

Title: Heart Prayer
Text: Matthew 6: 5-15
Date: Jan 28, 2024
Place: SGBC, NJ

Matthew 6: 5: And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 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. 7: But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8: Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. 9: After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. 11: Give us this day our daily bread. 12: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14: For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Our great Intercessor teaches us to pray, “*And when thou prayest.*” It is a given that God’s saints pray. We depend entirely upon God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Prayer is our life. So by the Spirit of God we are compelled to pray. When the Lord Jesus revealed himself to the apostle Paul, without anyone telling Paul to pray, Christ said, “Behold, he prayeth.” The Spirit of Christ within us compels us to pray.

What a blessing that we *can* pray. By the blood of Christ making us holy and righteous we can approach holy God. By the Spirit of God giving us a new heart and leading us to pray we have access into the holiest of holies. Having Christ as our High Priest interceding with God for us, we have boldness—liberty and welcome access—to enter into God’s holy presence in prayer. What a blessing that Christ has given us entrance so that we *can* pray.

Proposition: The issue in prayer is to pray from the heart. We worship God in spirit. We pray in spirit. Christ is teaching us to pray from the new heart God has given.

Subject: Heart Prayer

HOW NOT TO PRAY

Matthew 6: 5: And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 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. 7: But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8: Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

There is no heart in the prayer of unregenerate religionists. All of their religion is carnal. They do all to be seen of men. Their confidence is in what they can see. It is what the Spirit means when he says the Jews seek after a sign. Carnal, legal religion only has confidence in what the natural eye can see. There is no new spirit created within, therefore there is no spirit in their prayer or in any aspect of their religion.

Self-made religionists do all to be seen of men. They do alms to be seen. When troubles come, they make sure all see they are mourning—they fast to be seen of men. They pray in public to be seen. And that is their reward. Men saw them. Men boasted in them. That is what they sought and that is the only thing they get in return. All is carnal. It is all about what they can see in outward works.

Our Lord teaches us to pray from the heart—“*enter into thy closet and shut the door.*” Go to a secret, unseen place to pray. If in public, pray from the heart. In private or in public the secret place is in the heart. Our Lord is teaching that it is the heart that is important in prayer. Only the Lord sees the heart. He sees in secret and he rewards openly. We can pray in public without anyone seeing us. It is not necessary to bow the head and close the eyes to pray. Prayer is between the new man in you and God.

Our Savior teaches us not to use vain repetitions. You see men on their knees at a wall, rocking back and forth, muttering the same words over and over. The Lord says that they think they will be heard for speaking a lot of words. Think of that. The Intercessor who must present the petition of his saints to the Father, knows what men are thinking when they repeat words over and over. Do you see it is the heart that matters?

Christ commands, “*Be not ye therefore like unto them...for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*” In Ezekiel 36, the Lord declared what he would do for his people. Then he said, “I will yet be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase men like a flock.” (Ez 36: 37). Prayer is not us changing God. Prayer is the Holy Spirit bringing us to submit to God’s will, to ask God to do what he already purposed to do. God promises,

Isaiah 65: 24: And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

HOW TO PRAY

Matthew 6: 9: After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. 11: Give us this day our daily bread. 12: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14: For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

We know we do not recite these exact words like so many do. This is a model of how to pray—*"After this MANNER therefore pray ye."* We will see, it is not these exact words that we are being taught to pray, it is to pray from the heart.

This is instructive for praying publicly in these services, as well as in private. In private we use more personal pronouns. But in public, prayer is a picture of Christ our Intercessor representing his redeemed before the Father. The one praying represents the whole congregation. So we pray "our", and "us" and "we" rather than "I", "me" and "mine." It is ok to occasionally use personal pronouns in public prayer. But, remember, we are praying on behalf of the whole congregation. So we thank God for blessing "us" and ask God to bless "us."

First, the Lord teaches us to pray with a reverent heart—*"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."* God is our Father. He chose us to be his children by grace by his will.

Ephesians 1: 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,...

He sent the Holy Spirit and gave us the adoption.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Child of God, how do you speak to your earthly father? Sovereign God of heaven and earth is your Father--*"OUR Father which art in heaven."* We acknowledge his authority and our submission to him. He is our Father, we are his children. He is in heaven, we are below.

God our Father is holy—*"hallowed by thy name."* Everything God does in salvation is according to holiness—his love, his grace, the satisfaction of holy justice on the cross, free forgiveness, all of salvation—reveals and magnifies his holy name.

Leviticus 10:3...I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.

So we come before him with reverence, in godly fear, owning his name to be holy. He is not "the man upstairs"; he is our holy God. Christ is not Jesus; he is the holy, Lord Jesus!

Psalm 111:9...holy and reverend is his name.

Next, Christ teaches us to pray with a submissive heart—*"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* It is God the Father's will that Christ be exalted as King of kings, and Lord of lords. His kingdom comes in the heart in regeneration.

Luke 17: 20: And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is set up in the hearts of his redeemed in regeneration. Christ told Nicodemus, we must be born-again or we cannot see the kingdom of God. Christ was "born King of the Jews." He established his kingdom in righteousness when he cried, "It is finished." God is satisfied and raised our King to his right hand

Psalm 2:6: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

By the grace of God, Christ has entered our hearts and made us bow to him as our King and we his servants. On the day of Pentecost, when they preached in his name in languages they had never learned and Christ saved a multitude, Peter declared,

Acts 2: 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

So he instructs us to pray for his kingdom of grace to be established in the hearts of all his redeemed and to all eternity, as it is and shall be. He instructs us to earnestly pray for our Lord's return when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess him King of kings and Lord of lords. That is when our King shall deliver us into the new heavens and new earth where we shall dwell with him eternally. That is the will of God our Father so we pray in submission to his will—*"thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"*—his will shall be done! He will not lose one!

Psalm 115:3: But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Thirdly, our Master instructs us to pray in faith with a dependent heart—*"Give us this day our daily bread."* Not bread for tomorrow. Give us THIS DAY our DAILY bread. By this, he instructs us to pray in faith dependent upon him, acknowledging that every blessing comes from him alone!

Christ is the True Bread—the Bread of eternal Life—our Salvation. Having given us eternal Life—Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption—Christ promises we shall never hunger or thirst for these things. So we can be sure he shall provide this day our daily bread.

Psalm 37: 25: I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. 26: *He is* ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed *is* blessed.

Next, our Master commands us to pray with a heart that needs forgiveness and that forgives—*"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."* By debts he means sins.

Luke 11: 4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.

Again, I remind you when we pray publicly we are representing the whole congregation. Notice he says, "Our", "Us." Confess personal sin in private. Christ our High Priest is the only priest to whom you are to confess personal sin. But public prayer is a picture of Christ's intercession for us at God's right hand—one man intercedes on behalf of the whole congregation. So we confess "Lord, forgive US OUR debts."

Sin is a debt. Sin makes it so that we owe God eternal death—justice. We owe God a debt of perfect righteousness. No sinner can pay the debt we owe to God.

But God sent his only begotten Son and Christ bore our sin and the fierce fury of God's justice in place of his people. He satisfied justice for his elect. He gave God perfect righteousness, making us the righteousness of God in him. Therefore, for the sake of Christ Jesus our Righteousness, God our Father has forgiven every sinner who he has given faith in his Son.

Rom 3: 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Isaiah 43:25 I, *even I, am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Still, every regenerated saint has a sin nature. And we sin daily. And God will have us ever mindful of his Son, that forgiveness is only in and by his Son. So Christ instructs us to confess to God that we *are* sin and that we *have* sinned and ask God to forgive us for the sake of his Son.

1 John 1: 8: If we say that we have no sin [singular—our sin-nature], we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10: If we say that we have not sinned [in thought, word and deed], we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 2: 1: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And [when] any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* [of his saints throughout] the whole world.

And to keep us ever mindful that we are to forgive all who sin against us, Christ teaches us to ask forgiveness in this way—*"forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

Matthew 6: 14: [Christ declares] For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Christ is not saying that we earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others. Nor is he saying that God's saints will not forgive. Nor is he saying that we shall ever perish. He is declaring that by God's grace, God's saints surely do forgive those who sin against us. It is all of God's grace that we forgive. When God's child tries to harbor an unforgiving spirit, God chastens us by bringing to us to remember the multitude of our sins he has forgiven for Christ's sake. God always succeeds in making his child forgive all who sin against us. The sinner saved by mercy is made merciful by God. The sinner made to see God has forgiven him for Christ's sake, forgives any and all who sin against him for the sake of Christ.

But any who go on refusing to forgive others merely prove they know nothing about God's free forgiveness. And all who meet God in that state shall not be forgiven by God. So to keep us forgiving all who sin against us, Christ teaches us to ask forgiveness in this way—*"forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*

Also, Christ teaches us to pray with a heart of need—*"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* By this we are confessing to God what we sing, "I need thee every hour most blessed Lord." We cannot take one step without our great Shepherd holding our hand and leading us—*"lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."* He shall. The Lord is my Shepherd. We sing, "He leadeth me, he leadeth me."

Lastly, Christ teaches us to pray with a heart of praise—*"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."* This is the difference between God's saints and the rest of the religious world. We know Christ is King and the

kingdom is his by the purchase of his blood. We know the power is Christ. He is the power of God unto salvation. Therefore, we know the glory is God's forever. And God's saints want our triune God in Christ to have all the glory for saving us beginning to end.

Do you see that the heart is the issue? Dear children of God when you pray...

- Pray with a reverent heart—*"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."*
- Pray with a submissive heart—*"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."*
- Pray with a dependent heart of faith—*"Give us this day our daily bread."*
- Pray with a forgiving heart—*"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*
- Pray with a heart of need—*"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*
- Pray with a heart of praise—*"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."*

Amen!