

The Priority of God in Prayer

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Our joy is only multiplied as we remember the reality that we gather together here today because the Lord Jesus Christ has saved us from our sin, and when I say "we," what I mean by that is those of us that are truly in Christ. We realize that some will come and be with us that have not yet received Christ for their salvation and we pray for you. We welcome you. We're glad that you are with us but predominantly this is a gathering of the saints of the Lord here today, those that have been set apart by him, and it's to those that we primarily speak today, but even as we do so, we invite those who are with us that do not know Christ to contemplate carefully everything that is going to be said because we're going to lay out here today the whole purpose of life and of Christian redemption and we're doing that in the context of the Sermon on the Mount in the teaching of the Lord on prayer found in Matthew 6, and I would invite you to turn there with me. Matthew 6, and as you're turning there, let me just say this: that when you became a Christian, God put his Holy Spirit within you, that the Spirit of God dwells in those who are truly Christians and God imparts a new nature to us. Not a perfect nature, one that is still dealing with the remnants of sin, but a new nature that is alive to God and is alive to Christ. And one of the aspects, one of the ways in which that plays out in the life of someone who has been born again is that a spirit of prayer is instilled within them; that it becomes natural for us to approach God and to speak to our Father in prayer, and Jesus is teaching us how to do that as we look at Matthew 6:9-13. And we've been kind of leading up to this for the past two or three weeks, and one of the things that we've tried to say and to make clear is that for many of us, if not for most of us, we need to jettison a lot of the teaching and the things that we've embraced in prayer in the past in order to come back to the simplicity of what Christ has to say to us, and we want to do that here today.

You know, when you realize something of the significance of what it means to be saved, you realize that the Son of God came down from heaven in order to give his life as a ransom payment to buy you out of the slave market of sin, that he shed his blood in order to satisfy the justice of God which cried out for your condemnation and that Christ paid the price for that, that his perfect righteousness and his perfect obedience is counted to your benefit so that every obligation of the demands of God's word, the demands of the law, are satisfied on your behalf, and that there is a perfect reconciliation, you have a perfect standing with God that cannot be changed, that cannot be diminished, because it's based on the merit of Christ, not of yourself, when you realize all of that, it should drive you to love this God who saved you, who dealt with you so mercifully. In fact, so much

so that the true Christian understands with just a little bit of biblical teaching and instruction reading in God's word, you realize that the glory of this God who saved you is now your preeminent and really your only priority in life.

Nothing else matters by comparison and Scripture presents this theme to us in a number of different ways. For example, in Acts 26:20 when Paul was describing the Gospel that he preached, he said he preached this to the Gentiles, he preached that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. A full-hearted turning away from sin in submission to this God with an overflow of life that is worthy of this salvation that has been given to them. Deeds appropriate to repentance. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9, Paul describes the Gospel as that of turning away from lifeless idols in order to serve the living God and to wait for him from heaven. So this idea of deeds appropriate to repentance, serving this God, giving us different aspects of the different priority that we have simply to glorify our God with our lives.

Now, you must understand things from that broad perspective and I'm going to talk about it more here in just a little bit, but you must understand that that perspective is a pervasive comprehensive approach to what the Christian life is to be. And I say this with all manner of gentleness and sympathy and not knowing exactly who it might apply to as I speak here, but let me just say this, is that one of the most common errors that people make that grow up in the church or that somehow associate loosely with churches or loosely associate with Christianity, is to think that this aspect of living for God is one compartment among others in life so that you have your spiritual life in one silo, and then your work life in another, and your family life in another, and everything is kind of compartmentalized and you do that, and so God has a part of your life over here and that's expressed sometimes in when you show up on Sunday and maybe do a couple of other devotional things during the week. Beloved, you must understand that that is not biblical Christianity. And I must tell you, I'm going to be far more candid and transparent here than I should be, but I am going to anyway. I worry about some of you. I worry about some of you that you have this compartmentalized approach to life and that Christianity is just another aspect among others among your life. And if you're like that, you need to understand that you don't understand Christianity at all. You see, when you realize that Christ gave himself to save you, that Christ loved you and is Lord, he is Lord not over a segment of your life, he is Lord over all of it. He is Lord over every dimension so that every dimension of your life is oriented toward bringing glory to this God who saved you and you must understand this. And as a pastor, I need to make that, I need to state that and make that plain and not let you dwell on a comfortable sense of false security, that that aspect of living for Christ like that is true biblical Christianity. There is no assurance in that at all because the one who has truly seen Christ, the one who has truly understood the Gospel, truly understood the glory of Christ, truly understood the glory of the cross, truly understood the depth of their sin, truly understood the threat of eternal condemnation that Christ saved them from, this has a revolutionary impact on your life and reorients you toward everything and you cannot look at Christ truly and have a partial response to him. That is just not what true biblical Christianity is and how that sorts out in your own heart and in your own life and in your own thinking, I'm more than content having said that to let the Holy Spirit apply that to your heart and convict

you as need be, or to encourage you as need be to say, "That is my approach however imperfectly I live it. I do embrace Christ in all of my life. I want all of my life to glorify him. That's what I want. This is a mark of true salvation, now let's go and see what God's word has to say about prayer in that context."

Matthew 6 as we continue our study of what has become known as the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. I'll read the whole section but we're just going to deal with one clause in it here this morning. Beginning in verse 9,

9 "Pray, then, in this way [Jesus said]: 'Our Father who is 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 do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'"

Many years ago, I preached this text and I did so in two messages. We're not going to go through it quite that quickly here at Truth Community Church. I don't know how long we're going to spend in this text, to be honest with you, but I think it's just important for us to slow down and let this really sift us and to think through what Jesus is saying here. And if I rush through it, if I hurry through this, I'm just afraid that you're going to miss the import of it, the blessing of it, to miss the significance of it, because if you treat something in ten minutes, you say, "Well, that must not have been too important," but if we slow down, then maybe the Spirit of God will use this to impress things on your heart.

When Jesus says in verse 9, he says, "Pray, then, in this way," he's using an imperative and he's using a form of the imperative that refers to the ongoing approach to prayer. This isn't a one time prayer that we pray, and it's not, as we've said in the past, this is not something to be mechanically repeated as if there was a magical power in the mere recitation of the very words that would put us in good stead with God. No, what we're going to see here is that Jesus is teaching us principles of prayer that are sort of like the hub of a bike wheel and things radiate out from that and from this hub of prayer, your whole principle and whole priority of prayer are defined as we radiate out from these basic principles that are laid down. This is an ongoing approach to prayer. This pattern of prayer is your goal of prayer throughout all of life. That all of life as you grow in prayer, as you grow in your Christian life, that this is something that you come back to repeatedly, often, and you let it inform the way that you pray so that what you should be thinking as we approach this and just kind of as we're about to dive into the pool, so to speak, in Jesus' teaching on prayer here, you should be diving in with the sense that what we're going to be talking about today and what we're going to be talking about over the next few weeks is that this is something that you would develop and deepen over time. The ongoing nature of the imperative teaches us that this is something that we come back to again and again; that these are principles that we come back to, that we repeat, that we rehearse, that we learn again and again.

So that's the basic idea here and as I said last week, is that we do not come to Christ with a natural knowledge of how to pray. No unregenerate person has any idea of how to pray to a holy God, has no ability to pray rightly to a holy God, and so we're born like infants into the kingdom of God and as infants in prayer, we need to grow and we need to develop. And one of the things that we must do, one of the things that Christ immediately calls us to is this: is that over time we learn more and more that we are to abandon a selfish approach to prayer and let the glory of God which defines all of life, become the guiding principle that defines everything else for us in prayer. We're going to see that.

This prayer breaks down into two sections, broadly speaking. The first half of this prayer deals with the glory of God. Look at verse 9 with me and we're just looking at this in a very general way right now. The first half of this prayer is devoted to the glory and the will of God. Verse 9, "Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done." Jesus teaches this as the first priority of prayer and it is multifaceted. The glory of God has the priority of place in his teaching in prayer.

Now, why is that so important? It's important because we tend to be so self-centered in prayer. We tend to be so earthbound in our prayers. Pick up any prayer sheet, any prayer list from most any church and you'll find that the things that are listed there are preeminently earthbound considerations. Now, that's okay. We love to pray for people in need. We get that, but if that's the only way that we think about prayer, we're not really thinking about it as Christ commanded us to. We're not approaching it at all in the way that Christ commanded us to.

In the second half of the prayer, we see that God receives our prayers about our needs. Verse 11, "Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts. Do not lead us into temptation." There is this place for this human element in prayer but we get to that only after we've passed through the great vestibule of the glory of God to get there.

Beloved, here is the whole point today, here is the whole point: we do not, we do not bypass the glory of God when we pray. We do not just realize that he is a God of all power and therefore he can fix the things that we consider to be wrong in our lives. That's bypassing the main point. It could never be simply about bringing our human needs to God and bypassing his glory and Jesus tells us, teaches us, that true prayer has this dimension of being preoccupied with the glory of God which is alien to the natural man, which is foreign to the unregenerate man, and frankly for those of us in Christ, is something that we still need to grow and aspire after. So the glory of God in prayer.

Now, what I want to do is I want to distinguish two thoughts about the glory of God in your mind. This will help you as we work through this. Two aspects of the glory of God. When you talk about it in one sense, God has his own intrinsic glory that is already perfect. Nothing can be added to it. He has been perfect in glory throughout all of eternity and it always will be. It cannot get better. He cannot get more glorious in his person. His glory is already perfect. It doesn't improve over time. If it improved over time, he would not have been perfect originally.

So God's intrinsic, inherent glory is perfect, it is eternal, it is unchangeable, and when Christ teaches us to seek the glory of God in prayer, we're not adding to that glory as if something were missing, rather instead we are ascribing glory to him, we are declaring his glory, we are submitting to his glory in prayer, to give you a few different words to think about this through. When we glorify God in prayer, when we seek his glory in prayer, we honor him from our hearts. We give credit where credit is due. We don't simply burst into his office, so to speak, better stated, we don't burst into his glorious throne room and say, "God, I need this, this and this. And So-and-so needs this, this and this." When you put it like that, it's easy to realize what a disregard of the preeminent person in prayer is. We come to prayer and we come with a hushed heart. We come with a humbled heart that says, "God, I am approaching you in your majesty and compared to that, the things in my life are secondary. Let me honor you as I approach you." That doesn't make God more glorious but it recognizes his due.

Now, I'm going to break today's message into two parts here and what I want you to see is this: first of all, I want you to see the centrality of God's glory in salvation. That's the first point if you want to write it down: the centrality of God's glory in salvation. And this is just so so very vital to everything else that follows. I'm going to lead you through a number of different aspects of this in order to make a point at the end of this.

Turn to Ephesians 1. I've got 10,000 things that are trying to come out on one tongue at the moment and so I need to do it a time at a time. Ephesians 1. The purpose of salvation. The purpose of salvation, the ultimate purpose of salvation is the glory of God. It is not to make your earthly life go better, it is not to give you happiness on earth, although perhaps that's an overflow, the ultimate purpose of Christian salvation is the glory of God and Paul makes this very clear in Ephesians 1.

Look at verse 5 with me. It says that God "predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." Why? To what end? "To the praise of the glory of His grace." God saved us so that our lives and our hearts would bring praise to him, would bring glory to him, would be a display of his honor and his eternal majestic worth. That's why he chose us in the first place. It was not because of anything good in us or anything good in you, it was not because you would obey him so well and do rules and things like that and he says, "Ah, that obedience is so good I have to honor that and I have to recognize that person for what they've done." No. You've all fallen short of the glory of God. You've sinned. Your righteousness is as filthy rags. There is nothing about you worthy of glory and there never will be. God saved you not because of your intrinsic worth but that in the act of saving you and keeping you and bringing you to eternal glory, your life would be a manifestation of his glorious grace.

Paul repeats this point in verse 11. He says, "we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." And in verse 13, "you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." The purpose of salvation is the glory of God. The

purpose of salvation is the glory of God. Someone who is not living life to the glory of God is someone who is not saved. They're not a Christian because the very heart of Christian salvation is the glory of God, to have regard for that, to seek that.

Carry it further. Look at Ephesians 3. The purpose of the church is the glory of God. The purpose of the church is the glory of God, not to entertain people, not to dispense free coffee with them, not to entertain them with music and jokes and stories. That's not the purpose of the church. Oh my goodness, you would never know that except through Scripture. Chapter 3, verse 20, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever."

So beloved, here we are gathered in a local manifestation of the church, the local body, the local church, a visible manifestation of the universal church which constitutes all true believers. In this individually as Christians, we enjoy this salvation. We have been brought to Christ with the defining purpose of that to bring glory to God, the purpose of salvation to bring glory to God, the purpose of the church to bring glory to God. Now we descend into the details. As you read Scripture and you follow this through as you read in the details, the purpose of the Christian life in every detail is to bring glory to God. 1 Corinthians 10:31. 1 Corinthians 10:31 for those of you taking notes and need a time to get it down. Paul said, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." That really lays it down in the details, doesn't it? Eat, drink, whatever you do. It is comprehensive.

Your spiritual growth is for the glory of God. 2 Peter 3:18 says, "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." At the end of this age and at the start of the next, glory is the theme. In Revelation 19:7 it says, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." And as we enter into the eternal state, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.'" The word "glory" not used in that particular passage but obviously God is the focus of what everything will be in eternity. We will be gathered together praising him, giving glory to him throughout all of eternity.

So having laid all of this out, now I can make my very simple point. Rooted in eternity past, God established a plan of redemption that would bring him glory. Christ came, paid the price to purchase that redemption for his people. In time, the Spirit of God saved them, Father, Son and Holy Spirit working in perfect harmony for the accomplishment of the glory of God. In time in your life as a Christian, God saved you and the purpose of that salvation was his glory. So much so that Scripture says whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. And after we have finished this life, at the end we will enter into heaven, we will be with Christ when he reigns on the earth, we will be with him in

eternity and his glory will be the resplendent theme of everything that transpires. An overarching purpose of eternity to manifest and display the glory of God. That's pretty pervasive. God's glory is supreme in salvation from beginning to end. That's undeniable. This is basic.

Now, what does that have to do with Matthew 6:9-13? Do you see, once again we've reasoned from general principles down to the specific, do you see that if all of salvation is designed for the glory of God, do you see that if all of your life in its details is to seek the glory of God, do you see that of necessity then the glory of God would be the supreme theme in our approach to prayer? It could be no other way. It's not like we check the glory of God at the door and then we start praying and saying, "God, this is all the stuff that I want and need." It's not that at all.

So a heart and a life devoted to God's glory is the key to true prayer and let me contrast that with what true prayer is not so that you can see exactly what I mean. Prayer is not a ritualistic repetition of the same words over and over again. Jesus plainly condemned that just a few verses prior. Do not use meaningless repetition. That is not true prayer. That is not acceptable to God, a mindless repetition. That is not true prayer.

For those of you that come from fundamentalist circles, I'll just say to your liberty and praise again, prayer is not a matter of time schedules and long lists of prayer, long lists of requests. That might have a place at some point but that's not the heart of it. Do you see this is what we're talking about? What's at the heart of it?

Prayer is not, for those of you from charismatic backgrounds, prayer is not a positive confession by which you bring things into existence with what you say with your mouth. It's not that.

And for all of us, prayer is not a forum by which you seek to have God do things your way and to make life what you want it to be. Why would we do that? You say, "Well, why wouldn't we do that?" No, I say why would we do that? If God has established all things that are going to happen in your life and he has a perfect will that he's working out in your life to bring him praise and glory, the last thing that I want to do is say, "God, do it my way." The best thing for all of us is if God does it his way and if God does his will in your life, even if it brings pain and sorrow and suffering. That's why Jesus says to pray, "Father, your will be done as in heaven, so also upon earth." We'll get to that another time.

What is prayer, then? Prayer is an extension of the overall purpose of salvation and life, that is, to seek the glory of God above all else. Prayer is an extension of the overall purpose of life, the overall purpose of salvation, and that is, to seek the glory of God above all else. That's the centrality of the glory of God in salvation. When you understand that prayer is one aspect of a larger whole of your life and that the larger whole is to be devoted to the glory of God, then the inexorable force of that is to say, "Oh, my prayers must be for the glory of God as well." That liberates you from silly time rules. It liberates you from false repetition. It brings a glorious purpose and a glorious motivation to it.

"Lord, I am here as one of yours to declare your glory to you in the privacy of my own room and the privacy of my own prayers. God, I love you so much for what you've done for me in Christ. I love you so much for your goodness. I am so enamored with your greatness, Father, that I just want to praise you as I come into your presence here today." That's the spirit of true prayer. That's ascribing glory to him.

That brings us to our second point: the priority of God's glory in prayer. You could treat this as a subset of the first point but now we're going to go back to Matthew 6 with all of that framework in place and in Matthew 6, we'll find the priority of God's glory in prayer. And let me hasten to remind you, we have a number of people that weren't with us last week, we're glad you're with us as always. Let me remind you of something that we said last week, that God is the supreme person in prayer and that in order to truly pray, you must be a Christian because no one comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ, John 14:6. And we recognize the goodness and the greatness of God. We have to remember who it is that we're praying to and the honor of God, Jesus says, in light of all of that, that becomes the priority. It's given the first position in Jesus' teaching on prayer.

Look at it with me there in verse 9 as Christ says, "Pray, then, in this way." Pray, then, in this way. Now, let me approach it this way before we get directly into the text and sometimes when you just realize the simplicity and clarity of little principles, it just echoes, it ripples like a rock in a lake and it just ripples and goes to the farthest shores when you understand basic things like this. Your first goal as a Christian in praying should be to pray in a way that your Lord commands you to do. It's not to get what you want. It's not to satisfy the rules of men. To just go to the Lord and in all simplicity and sincerity and humility of heart and say, "Lord Jesus, you are the one who bought my life. You own me. I love you. I submit to you. You're my Lord and you're my teacher. How should I pray?"

Jesus answers it and in verse 9 he says, "Pray, then, in this way." Jesus speaking to his disciples and don't lose sight of the fact that this is an imperative; that this is a command; that this is Jesus saying, "This is how it is to be done in my kingdom." This isn't one option among many. This isn't an alternative approach to other things that you've been taught. This is the way to do it according to Christ himself and when we realize the simplicity of it, we realize, "Do you know what? There's nothing burdensome here. This is not a heavy yoke that he is placing on me. If I simply follow and in simplicity of trust and belief pray in this manner, I can have a confidence and an assurance that Christ is pleased with my prayer and I'm praying in a way that God finds acceptable." That should be the supreme goal of your heart, that your prayers are obedient; that your prayers honor Christ; that they are what he wants. That's his prerogative as your Lord, to say, "This is the way I want it done." So this isn't something to bypass quickly. This is something to receive, to submit to, to embrace.

He says in verse 9, "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven.'" We looked at that last time. And then he says these magnificent words, "Hallowed be Your name." Hallowed be Your name. The honor of God has the first position in Jesus' teaching. It has the preeminent priority in your heart.

To hallow means to sanctify, to make holy or to consider holy. Jesus says, "Pray to God: 'Hallowed be Your name.'" What's he saying? Well, God's name is more than the word by which we address him. God's name stands for the fullness of his character. God's name represents all that he is and so when Jesus tells us to pray, "Hallowed be Your name," he's teaching us this: he's saying, "God, my supreme desire as I approach you is that your name would be glorified." God is already holy, he cannot become more holy, but we can pray that that holiness would be recognized in our own hearts, recognized in the church, recognized in our loved ones, recognized in the world at large. "God, I pray that you would so work in a manner that people would see your glory and praise you for it." One writer said this, "We pray for God's name to be hallowed because we strongly desire that he receive surpassing praise in our own lives, the church, and the world."

Here's how this works out in your heart and in your thinking, beloved, and remember, we're not prescribing a script by which you would pray, we're talking about greater principles than that. You see yourself as one who is set apart for the glory of God, you have this magnificent opportunity of prayer and praying to God and having him hear you and respond to you, and you say, "God, as I come to you, what I really want is for you to be glorified. That's what I want more than anything else, O God. That's what I seek as I pray."

Now, this particular request, "Hallowed be Your name," this prayer is framed in a different sense. It's a different verb tense in the original language and this is a tense that conveys a sense of urgency. It's the aorist imperative. It conveys a sense of urgency. "God, this is really important. This is what needs to happen. This is what matters to me." And so as you come into the presence of God, you're thinking like this, "God, I see my own spiritual dullness. I see how inconsistent I am even in my desires for you. You deserve so much more from me, O God. Hallowed be your name. God, I look around, I look around at the people of God, those who name the name of Christ and I see them struggling, I see them suffering. God, I pray that you would sanctify your name and that they would glorify you in the midst of their suffering. God, I look at others who have no regard for you. O God, sanctify your name. Hallowed be your name to them that they might respond to you in faith and in worship. God, I look at the world around me and what a disgusting mess I see, all about violence and bloodshed everywhere, the worst forms of unspeakable immorality that shouldn't even be named are openly practiced and affirmed. O God, this is a violation of your holiness. God, I pray hallowed be your name."

So with surpassing love for your heavenly Father, you look around, you look within at your own heart, and you see that there is a shortfall of a love and a passion and a desire for the glory of God. There is a great deficit of this compared to what he is deserving of and you say, "God, into that deficit I step and I make it my prayer that you would glorify your name. Work with power through your Spirit, work with power through your word, bring sinners to salvation, sanctify your people, work in my own heart, Father. All I want as I come to you, I want the glory of your name because that is more important to me than life itself." That's the sense of urgency that we bring to this prayer. You look at all of

this dullness and you say, "Lord, this is not right. Men should esteem you. I pray that you would work in such a way that we would glorify you appropriately."

A. W. Pink said this and I quote, he said, "This petition must take the precedence for the glory of God's great name is the ultimate end of all things. Every other request must not only be subordinated to this one, but be in harmony with and in pursuance of it. We cannot pray rightly unless the honor of God is dominant in our hearts." Dominant in our hearts, the supreme theme in prayer.

So, beloved, let's get practical, shall we? Let's go to the kitchen of your life. This past week, this past week, was the glory of God uppermost in your mind when you prayed? Let me ask it a different way, one that I fear may be closer to the truth for many of us: did the glory of God even occur to you this past week when you prayed? Martyn Lloyd Jones said this, "It is when we look at it in that way that we see how utterly valueless much of our praying must be."

Now, this is convicting but isn't that the way that it should be? Isn't the word of God designed to instruct us? To correct, rebuke and train us in righteousness? Well, Christ brings this to us in order to sanctify us, in order to change us, to move us from our self-centered focus in prayer and, "God, this is what I want," to move us away from that and say, "Oh, do you know what? I am praying to the eternal God of the universe whose glory is so great that it cannot be measured. I should recognize him as my first priority in prayer." That should be the dominant thing. And see how all of this fits together from what we looked at beforehand? When you see the centrality of God's glory in salvation, you see the centrality of that purpose in salvation and Christ calls you to this in the details of your life, and you say, "Oh, yes, well, then prayer must be about the glory of God, not about me primarily."

So not only do the people who tell us to approach God for health and wealth teach us lies in that realm, they also completely distort our perspective on what the purpose of life is, what the purpose of prayer is. It's not to get what I want. It is not to get what I want. It is to recognize and ascribe glory to God as the preeminent priority and maybe God would be glorified in our poverty and in our sickness. Maybe God would be glorified when we honor him like Job did and trusted him even though he had no external prompting to do so. Maybe that would glorify him. Out, out, out, out, out with this selfish preoccupation with earthly life when we come to a holy God. Out with it! Out with it.

So what does praying to the glory of God look like? Well, let me just suggest some simple things, some simple words. Not that these are the rules. We've dismissed that. These are just things to help you have an idea of how to approach God when you pray. In the simplicity of these things to say, "Hallowed be Your name," what do we mean by that? What are we saying by that? We're saying, "Father, you are good. I trust you no matter what. Father, you are wise. Give me wisdom. And I thank you for the wisdom that has ordained these circumstances in my life. I submit to your wisdom, Lord. You're wise. You're good. I give glory to you. Father, you're great. You are high and lofty. I worship you. Father, help me to glorify you in what I'm facing today. Father, you're good. Father,

you're great. Father, you're wise. Father, you're loving. Father, you're sovereign and I frame all of my prayers in response to that."

Brothers and sisters, I'm deliberately being simple in what I say here as I suggest these things. It's deliberately simple, so simple that a nine year old girl could understand it. If you accept that basic idea, a different world of praying will open to you and no longer is prayer a burdensome duty, but prayer is a joyful delight when you respond to the very purpose for which you were saved and the very purpose for which Christ calls you to prayer as the preeminent priority. Now, this isn't all that prayer is. Christ had other things to say but this is where it starts. If you start here, "Father, you're great. Father, you're good. Father, I trust you." Your prayer life is on a trajectory where it will grow and be meaningful and where it will count in the courts of heaven which is the only place where the math matters.

This glory of God, pursuing God in prayer like this produces trust. It produces submission. It produces obedience. It supremely produces praise. And you should be thinking about prayer as that avenue, that venue in which you express praise and trust and submission and obedience to your God. That is where you glorify him, from the deepest recesses of your heart. In prayer, we display to God that which is most important to us. Let it be the glory of God to be the surpassing priority of our prayers.

Now then, having laid it all out, having seen it from Scripture, will you make the glory of God your supreme priority in prayer?

Let's pray.

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be your blessed name. Indeed, our Father, you are good and we affirm our trust in you this morning. Indeed, our Father, you are wise. We trust you for your wisdom in the way that you've ordained our lives. Our Father, you are great, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, sovereign over all, holy, holy, holy, separate from sinners and exalted above the heavens are you, Lord Jesus. We worship you in response.

Father, in light of these things, our circumstances take a different perspective in our lives. Yes, they're difficult. Yes, they may be sorrowful for some. But Father, we view them with different glasses on when we see them through the prism of your glory. We realize that what you have appointed for us in this time of life is the stage that you have given us to glorify you, to ascribe glory to you. And so we ask for each one, Father, that they would glorify you in life; that sinners would glorify you by confessing Christ as Lord and Savior and coming to you for the first time in faith; that your saints would love you for your glory and orient all of life around it.

And Father, for those in our midst that have compartmentalized their approach to Christianity, that see things, see aspects of life apart from your glory and unrelated to it, Father, help them to see, break down the bad thinking in their minds and let us all leave with this great thought impressed upon us, that our purpose is to glorify you in all things

until you call us home. And Father, where we have not done that, where we have not even considered it, forgive us of our great sin against you and change us through the power of your word that we might be more conformed to the image of Christ who prayed in Gethsemane, "Father, not my will but thine be done." And it's through the merit and the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that we gladly pray. Amen.

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