

Prayer

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.

- When you pray – there is an assumption that if you are a disciple of Jesus, you will pray.
- Prayer is the lifeline of a Christian. It is our connection with the Father.
- Don’t be like a hypocrite. How do hypocrites pray?
 - To be seen by others.
 - Synagogues and street corners – The only time they prayed was when they could be seen doing so.
 - This means that they saw no value in prayer other than getting praise from people for being so spiritual.
 - **James 5:16** Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.**
 - Do we fully believe that prayer is effective? Do we know we have the attention of God when we pray?
- Jesus says that secret prayer is what brings the reward of the Father.
 - We are not only rewarded with answered prayer, but with God Himself
 - **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
 - **Jeremiah 29:13** And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.
- Secret prayer is intimate prayer between only you and the Father
 - This does not mean there should not be public prayer. But, when we do pray in public it should be done with the same heart attitude of private prayer.

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.

- How else do hypocrites pray? With vain repetitions. They believe if they are eloquent enough God will hear them.
- Again, this shows that they are looking to impress someone. Using repetitions or long phrases with big words to sound super fancy.
- Praying for show is hypocrisy. Why do we pray?
- Vs. 8 says God already knows what we need before we ask, so why pray?
 - Because our prayer is about our relationship with God.
 - Prayer is not to inform God. It is to put into our mind that we have a Father in heaven that loves us and desires relationship with us.
 - Talking with God should also help bring our desire in line with His desires. Just like talking with others can influence your view on things.

Matthew 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

- In this manner – This is the model. These are not the exact words that we should pray, but each phrase is the model after which we should pray.

Our

- We are not alone in our Christianity. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus did not say “My.”
 - **Romans 8:29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.
 - **Matthew 12:48–50** But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” ⁴⁹ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My

mother and My brothers!⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

- How does this affect our prayer time? Our focus is on God and His relationship to us. We are not alone. We are in this with all other believers. The focus is not towards self, but to God even in so knowing that He is Father to all believers.
- Elijah prayed in the singular
 - **1 Kings 19:14** And he said, “**I have been** very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. **I alone am left**; and they seek to take **my life**.”
 - This is a whiny prayer that ultimately results in God correcting him and showing Elijah that he is not alone.
- Not only are we in union with other believers, we are in union with Christ.
 - **Hebrews 13:5** *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*
 - **Romans 8:34** Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.
 - **Romans 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
 - Jesus Himself is also praying with us. The Holy Spirit is praying with us. We are never praying alone.
- So our attitude in prayer is that we are jointly praying with Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and even joining in prayer with millions of believers around the world.

Father

- We spoke a lot about God as Father last week. But the relationship of coming to God in prayer should be to view God as Father.

- Jesus did not say Creator, Almighty God, All Sufficient One – which are all names of God. He said Our Father.
- Jesus’ most common way of opening His prayers was “Father.” Even from the cross, except for when He was forsaken, He referred to God as Father. In the garden His prayer was directed to Father, raising Lazarus, and so many more.
- Our purpose is to be children of God so the primary relationship that we have with God is as Father.
- How does this affect our prayer?
 - Our Father is interested in us.
 - Our Father wants to bless us.
 - We are directed to pray as children that love their Father, and to a Father that loves His children.
 - If you have an incorrect image of God as Father, see last week’s message.
 - The story of the Prodigal son – The son takes and leaves, but eventually desires to come back. He is ashamed and broken, hoping that his father will hire him as a servant.
 - The father’s reaction: **Luke 15:20–24** “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.²¹ And the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet.²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry;²⁴ for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.
 - Jesus told that parable to show the love, forgiveness, and heart of the Father. This is the way we should view God in prayer.