

Subject: *Our Father in Heaven*

Scripture: *Matthew 6:9-13*

Prayer can do anything God can do and God can do anything. E. M. Bounds said that nothing lies outside the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God. The Bible teaches us some very important things about prayer:

- WHEN to pray – *Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.*
- WHY to pray – *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (it accomplishes much).*
- HOW to pray – *After this manner pray ye...*

He taught us not only to pray, but HOW to pray. The Jews knew the power of prayer better than any people, but something had gone wrong, and by the time Christ began His earthly ministry, prayer had become for them a mere formality and ritual. Jesus had just warned about going through the motions in prayer. He warned us not to pray for the wrong reasons, and not to pray mere words spoken over and over in a meaningless way (“vain repetitions,” *verse 7*). Jesus revealed and condemned the wrong way to pray, and then He taught and encouraged the right way. Jesus gave this as a model prayer. When Jesus gave us this prayer, He did not say, “Pray these words,” but “Pray this way.” It is fine to recite it, to memorize it, and to review it over and over in our minds, but it was never intended to be a substitute for our prayers, but a guide or blueprint for our prayers.

This prayer may be divided into two parts: 1) God’s glory, and 2) our needs. The first part of the prayer is all about the Father. Jesus spoke of three things:

1. A relationship with our Father

We pray to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. When we pray we talk to God as a loving Heavenly Father. That means we have a relationship with Him and we don’t have to impress Him. God is our Father only when we come into His family through His Son. The Bible makes it clear that God becomes our Father when we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. ***John 1:11-12*** *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* Unbelievers have another spiritual father. Who is it? Jesus answers that question in ***John 8:44*** *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do...*

This model prayer is a very simple prayer based on the relationship of our Father and His children. All parts of the prayer are in some way related to the Father:

- The Father’s purpose – *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done*
- The Father’s provision – *Give us this day our daily bread*
- The Father’s pardon – *Forgive us our debts...*
- The Father’s protection – *Lead us not into temptation...*
- The Father’s power – *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory...*

From beginning to end the focus is on our Heavenly Father. He is the Father of lights, the Father of mercies, and He is the Father of all who receive Christ as Lord and Savior. He is OUR Father. In this prayer we are reminded that our Father is a King. We

have the sympathy of a Father and the sovereignty of a King.

2. A reverence for our Father - *Hallowed be thy name*

God's name is to be revered, held sacred. It is "hallowed" (holy, set apart). He is set apart and in a category by himself. God's name is more than just a title. It stands for all He is.

Psalms 34:3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.

Psalms 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

The name of the Lord is holy. The 3rd commandment says, **Exodus 20:7** *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* The Lord respects those who respect Him.

Malachi 3:16 *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

The name of the Lord stands for all He is and all He does. When the Bible tells us how to be saved it says, **Romans 10:13** *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

3. A request of our Father - *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.*

Prayer is not to make demands of God, to inform God, or to convince God to do what He doesn't want to do. Prayer is not bending God's will to fit our will. Prayer is not coming to God like some cosmic vending machine and saying, "I'll take this, and that." Prayer is not taking our shopping list to God.

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us. When we pray like this, it prepares us to receive the answer, and it means we are willing to be part of the answer. Otherwise, we are hypocrites! For example, if we pray for someone to be saved, then we must be willing to speak with them about their salvation. If we pray for wisdom, then we must be willing to spend time alone in God's Word. If we pray for God to bless our church, then we must be willing to get involved.