

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Matthew 6:9-15

A Christian's Prayer

I. Important Points on the Lord's Prayer

- A. The Lord's Prayer is best thought of as a 'model' prayer - "This is how you should pray" (6:9a), not "This is *what* you should pray."
- B. The Prayer consists of six petitions. Three dealing with God directly (his name, his kingdom, his will) and three dealing with man directly (our daily food, our sins, our temptations).

II. The Biblical Use of "Father"

- A. The word "father" is used of God about 15 times in the OT.
- B. By contrast, in the New Testament, "father" is used some 245 times with reference to God.
- C. Jesus refers to God as "father" 17 times during the Sermon on the Mount, more times than the term is used of God in the Old Testament!

"You sum up the whole of New Testament teaching in a single phrase, if you speak of it as a revelation of the Fatherhood of the holy Creator. In the same way, you sum up the whole of New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one's holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all " - I I Packer. *Knowing God*. 185

II. A Christian's Prayer

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. ¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'" (Matt 6:9-15)

1. How does beginning our prayer "Our Father in heaven" demonstrate intimacy, reverence, and fellowship? How do these elements set the tone for Christian living and Christian praying? Are any out of balance in your life?

"The whole of our worship flows from these few words. They, in turn, invest our worship with the grandeur and the joy of true praise and adoration." - Sinclair Ferguson, 121.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of
Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Great Father of glory; pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render; O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!

-Walter Chalmers Smith, 1867

2. Is the phrase "hallowed be your name" a petition or a statement? What does it mean for something to be "hallowed"? What does this first phrase of the Lord's Prayer mean?

"The pious mind does not dream up for itself any god it pleases, but contemplates the one and only true God. And it does not attach to him whatever it pleases, but is content to hold him to be as he manifests himself; furthermore, the mind always exercises the utmost diligence and care not to wander astray, or rashly and boldly go beyond his will. It thus recognizes God because it knows that he governs all things; and trusts that he is its guide and protector, therefore giving itself over completely to trust in him. Because it understands him to be the Author of every good, if anything oppresses, if anything is lacking, immediately it betakes itself to his protection, waiting for help from him. Because it is persuaded that he is good and merciful, it reposes in him with perfect trust, and doubts not that in his loving-kindness a remedy will be provided for all its ills. Because it acknowledges him as Lord and Father, the pious mind also deems it meet and right to observe his authority in all things, reverence his majesty, take care to advance his glory, and obey his commandments. Because it sees him to be a righteous judge, armed with severity to punish wickedness, it ever holds his judgment seat before its gaze, and through fear of him restrains itself from provoking his anger. And yet it is not so terrified by the awareness of his judgment as to wish to withdraw, even if some way of escape were open. But it embraces him no less as punisher of the wicked than as benefactor of the pious. For the pious mind realizes that the punishment of the impious and wicked and the reward of life eternal for the righteous equally pertain to God's glory. Besides, this mind restrains itself from sinning, not out of dread of punishment alone; but, because it loves and reveres God as Father, it worships and adores him as Lord. Even if there were no hell, it would still shudder at offending him alone." (Calvin, 1.2.3)

3. What do we mean when we talk about the "already/not yet" aspects of the Kingdom of God? What does this second petition mean? What personal posture lies behind this petition? What desires concerning the Gospel lie behind this petition?

"Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body." (Mark 15:43)

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev 11:15)

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar... Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God...¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace." (2 Pet 3:8-14)

4. What is the irony of the words "our bread" in the Lord's Prayer? How is it "ours"? What attitudes/actions reveal that you have forgotten God's warning in Deut 8:17-18?

"...have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come..." (Heb 6:5)

5. In vv. 14-15, does Jesus mean that our *reception* of forgiveness (from God) is determined by our *granting* of forgiveness (to others)? How does a biblical view of sin maintain the correct logic in Jesus' statement?

6. Does the final petition imply that God leads us into temptation (see Matt 4:1, James 1:12-15)? What are the Christians three great enemies?

"Mortification of sin by self-strength, carried on by ways of self-discipline, unto the end of self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world." - John Owen, On the Mortification of Sin

"It is to be feared that very many Christians have little knowledge of the main enemy that they carry about

