

## INTRODUCTION

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ knows the things to which we are tempted regarding prayer, and so He lovingly has warned us:

Do not be like the hypocrites; as if you love what they love, the praise of men who see them praying. Do not do like the heathen; as if you think what they think, that prayers should be made to beings that are not the one true God.

And He has given us the example of His disciple who said, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

What was our Lord’s response to that request? He repeated the model prayer that He had set before us in the Sermon on the Mount.

So, in order that we not be taught to pray by the hypocrites or the heathen, but instead by our Lord Jesus, we study the model prayer He gave us, which we usually call “The Lord’s Prayer.”

Today I take up this study with you in the preface, where our Master taught us to address our prayers to God as our Father in heaven.

The whole Bible teaches us who God is, and what He does, so that we can know who it is to whom we pray. But in the lines right around the Lord’s Prayer, we will find things our Master taught specifically about God as our “Father in heaven,” which things help us address Him with understanding and confidence.

## TEXT

Matthew 6:5-9a

## BODY

For today’s study, I have organized our Lord Jesus’ words into two headings:

- our Father in heaven’s perfections
- our Father in heaven’s actions

or, put another way:

- who our Father in heaven is
- what our Father in heaven does

I. Our Father in Heaven's Perfections; or Who Our Father in Heaven Is

- A. Our Father in heaven, to whom we pray, is the One who is omnipotent, all powerful
1. Mt 5:45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven, for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
    - a) the sun is His; He makes it rise
    - b) He has the rain; He sends it
  2. He created everything; everything is His; He has all power
  3. Paul told this to the heathen in Athens - Acts 17:24a God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth...
  4. As we pray, we understand that we are praying to the One who has all the power to answer our prayers in whatever ways He is pleased to do it
- B. Our Father in heaven, to whom we pray, is the One who is omnipresent, all present
1. Mt 6:6 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
  2. When you go into your room or closet, where there is no other human being, God is there.
  3. Paul told this to the heathen in Athens - Acts 17:27b ...He is not far from each one of us.
  4. God is present in the congregation's meeting house; so when the congregation meets to pray, He is here with us; but God is present everywhere all the time, wherever you are; so you don't have to be any certain place or special place to pray; prayers are not made better by being in a certain place
  5. As we pray, we understand that we are praying to the One who always is right there.
- C. Our Father in heaven, to whom we pray, is the One who is omniscient, all knowing
1. Mt 6:6 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
  2. Matthew 6:7-8 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. (8) "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

## II. Our Father in Heaven's Actions; or What Our Father in Heaven Does

### A. Our Father in heaven, to whom we pray, provides us what we need physically

1. He feeds - Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?
2. He clothes - Matthew 6:30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?
3. He rewards - Mt 6:6 ...your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly
  - a) rewards
    - (1) not meaning that He gives us something we deserve because we have earned it
    - (2) but meaning that He gives us something in answer to our prayers
  - b) He does not reward the hypocrites, who pray in front of men to be seen by them
  - c) He does reward those who pray in secret
  - d) often the rewards He gives to prayers made in secret are seen openly
4. He gives good things - Matthew 7:11 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!
  - a) He gives
  - b) He gives good things
  - c) He gives good things to those who ask Him

### B. Our Father in heaven, to whom we pray, provides us what we need spiritually

1. He gives us the Holy Spirit
  - a) Luke 11:13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"
  - b) by whom we must be born again to be saved
  - c) by whom we must be filled to walk in love through this hateful world
2. He forgives us our sins
  - a) Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
  - b) there is more to learn about this; we will plan to go into this more fully a few weeks from now; for now, observe with me that He forgives
  - c) understand forgiving sins so much to be what God does that He gave His only-begotten Son to accomplish it
3. these gifts from God, forgiveness and the Holy Spirit, are promised in the Gospel to all who repent - Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
4. so, let the sinner hear of this kind of prayer, and pray it in faith
5. let the disciple of Jesus Christ hear it, also, and pray for every spiritual blessing

## CONCLUSION

The hypocrites address their prayers to themselves, and to other people.

The heathen address their prayers to idols, who are not divine, who are not God.

But our Lord Jesus Christ, warning us of such temptations, teaches us to pray only to God, to our Father in heaven.

-for He is the one omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient

-and He is the one who provides all we need physically and spiritually in Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit

Roel - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 103:1-13

Thad - Scripture Reading - Acts 17:22-31

Dillon - Congregational Prayer

Allison - Prelude

Allison - sheet "All Creatures of Our God and King" - Andrew lead

Audrey - Trinity 488 "Lead On, O King Eternal" - Andrew lead

Angie - Trinity 421 (First Tune) "Rock of Ages"

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1 Kings 8:27-30 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? (28) Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: (29) That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. (30) And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

John 4:19-26 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. (20) Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. (21) Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. (22) Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. (23) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (24) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (25) The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. (26) Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Malachi 1:11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

1 Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Acts 10:1-2 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, (2) A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

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

Psalms 55:17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 5:43-48 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' (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, (45) that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? (48) Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 6:5-6 "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.

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

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Matthew 6:30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Matthew 7:11 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!

Luke 11:13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

## CONCLUSION

### **Our Father which art in heaven**

Trapp:

"Father" is taken sometimes personally, as in that of our Saviour, "My Father is greater than I;" sometimes essentially for the whole Deity, so here.

Poole:

our eyeing him as in heaven speaketh his power, Psa\_115:3, our considering him as our Father speaks our faith in his goodness, Mat\_7:11.

Poole [on Mt 5:16]:

Our Father is said to be in heaven, because, though his essential presence filleth all places, yet he is pleased there, more than any where, to manifest his glory and majesty.

Henry:

He is a common Father to all mankind by creation, Mal 2:10; Act 17:28. He is in a special manner a Father to the saints, by adoption and regeneration (Eph\_1:5; Gal\_4:6)

Clarke:

The word Father, placed here at the beginning of this prayer, includes two grand ideas, which should serve as a foundation to all our petitions:

1st. That tender and respectful love which we should feel for God, such as that which children feel for their fathers.

2dly. That strong confidence in God's love to us, such as fathers have for their children.

Thus all the petitions in this prayer stand in strictest reference to the word Father;

the first three referring to the love we have for God; and

the three last, to that confidence which we have in the love he bears to us.

in heaven

This phrase in the Scriptures seems used to express:

1st. His Omnipresence. The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. 1Ki\_8:27 : that is, Thou fillest immensity.

2dly. His Majesty and Dominion over his creatures. Art thou not God in heaven, and rulest thou not over all the kingdoms of the heathen? 2Ch\_20:6.

3dly. His Power and Might. Art thou not God in heaven, and in thy hand is there not power and might, so that no creature is able to withstand thee! 2Ch\_20:6. Our God is in heaven, and hath done whatsoever he pleased. Psa\_115:3.

4thly. His Omniscience. The Lord's throne is in heaven, his eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men. Psa\_11:4. The Lord looketh down from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men. Psa\_33:13-15.

5thly. His infinite Purity and Holiness. Look down from thy holy habitation, etc. Deu\_26:15. Thou art the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy. Isa\_57:15.

Barnes:

God is called a Father,

1. as he is the Creator and the Great Parent of all;
2. the Preserver of the human family and the Provider for their wants, Mat\_5:45; Mat\_6:32;
3. in a special sense he is the Father of those who are adopted into his family; who put confidence in him; who are the true followers of Christ, and made heirs of life, Rom\_8:14-17.

JFB:

the paternal relationship of God to His people is by no means strange to the Old Testament. (See Deu\_32:6; Psa\_103:13; Isa\_63:16; Jer\_3:4, Jer\_3:19; Mal\_1:6; Mal\_2:10).

Broadus:

The thought of God as our Father is presented in some passages of the Old Testament, (as Isa\_63:16; Psa\_103:13; Deu\_32:6)

In one sense God is the Father of all men, as in one sense all men are brothers; and so we can fitly speak of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man; and yet it is only believers in Christ who can in the fullest sense call God Father, (1Jn\_3:1; Joh\_8:42) and call each other brethren. (1Jn\_3:14)

Ellicott:

He had claimed "Israel as His son, even His firstborn" (Exo\_4:22), had loved him as His child (Jer\_31:9; Hos\_11:1). The thought of an outraged Fatherhood underlies the reproaches of Isaiah (Isa\_1:2) and Malachi (Mal\_1:6). "Thou, O Lord, art our Father" (Isa\_64:8) was the refuge of Israel from despair.

Like all such names, it had its inner and its outer circles of application. It was true of all men, true of all members of the Church of Christ, true of those who were led by the Spirit, in different degrees; but all true theology rests on the assumption that the ever-widening circles have the same centre, and that that centre is the Love of the Father.

RWP:

Some people are disturbed over the words "Our Father" and say that no one has a right to call God Father who has not been "born again." But that is to say that an unconverted sinner cannot pray until he is converted, an absurd contradiction. God is the Father of all men in one sense; the recognition of Him as the Father in the full sense is the first step in coming back to him in regeneration and conversion.

