

The Disciples' Prayer

Our Pattern and Purpose for Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13

Introduction

Our Devotional Life in Christ (6:1-18)

The Gospel Transformation

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

"But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). A "righteousness" which belongs to Whom? Jesus!

Now reborn, we joyfully, willingly "obey...with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord" (Ephesians 6:5-8).

The New Antinomian

Def. "The idea that behavior is unrelated to faith. Or, that Christians are not bound by any moral law. Antinomianism radically separates justification and sanctification making practical holiness 'elective.'" (MacArthur).

Antinomianism is a view contrived out of an unremitting desire to be *Christian*, but live the way they want to live. An unwillingness to see any redeeming value in the law of God.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12).

Repentance then (i.e., 'turning'), is a willful desire produced in the heart of someone who loves the Lord, wants to honor Him, and follow Him by turning from a former sinful behavior toward godly living.

Our Pattern and Purpose for Prayer

"Nay, many times I know not what to pray for, I am so blind, nor how to pray, I am so ignorant; only (blessed be grace) the Spirit helps our infirmities.... Without the Spirit, man is so infirm, that he cannot

with all other means whatsoever, be enabled to think one right saving thought of God, of Christ, or of His blessed things” (Bunyan).

“And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for {us} with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to {the will of} God” (Romans 8:26-27).

Avoiding the Danger of Religious Hypocrisy

Prayer, it could be said, is the soul communing with God through our union in Christ.

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:5-6).

Think: *From whence cometh your prayers?*

Turn your prayers inside out.

“When thou prayest before others, observe on what thou bestowest thy chief care and zeal, whether in the externals or internals of prayer, that which is exposed to the eye and ear of men, or that which should be prepared for the eye and ear of God; the devout posture of thy body, or the inward devotion of thy soul; the pomp of thy words or the power of thy faith; the agitation of thy bodily spirits in the vehemency of thy voice, or the fervency of thy spirit in heartbreaking affections. These inward workings of the soul in prayer, are the very soul of prayer” (Wm. Gurnall).

Prayer is to be generated internally, from the soul of a person searching for its Creator.

Pray is the outpouring of your heart.

“O you who hears prayer, to you shall all flesh come. When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!” (Psalm 65:2-4).

“And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us {in} whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (1 John 5:14-15).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23-24).

How is it that a human prayer has the power to move the hand of God?

The Word of God and the Prayer of the Saint

Pray the Scriptures (M. Henry).

“The mightier any is in the Word, the more mighty he will be in prayer” (Gurnall).

“Turn the Bible into prayer” (M ‘Cheyne).

“Nothing is surer or more helpful as a rule or guide in prayer than the whole Word of God. All this echoes the magisterial words of Christ.”

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

Immersing yourself in the Word of God is what drives you to prayer. It rightly instructs you and informs you on how to pray.

“If Stephen had not prayed for his persecutors, the church had never had such a glorious doctor as Paul was.” (Augustine).

Our motive for prayer is not to bend the arm of God; but for God to bend the will of man and conform it to His.

“In our earnest petitions we do not bring God’s will to ours but ours to Him. Prayer is a golden chain that reacheth from heaven to earth, and although we think to move God to us, yet we move our selves to Him. As the ship that is fastened with the cable doth not bring the [harbor] to it, but itself to the [harbor], so the change prayer makes is not God, but in ourselves” (Burgess).

Prayer is *Taking Hold of God*

“Prayer is not conquering God’s reluctance, but taking hold of God’s willingness” (Phillips Brooks).

“There is no one who calls upon your name, who arouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities” (Isaiah 64:7).

“Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.” (Isaiah 27:5; NKJ)

...take hold of My covenant. Isa 56:4; (KJV)

“It is in the field of prayer that life’s critical battles are lost or won. In prayer we bring our spiritual enemies into the presence of God and we fight them there.” (Jowett).

“the angel fetched Peter out of prison, but who fetched the angel?” (Watson).

Prayer fetched the angel. The fervent, unrelenting prayer of God’s people.