

The Messiah Has Come
Week 24
Matthew 6:11-15
“Effective Prayer” (Part 3)

Introduction

As we continue our study of The Sermon on The Mount, in particular the passage on praying effectively, we will take up the verses from where we left off last week. As we have discussed previously, praying in Jesus Name is actually a means to align our will with that of our Heavenly Father. So, in order to do this, we must first re-order our priorities. For all of us, when we allow our flesh to have its way, will pray according to our own selfishly desires, rather than to take the time to seek out the will of God. This is why so many in the church today have weak and ineffective prayer lives. And when the church loses its ability to pray in The Spirit's power bad things will happen. There is nothing more anemic and pitiable than a church that has no power, not to mention, it will be divisive and unhealthy.

What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You are an adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God. Or do you think it's without reason that The Scripture says: The spirit He made to dwell in us envies intensely? But He gives greater grace. Therefore He says: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

James 4:1-6

As we learned last week, the key to an effective prayer life is to begin our prayers with the realization of just Who it is that we are speaking to. He is The Almighty, Everlasting, Holy God, Who created us for His pleasure. Not the other way around. And when we come into His presence, we should be ever reminded of the **privilege** we have been given through the shed blood of Jesus. We should recognize that our Father's **place** is in heaven. Therefore, we are on our journey to where He is, which means this world is not our home, and the things of this world are not our priority. And finally, we must realize the **priority** of The Father, which is to send forth His Son to rule the earth in power and glory. When we understand these things, we will see a shift in our own priorities, and our prayers will go from being self-centered to God-centered.

Once these things are firmly established, and we desire to seek God's will, rather than have God follow us around and give us everything our selfish heart's desire, then and only then, are we prepared to speak to our Father about our needs (not *wants* mind you, but needs). God wants us to tell Him what we need in order to continue our pilgrimage here on this earth. We need only to retrace our steps back a few verses and hear the words of The Savior.

When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask Him.

Matthew 6:7-8

God longs not only to hear us pray for our needs, but also He delights in meeting those needs. Again, hear the words of The LORD on this:

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give The Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

Luke 11:9-13

So, as we conclude our study of The Model Prayer, we will learn just how to pray effectively for the things we need in order to complete our journey through this fallen world. We pray for daily *Provision*, for *Pardon*, and *Protection*, and finally we pray in The Spirit's *Power*. Please allow me to explain.

Provision (vs. 11)

Give us today our daily bread.

Matthew 6:11

The first thing I find striking about this verse is the repetitiveness of *today* and *daily*. It should give us a bit of insight into The LORD'S thinking. He not only wants us to come to Him with our needs, but He wants us to do it every day! Once again, Jesus died so that you could pray, and God The Father wants to hear from all of His children each day. I think the most productive thing any child of God can ever do is to begin every new day with prayer. How much better would our lives be if before we stepped out of our homes and into this wicked world, we made sure that we did so clothed in the armor of God (**Ephesians 6:10-18**)? We must develop the spiritual discipline of a *daily quiet time* with God.

The second thing I want you to see is the manner in how we are to make petition for our needs. "Give us this day our *daily bread*." Think about that for a moment. Why do you think it is that The LORD commands us to ask each day for only what we need that day? Can I point something out here? When our priorities are aligned with our heavenly Father's, then we want only what He wants. And we are to become far more concerned about His coming kingdom as opposed to all we can gain for ourselves down here! If our hearts are where they ought to be on this subject, today is all we need be concerned with, for tomorrow Christ may come! And so much the better if He does! So why worry about tomorrow's daily bread? Let the kingdom come! All we need to be concerned with as Believers is our provision for today. What a liberating way to live.

Is it any wonder that Christ will go on to say in this very same sermon that we should never be given over to worry (**vs. 25-34**)? Why be wrapped up in concern for the future, when today is all you have? I really believe that the best thing any child of God can do is to "clock in" every day and do your very best with the day you have been given. Share Christ with those who will listen, show His love in all things, and work as though you are serving God Himself, for that is how we are to spend each and every day. And our God will supply our needs according to His riches in glory (**Philippians 4:19**). Just imagine for a moment how much happier you would be if you had faith enough to come a "daily bread kind of Believer!"

Pardon (vs. 12 & 14-15)

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 6:12

And:

For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

Matthew 6:14-15

I connected these two passages because this part of the prayer is the only portion that Christ took the time upon which to expound. Our forgiveness from God is conditional upon how we forgive others. That seems to me to be an important point of order, does it not? For you see, according to Scripture, we are always in need of some grace. *The Bible* says:

The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable — who can understand it?

Jeremiah 17:9

So do not miss this. Just as we need daily bread, we also need daily grace! Why? Because we cannot get through a single day without doing something wrong. That's why. There are people who would argue that they do not mess things up every day, but those people are liars. So there's that. Even the Apostle Paul understood that his "best self" was a wretch.

For we know that The Law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold as a slave under sin. For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. Now if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with The Law that it is good. So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is sin that lives in me.

Romans 7:14-20

Condensed version, Paul was saying that no matter how hard he tried, he still could not be good enough when judged according to God's flawlessly perfect standard of righteousness. And this is coming from the guy who wrote about a third of your *Bible*! So guess what? The very best that we can do is never good enough. This is why we needed a Savior in the first place. So with that in mind, how often do we need to draw upon the grace of God? Answer: **daily**. You need daily forgiveness, pardon, if you will, just as desperately as you need daily bread. And without it, your soul would be starving.

So, then The LORD goes on to say something astounding. God will be as forgiving to you, as you are to others. Now that stings a bit, does it not? And trust me, there is no loophole here. I have studied the Greek text, and the word that Christ uses here translated "as" in the CSB is "hos", and it literally means "in the same manner". So a correct rendering of the original text could also be: "And forgive us our debts in the same manner in which we have forgiven our debtors". Simply put, God will extend the same amount of grace to you, as you do to those who have offended you. So how good are you at forgiving? For you cannot afford to withhold forgiveness, because you yourself cannot do without God's forgiveness! Sobering thought is it not? So forgive, not only for the sake of your debtors, but for your own sake as well.

Protection (vs. 13a)

And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. **Matthew 6:13**

First things first. There are a lot of people who have misunderstood the intent of this verse, so let us clarify. God does not tempt people to sin. He does however, allow us to be tempted and tried so that we may mature in our faith. But make no mistake, Jesus is not saying that God tempts us when He says we should pray, "and do not bring us into temptation", on this the Scriptures are clear.

No one undergoing a trial should say, "I am being tempted by God," since God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself doesn't tempt anyone. But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. Then after desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

James 1:13-15

What then is Jesus telling us to pray for? Answer: After we have re-aligned our own priorities with those of The LORD'S, we will soon discover that the greatest enemy of this mindset is our very own flesh. In essence, what we are asking God for here is protection from our very own selves! The devil knows full well how to entice us away from the will of The Father, by using our own weaknesses against us.

Every person on this earth has what I have heard referred to as a "besetting sin", something that is a greater temptation to them that may or may not be such a great temptation to others. I have always enjoyed fishing, and part of getting those cagey old fish to bite the hook is to lure them with something that they naturally crave. That is why there are so many different types of fishing lures out there for the serious angler. Something that would cause a Largemouth bass to strike would be totally undesirable for a trout and so on. You need the right bait in order to deceive and reel in the big ones!

So how should this knowledge affect the Believer? Simple. Each one of us needs to become painfully aware of what triggers our deepest desires within our own fleshly natures. In short, we need to know what lure the devil would most likely use to get us to “strike”, as it were. And those things should be guarded with fierce intensity. Listen to what Paul says on the matter as he compares this to the training of an athlete.

Now everyone who competes exercises self-control in everything. They do it to receive a perishable crown, but we an imperishable crown. So I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.
1 Corinthians 9:25-27

So the disciplined prayer of the child of God, who wishes for his/her priorities to stay in line with those of The Father, will be, “LORD, protect me, from my own selfish and lustful desires. The devil knows my weaknesses, so let my strength come from You. Deliver me from my own evil.”

Power (vs 13b)

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.

Matthew 6:13b (KJV)

I had to quote from the King James Version on this particular phrase, because it isn't in many of the modern translations. The reason for this is simple; since the KJV was translated, older manuscripts of this text have been discovered. And these older versions do not have this final doxology attached to the model prayer that Christ taught. This has led many scholars to believe that it was added later by someone unknown to history.

Whether Jesus said it or not, it isn't like it is an untrue statement of faith. God is all powerful, and many other Scriptures indeed bear this out. But I for one, think The Spirit wanted us to have this verse. For it is a good reminder of just Who we are entrusting to lead us on this, our pilgrimage, to the promised land. He is none other than The Almighty, Everlasting, God, Who will see His children safely to our beloved home. The prayer begins with our Holy Father, and concludes with our Almighty Father, and that should remind us of not only Who *He* is, but how safe we are in Him. So I for one, think it is a perfect ending to a great prayer. Truth be told, my faith isn't always as strong as it should be. And quite often, I need to be reminded that it is not I that holds onto Him, but rather, it is He Who holds on to me!

In *The Old Testament*, God instructed His priests to bless His people. And to do this, He commanded them to speak His Name over them. In His own words this is what He commanded them:

The LORD spoke to Moses: “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. You should say to them, “May The LORD bless you and protect you; may The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; may The LORD look with favor on you and give you peace.”’ In this way they will pronounce My Name over the Israelites, and I will bless them.”
Number 6:22-27

For His *is* the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever... Amen!

Truth!!!