

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 1.28.2024

PRAY THEN LIKE THIS

I. INTRODUCTION

Matthew 6:9-15

9 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

II. PRAYER OR PATTERN

- Baptist Catechism Q.106 What rule has God given for our direction in prayer?
- A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that prayer which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.
- The content of our prayer matters as we are instructed to pray according to the will of God.
- When we pray the Word of God we can have confidence we are praying according to the will of God.

- But is the Lord's Prayer a prayer to pray word -for-word or is it a pattern for prayer?
- In Luke's account, Jesus says, “when you pray, say...”
- The disciples are asking the Lord, “*teach us to pray,*” and he answers by giving them the very words of the Lord's prayer as a form to be repeated. (Luke 11:1-4)

- In Matthew's account, Jesus says, "*pray then like this.*"
 - Which can also be translated, "pray in this manner," or "pray in this way."
 - Here then, it appears that Jesus is giving them not the exact words to say but a framework or outline for prayer.
 - It seems like Jesus had both uses of the Lord's Prayer in mind: as a prayer itself and a pattern for prayer.
 - And that is how the church has viewed the Lord's prayer since the first century.
- The Lord's Prayer is simple and concise and yet comprehensive.
 - Simple - even a child can learn it.
 - Concise - it's not long. It follows Jesus's exhortation to not make prayer repetitious or too wordy.
 - Comprehensive - it is densely packed with truths of the Christian faith and contains the main things that we are to ask God for.

STRUCTURE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

1. PRELUDE

a. Our Father

b. In Heaven

2. PETITIONS (6 of them)

a. GOD'S CONCERNS (3)

i. Hallowed by your name

ii. Your kingdom come

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

b. OUR CONCERNS (3)

i. Give us this day our daily bread

ii. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

iii. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

3. PRAISE

a. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- The structure of the prayer becomes obvious through Jesus' use of the pronoun "YOUR" as the Father is addressed and the pronoun "US" for our needs that are addressed.
- What about the familiar ending of the Lord's Prayer? "*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*"
- Why is it omitted from most Bible versions? We'll discuss that as we teach on that part.
- But we will include this part as not only is it fitting, but the church has historically included the praise at the end of the prayer, and it has in large part been regarded as Scripture by the church as early as the first century.

III. PRELUDE TO THE PRAYER

1. OUR FATHER

- The prelude orients us immediately to the One whom we are addressing our prayers.
 - It brings immediate focus to us in prayer.
 - It sets the tone and the mood for the whole prayer.
 - It identifies our relationship with the one to whom we are praying.
 - We pray to Our Father.
 - Notice Jesus did not use the singular, 'MY Father' as he had done many times.
 - He uses the plural, 'OUR' - which points to the communal reality that all believers have in relationship with God.
 - The emphasis here is communal. This prayer then it seems, is one that is meant to be prayed in community.
 - We pray WITH and we pray FOR our fellow believers.
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- What a depth of intimacy we have and enjoy with the God of all creation by virtue of the gift of adoption that we receive in Christ.
 - John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - The way we become a child of God with the right to call him Father is only through spiritual birth.
 - Through Christ alone we have access to the Father.
 - Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)
 - By faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the Spirit of adoption and become children of God. (Galatians 3:26)
 - The Holy Spirit bears witness with our Spirit that we are children of God. (Romans 8:16-17)
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- 1 John 3:1a See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.
 - God has a general love for all of His creation.
 - But the Father has a particular and special love for His elect children.
 - Prayer begins with and is possible because of that special relationship!
 - He is our Father and we are his children.
 - We come to Him as children to a Father who loves us and is ready, willing, and able to help us.
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- The fact that He is Father immediately tells us things about the nature and character of God:
 - Our Father is a person.
 - Our Father is accessible.
 - Our Father hears.
 - Our Father cares.
 - Our Father replies.
 - Our Father provides.
 - Our Father protects.
 - God is the perfect Father. Jesus said, "Your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)
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- We are never instructed in Scripture to pray to lesser beings like saints or angels or our mother — we pray to our Father!
 - The fatherhood of God is not a side note in the Scripture.
 - Jesus didn't use a human analogy of fatherhood to try to describe God.
 - He is the supreme Father upon whom all fatherhood is based on.
 - Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,
 - He is the supreme Father upon whom all fatherhood is based on.
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- God is never referred to as "our Mother."
 - This is completely unbiblical.

- While in Scripture there are examples where God is described with motherly traits, like nourishing, nurturing, and comforting, God never reveals himself as mother, but only as Father.
 - We do not have the liberty to alter the term used by God and how He has revealed himself.
 - We are to call upon God as our Father!
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- Is it proper to direct our prayers also to the Son and Holy Spirit?
 - Prayer is made to the Father, in the name of Christ, through the Holy Spirit. That is the primary pattern of prayer.
 - Of course the Son and Holy Spirit are not excluded just because Jesus said to direct our prayers to the Father.
 - The Triune God is three in one. All persons share the divine essence, when you pray to the Father you are also praying to the Son and Spirit. They are One.
 - Martin Luther, *When you call upon Jesus Christ and say: O my dear Lord, God, my Creator, and Father, Jesus Christ, Thou one eternal God, you need not worry that the Father and the Holy Spirit will be angry on this account. They know that no matter which Person you call upon, you call upon all three Persons and upon the One God at the same time. For you cannot call upon one Person without calling upon the others, because the one, undivided divine Essence exists in all and in each Person.*
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- When you pray to the Father:
 - Be confident of your privileged sonship.
 - Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"
 - What a privilege to be called a child of God. That should always evoke a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving in us.
 - The reason Jesus tells his disciples to ask the Father anything in his name is because of this extraordinary privilege of being a child of God.
 - John 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"
 - Because of this we can exercise our privilege and turn to our Father in prayer.
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- Be confident of our Father's compassion.
 - Psalm 103:13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.
 - He knows our weaknesses, our limitations, and he knows we will stumble and fall.
 - And how does he look at us? As a loving Father does his children.
 - What could be more freeing and give us great confidence in prayer than this.
 - Your Father loves you and is compassionate towards you.
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- Even when we sin, he doesn't disown us!
 - Like any good father, he is displeased with the disobedience of his children.
 - But that doesn't change his disposition towards us of being a loving and compassionate Father.
 - When we come to prayer, we confess our sins, we grieve over our transgressions and errors, and we remember he is a loving Father who looks upon us with compassion.
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- Be confident of our Father's protection.
 - What loving father would not respond immediately to a cry for help from their child?
 - There are many promises in Scripture of the Lord's protection over his people.
 - 1 Peter 1:5 tells us we are kept by the power of God.

- Jude 1:24 tells us He will keep us from stumbling and bring us to glory.
- Hebrews 13:5 tells us that he promises never to leave us or forsake us.
- Romans 8:39 tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- When we are afraid, when something threatens us, we can cry out to our Father in confidence of his promises.
- Be confident of our Father's provision.
- We have a Father who answers prayer. Who is eager to provide and meet his children's needs.
- Matthew 7:7-11 "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 the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are 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!
- Our Father gives good things to those who ask him.
- Jesus told his disciples not to be anxious and worry about things.
- Matthew 6:32 "...and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all."
- "Your heavenly Father knows," doesn't just mean he has knowledge of our needs, it means that he cares enough to know and do something about it.
- God provides for his children. We can count on his interest and concern.
- Philippians 4:6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

2. IN HEAVEN

- This second part of the prelude reminds us that though our Father is intimate with his children, He is also transcendent.
- The Father we approach is not merely an earthly father, who is subject to the limitations, weaknesses, or corruptions of humanity.
- Jesus wasn't saying that heaven is the location of the Father, God is omnipresent.
- "in heaven" is added to remind us of who HE IS - his majesty and power.
- God rules from heaven, where his throne is, but he is not limited in location.
- Though our prayer is presented in childlike confidence, our tone in prayer is respectful and reverent.
- He is in heaven, we are on earth. He is not like us!
- A.W. Pink, *"What a blessed balance this gives to the previous phrase. If that tells us of God's goodness and grace, this speaks of his greatness and majesty. If that teaches us of the nearness and dearness of His relationship to us, this announces His infinite elevation above us. If the words "our Father" inspire confidence and love, then the words "who art in heaven" should fill us with humility and awe. These are the two things that should ever occupy our minds and engage our hearts: the first without the second tends toward unholy familiarity; the second without the first produces coldness and dread. By combining them together, we are preserved from both evils... as we duly contemplate both mercy and might of God, His unfathomable love and His immeasurable loftiness."* (The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer)
- There is a balance presented to us here by our Lord in this prayer.
- We address God intimately as our Father but we immediately recognize his infinite greatness and supremacy with the addition of 'in heaven.'

- These words are to fill us with humility, awe and a right and proper fear of the Lord.

- When you pray to our Father:

- Pray with a reverential fear.

- This is not a fear based on us not knowing how God is going to respond to us.

- 1 Peter 1:17-19 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

- The fear of the Lord is a good and proper motivation for the child of God.

- It motivates us toward obedience and wanting to please the Lord.

- When we pray "Our Father in heaven" we remember our aim in prayer is always His glory.

- Pray with complete trust in our Father's power and goodness.

- What need do you have that God is incapable or unwilling to help you with?

- Our Father in heaven is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we can ask or think.

- Our Lord invites us in this prayer to pray to the One who is both able and willing to help because He is our Father.

- We come to him with childlike confidence, boldness, reverence and godly fear, trusting in his power and goodness.

- Martin Lloyd-Jones, "*Prayer is the highest activity of the human soul before which all pales into insignificance. Man is at his greatest and highest when, upon his knees, he comes face to face with God.*"

- We must remember that in prayer, we are coming face to face with God!

- And He is our Father, who loves us, cares for us, provides for us, protects us, and is always ready, willing, and able to help us in our time of need.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?

- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?

- With whom can I share the gospel this week?