word Jesus used when he told people that their **sins** were forgiven (*Bold emphasis mine*).

Petition Five

In the 51st Psalm, when the prophet Nathan had confronted King David after he had gone to Bathsheba, the guilty king pleaded to the Lord:

Psalm 51:1-4, 9-12

1 Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;

According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.

4 Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.

9 Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

David, the chosen king of God's chosen people had sinned against God. The man who would be synonymous with the throne of the Messiah betrayed his birthright, but the King of Israel had to humble himself and asked for the Lord's mercy. He admitted his sin, repented and asked, not only for God's forgiveness, but restoration as well:

“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit (Psalm 51:12).”

Although God forgave King David and allowed him to retain his throne, there were consequences for his actions. Throughout the

remainder of his life his kingdom suffered from turmoil, betrayal and grief.

Our Heavenly Father does forgive our sin when we confess it to Him, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).” But Jesus has taught us that we must forgive to be forgiven.

After the Savior had communicated the model prayer, in Matthew’s account, He added:

14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

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

But Jesus didn’t stop there:

Matthew 18:21-22

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”

After explaining this to Peter, He tells a parable about a man who owed a large sum of money to a certain king but was unable to pay. He begged the king for more time, and the king had compassion and forgave the debt. However, the same man was owed a small amount by another, who could not pay and likewise

begged for more time, but he threw his debtor into prison. The king found out what the man who had owed him a great deal of money had done and sent him to be tortured until he could pay off the large debt. Jesus explains that this is what His Father will do to us if we do not forgive our brothers (Matthew 18:23-35).

Similarly, Jesus tells us that we must be at peace with our fellow man before we go into worship. We cannot properly praise the Father in worship or offerings if there is enmity between us and other believers. He communicates:

Matthew 5:23-24

23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,
24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Conclusion

The model prayers Matthew and Luke were inspired to share, have some slight variation, yet they are very similar. Ultimately, the Messiah tells us to ask for forgiveness when we sin. But He doesn't stop there; our Savior tells us to forgive others so that we might be forgiven. Additionally, He tells us to forgive over and over; seventy times seven of Matthew 18:22 is not just 490; it signifies forgiving and forgiving as the Father forgives us.

This applies to our lives as well. We must forgive others so that our Father in Heaven will forgive us. Even though we don't deserve it, Jehovah God was willing to send His Son to die on the cross that the price of our sin could be paid, and we might have forgiveness. So, we must be willing to forgive those who sin against us.

Notes

Chapter Twelve: The Lord's Prayer – Petition Six

By Rick Hertless

Matthew 6:13:

And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory
forever. Amen.

And do not lead us into temptation

God is not the tempter, Satan is. Satan's goal is for Christians to fall and fail.

James 1:13

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

So, Satan's existence is focused upon making us fall. He continues to tempt and cause doubt to render the believer incapacitated or helpless. But God strengthens us through the power of His Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 14:26:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

The Holy Spirit resides within us to guide us through the Devil's traps. He gives the spirit of discernment to enable us to know who is speaking to us, whether God or Satan. God makes a way for us to escape and walk in His favor.

1Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

“Lead us not into temptation” loses something in the English translation. When read in the Greek might read more like, “God forbid temptation,” or “God will absolutely not bring us into temptation.” The emphatic phrase states that God is not the tempter. In placing Matthew 6:13 in context with the rest of Scripture, we realize that God will not lead us into temptation because He will not go against His own Word. James 1:13 tells us that God can by no means lead us into temptation because He is not the Tempter.

As always, looking into the original language gives greater insight and depth to the Word of God. Again, looking into the original language is easy today through the tools granted to us. If you have a Strong’s Concordance you can look it up or go to www.blueletterbible.org and use that tool. Either one will help your study of the Word grow.

But Deliver Us From the Evil One

James 4:7 says, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Notice the Scripture first says, “. . . submit to God.” Your walk with God never begins with you. You walk in

the power and glory of God, not yourself. Even the angels in Heaven recognize where the power comes from. Jude 1:9 says:

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

The authority we have begins and resides only in God. When people begin to place themselves on the level with God they begin to get into trouble. The original sin of Satan was that he valued himself equal with God and was cast out of Heaven.

The sin of Moses was that he was told to speak to the rock to bring water. Instead, he struck the rock and declared, "Must we bring water for you out of this rock (Numbers 20:10)?" In doing so, he placed himself on equal ground with God as if God needed him to bring water. Moses said, "Must WE . . . (Emphasis Mine)." Plus, with the physical act of striking the rock rather than speaking to it implied that God needed someone to do what He could not. Because of this sin, Moses was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land.

God's desire is that we avoid evil. How can we do that? By following God and His Word daily. Allow Him to guide our steps by continuous prayer and communication. If we stay in fellowship with Him, He will deliver us from the Evil One.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Matthew's prayer includes honor to God the same way it began.

Jesus began with "Hallowed be Thy Name" and ended with "power and glory forever." Matthew's account was more about the spiritual side of Jesus. Luke's was more from the historical side with historical facts. The beauty of Luke's account is that many secular historians abide by his account because he was considered a great historian. Also, Matthew's account was first hand while Luke said that he got his account from eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4). He was a non-Jew and a physician.

The power and the glory recognize who answers prayer. It is not by the scope or depth of the prayer that He answers, it is by the depth of the heart that He hears and answers our prayer. When your prayers are focused on you, God does not answer but waits until your heart is turned towards Him.

The empty prayers of wealth and success are not what God is seeking. He is seeking the heart that is focused on His desires. Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." This verse has been misconstrued many times by those who would use God as their own personal "Genie." But most miss the most important part of the verse. If you delight yourself in the Lord, your desires will become what His desires are. Your desires will change to

Kingdom desires rather than fleshly desires. Then God will grant the success you desire for His glory, not your own.

God is concerned with eternal blessings for us. Many forget that all of the things of the world will burn and be destroyed. Nothing of this Earth will be with us for eternity. It is only His eternal blessings that matter.

At this point I must clarify. The above statements do not mean that we are to live in poverty or suffer all the days of our lives on this Earth. However, it is to say that seeking God first will lead to the blessings that will serve you the best in this life rather than the riches of the flesh. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Seeking God first will give you the desires of your heart that, ultimately, will be the desires of God Himself.

Notes

Chapter Thirteen: Does God Really Do “The Miraculous” through Our Prayers?

By Rick Hertless

Does God Still Do the Miraculous through Prayer?

James 5:13-16

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.

It is not God's desire for His children to suffer. However, God wants us to ask. Asking God and receiving His healing confirms that He is the healer. The world would have us believe that the human body can only be healed with the help of doctors. God has placed within our bodies cells that will regenerate and heal, and doctors can sometimes aid in that healing process. However, ultimate healing comes only through prayer to God. Yes, while the flesh may heal, the total healing from God replaces fear and psychological events that might come with traumatic experiences.

In the past few years, I have experienced a lot of traumas. But I can say with confidence, I am at peace. God has instilled in me His peace that goes beyond healing of the body.

Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

Another important aspect of prayer is overlooked by many. Most turn to God in times of trouble and turmoil, but they forget to come to Him daily with their songs of joy. God wants a daily relationship, not one only of discouragement and catastrophe.

When my father was alive, I took great joy in sharing with him successes in my life. I knew that he would be proud of the accomplishment, and we would celebrate together. God is the same way. In fact, more so. He sees the eternal implications of the successes that we share with Him. As discussed previously, if we delight ourselves in the Lord, and our desires become successes, these are successes of The Father as well. Take time to share the joys of life with Him.

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Thankfully, I have seen this done many times at First Baptist Church Leander. Pastor Tim believes in the power of prayer.

About 10 years ago, my brother was diagnosed with liver disease. The doctor pulled me into the hall to tell me that my brother did not understand the gravity of the situation. He told me he had six months to live. He explained that while the liver is the

only organ that can regenerate, his liver was passed that stage and there was no hope without a transplant. Pastor Tim and I went over to his house after he was released, and pastor Tim prayed over him.

When my brother began to understand the gravity of the situation he began a journal. At a six-month checkup, his doctor told him he did not know how it happened, but his liver was regenerating. He said he did not know how, but he could tell him the exact date that it started. He went home and looked at the date in his journal. It coincided exactly with the date the Pastor Tim and I went and prayed for him.

I could give you many more examples of God's miraculous healing, but this book would have to be too long. God is still in the miraculous healing business. His power has not been stripped away by the doctrine of man that would deny glory to a God who still loves us and does not want us to continuously suffer.

And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

The Bible says, “. . . the prayer of faith WILL save the sick . . . (emphasis mine).” Perhaps you are thinking, “Why then do I not see everyone I pray for healed?” There are many questions that I cannot answer, but we must still continue to pray in faith and trust God at his Word. Because some do not see instant healing on everyone, they stop praying for anyone. God tells us to take

Him at His Word and still pray for the sick. It is up Him who He will heal and who He chooses to wait.

And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.
Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

Another aspect of this Scripture is the confession of sins to allow for forgiveness. The healing described in the verse above is both physical and spiritual healing. Perhaps you have wronged someone. Confess your sins one to another so that the relationship can be healed. God is the God of relationships. He wants us to love one another and share each other's burdens. Too many times today, Christians try to tear one another down more than lift them up and share burdens.

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

What makes a man righteous? It is not his acts of kindness. It is his faith in Jesus that makes him righteous. How a man walks in Christ makes him righteous before God. That does not mean he is perfect. It does mean he is in right standing with God and his prayers matter. God hears the prayers of the righteous and answers them.

God's desire is to bless His children. It is His desire for us to commune with Him daily and understand and know the ways of God. It is easy then to follow Him. Many times, I have had someone ask me, "How do you know it is God talking to you?"

Because I know His voice. I study His Word. I talk with Him. His answers to me are never contrary to His Word. It makes it easy to gain guidance from Him with the assurance that it is He who speaks because I am in communication with Him daily.

Through the traumas I mentioned, it was easy to remain at peace because I knew God was in control. Even though I stumble and fall, sometimes literally, He picks me up and guides my steps once again.

I had a bad fall and could have become paralyzed, but God decided that I would not be, and I continue on. However, I know of another minister who had a bad fall and did become paralyzed. He now has become bitter and preaches that God is not longer in the healing business because he was not healed. Do I understand why I am walking and he is not? No! But I do know that God does not want to be given up on no matter what you experience in your life.

Do not fall into the same trap as the minister I mentioned. If life is not going your way, know that if you are walking with the Lord He is bringing you through something that He wants you to learn. It is not time to give up on God. It is time to trust.

God still does the miraculous today. He wants you to continue to trust Him and be ready for the miracle you seek. Many miracles come in forms that you would recognize. But God will open your eyes to His plan if you are will to look.

Notes