

In Jesus' Name, Amen

The Lord's Prayer

(Matthew 6:1-15)

- Introduction:
1. I call this prayer recorded in Matthew 6:5-11, "The Lord's Prayer" accommodatively, understanding this is how he taught the disciples to pray.
 2. Actually, the prayer that the Lord really prayed in recorded in John 17.
 3. Through the years, I've had people tell me they didn't know how to pray.
 - a. I must admit that I found this odd, because I was saying prayers as a young child.
 1. Eg. "Now I lay me down to sleep..."
 2. Eg. "God is great; God is good..."
 3. Ills. Praying for unity at the age of three.
 - b. However, I discovered that most of the people who said they didn't know how to pray, could actually pray and were praying, but thought they were not doing it right.
 4. Let's spend a little time examining this model prayer that Jesus left behind for us.

I. How Not to Pray

- A. (Matthew 6:1-8).
- B. Motives and the heart cannot be over-emphasized in Christianity.
 1. (Matthew 22:37-40).
 2. (John 4:24).
 3. (Romans 6:17).
 4. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).
- C. Before Jesus gives a model prayer for his disciples, he takes time to tell them how not to pray.
 1. Don't pray to be seen of men (Matthew 6:5).
 - a. Ills. of preacher who wanted opening prayer so he could sit in the chairs next to the pulpit.
 - b. Ills. of man who looked up words in the dictionary to use in a prayer.
 2. Pray privately (Matthew 6:6).
 - a. Does this mean public prayer is condemned?
 - b. (John 6:11; John 11:41-42; John 17:1; Luke 23:46).
 - c. It would seem the difference between public and private prayer has more to do with the heart than those who might hear.
 3. Don't use vain repetitions (Matthew 6:7).
 - a. Note that he is not condemning repetitions, but rather, vain repetitions.
 - 1) (Luke 18:1-8).

- b. Examples of what might be considered “vain repetitions.”
 - 1) “Hail Mary, Full of Grace...” (Addressed to the wrong person and asks her to do what she cannot do).
 - 2) “Providentially Hindered” (Would God “for someone’s good, keep them from coming to worship services)?
 - 3) “Ready Recollection” (Does God work this way? Does he cause us to remember things?)
 - 4) “Bring us back at the next appointed hour” (Often, the men who pray this have no plans to come back at the next appointed hour).
- c. Also, biblical expressions can become vain if not said with the heart.

II. How Jesus Taught Us to Pray

- A. Our Father who art in Heaven.
 - 1. We are to address the Father in prayer (John 16:23).
 - a. Does this exclude praying to Jesus?
 - b. Good brethren have reached different understandings on this question. I will add that my understanding of this question has changed from what it was at a previous time.
 - 2. Consider these points...
 - a. The question is not whether or not it is right to pray to the Father. Of course, it is. The text explicitly states as much. However, the question is whether or not praying to the Father is the exclusive pattern of praying?
 - 1) E.g., The Bible gives authorizes us to sing when we are cheerful (James 5:13). But does that statement exclude singing when you’re sad or melancholy, for instance, at a funeral?
 - b. According to additional texts, praying to Jesus, as well as to the Father was not forbidden.
 - 1) (John 14:14).
 - a) There is a textual issue here.
 - b) The word, “Me” is included in older manuscripts, having the verse say, “If you ask Me anything in my name, I will do it.”
 - 2) (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).
 - a) Paul pleaded with the “Lord” to remove his thorn in the flesh.
 - b) Instead, he was told, “My grace is sufficient.”
 - c) Paul concluded that he therefore willing to have the power of **Christ** rest upon him.
 - d) So, the Lord he was praying to, what the Christ who gave him strength.

- 3) (Revelation 22:20; 1 Corinthians 16:22).
 - a) John prayed, "Come, Lord, Jesus" at the end of Revelation.
 - b) Paul prayed, "Maranatha" which translated means, "Oh Lord, Come."
- 4) (Acts 7:59-60).
 - a) Stephen addressed Jesus in prayer.
 - b) Some might say this was a "special circumstance" because he saw Jesus in a vision.
 - c) Why should that be allowed to affect the "rules of prayer" if the rules said to only pray to the Father?
- c. In terms of consistency, if it is wrong to address Jesus in prayer, then we need to stop singing many songs that are prayers to him.
 - 1) "Jesus Lover of My Soul," "My Jesus, I Love Thee," "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," "More Love to Thee," "Love Divine All Love Excelling," etc.
 - 2) Surely, the intonation of one's voice does not determine whether one is praying or not.
3. Mary or any other saint is an inappropriate recipient for our prayers.
4. This also reminds us of our relationship to God.
 - a. We need to remember that we are children of God.
 - b. (1 John 3:1).
5. The name of God is to be hallowed.
 - a. Scribes would have to "wipe the pen and wash their entire body" before writing the name of God.
 - b. Today, there is little reverence for God's name.
- B. Thy kingdom come
 1. The expression of God's kingdom today is the church (Matthew 16:18-19).
 2. In that respect, the kingdom has already come (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9).
 3. For that reason, we need to pray that the church may continue to grow, spread, and be strong, etc.
 4. However, there is a sense in which we can pray these words if we have a proper understanding.
 - a. Kingdom – Greek (Basileia).
 - b. This word can also be translated "reign" or "to exercise sovereign power."
 - c. Consider how this view fits the couplet – "Thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
- C. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
 1. This demands self-denial and exalts God's will.
 2. What would happen to our money, relationships, priorities, etc., if we allowed God's will to be carried out on earth as it will be in heaven?

- D. Give us our daily bread.
 - 1. Acknowledges our dependance upon God (James 1:17).
 - 2. It is a request for necessities, not luxuries.
 - 3. Are we content? And would we be content if our luxuries were taken from us?
 - 4. (Philippians 4:11).
 - E. Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.
 - 1. We all need God's gracious offer of forgiveness.
 - 2. His grace will be extended to the extent that we extend grace to others (Matthew 18:23-35; Matthew 7:1-2).
 - 3. The greatest gift we could ever give ourselves is to forgive others.
 - F. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
 - 1. We are not tempted by God to do evil (James 1:13).
 - 2. Yet, James said to count it all joy when we are tempted (James 1:2).
 - 3. Surely, we want to be strong, but dread the trial.
 - 4. God has promised to help us overcome temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 - 5. (James 4:7-8) Draw near to God and resist the Devil.
- Conclusion:
- 1. There is much to learn from this "sample prayer."
 - 2. As a "sample," or "example," it is not exhaustive, but it is certainly helpful.
 - 3. By following the pattern of this prayer, we will...
 - a. Honor God and his reign over our lives.
 - b. Express our thanksgiving.
 - c. Acknowledge our dependance upon him.