

WALKING WITH JESUS - PART 6
The Disciples' Prayer
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Matthew 6:9-13
Subject: How Jesus taught His disciples to pray
Complement: as personal communication with their Father in heaven.
Exegetical idea: Jesus taught His disciples to pray as personal communication with their Father in heaven.
Homiletical idea: **Prayer is personal communion with our Father in heaven.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers let Jesus teach them how to pray, as personal communion with our Father in heaven.

Have you ever seen something and really wanted it for yourself? That's what happened to the disciples one day. What they saw wasn't a material item, like something to eat or an earthly treasure. What the disciples saw was a dynamic connection between earth and heaven. And when they saw that dynamic connection between earth and heaven, they really wanted it for themselves. So when Jesus had finished his time of private prayer, His disciples came to Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray!"

The disciples had prayed before, don't you think? They knew some things about prayer. But they were longing for a dynamic connection between earth and heaven like the one they saw when Jesus prayed. That's why they came to Jesus with the plea, "Lord, teach us to pray!"

Have you ever wished that you could ask Jesus that same question? "Lord, please teach me to pray!" In response to the request of His disciples, Jesus repeated a model for prayer that He had first given as part of His sermon on the mount. We're going to study that model for prayer today.

This is part 6 of our study on the great sermon of Jesus, the sermon on the mount. We

have entitled this series Walking with Jesus. In part 5 of our series, you'll remember that Jesus taught us not to pray in a way that draws attention to ourselves. And don't pray with meaningless repetitions, babbling, thinking that God will hear us because of our many words. Now, starting in Matthew 6:9, Jesus gives a model for prayer. Let's begin by reading the entire prayer together, starting with the words "Our Father," in Matthew 6:9. "....."

Before we study this model for prayer in greater detail, I want to draw our attention to the first phrase in Matthew 6:9. What does Jesus say? "In this manner." Is there anything wrong with praying this prayer word for word? Certainly not. You can repeat the exact words recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 in less than a minute, and that would be a meaningful prayer if you prayed with a heart open to our Heavenly Father. But what if you are going to pray for 10 minutes, or 30 minutes, or an hour. Should you just repeat this prayer 10, 30, or 60 times! Even this prayer that Jesus gave to us could become a meaningless repetition, if you repeated it over and over and over again? No! That could easily become meaningless repetitions. A type of "praying" that Jesus warned us about.

So don't miss those first words in Matthew 6:9. "In this manner." Jesus is giving us a model for prayer, an outline, a format. Today, in our study, we are going to examine this model for prayer more closely. I have provided you with an outline of this prayer on the back page of your bulletin insert. I encourage you to take notes so that you can review this material at a later date. And more than that. I want to encourage you to practice what you learn. As you walk with Jesus, let Jesus teach you how to pray.

Let's go back to the beginning of this model for prayer and notice how it begins. "Our Father in heaven." Some Christians have repeated this prayer so many times that we miss the

deep significance of those words. Remember, the expression Father in heaven appears for the first time in Scripture in this great sermon of Jesus. Jesus is giving us a new and intimate way of relating to Almighty God. “Our Father in heaven.” I have heard some people pray, “My Father in heaven” and that is certainly true. He is your Father in heaven. What a wonderful truth! The God of all creation is your Father in heaven! But don’t forget that He is not only your Father in heaven. He is our Father in heaven. That one simple phrase connects us all together. That one simple phrase should break down all of the walls that divide us. That one simple phrase should dispel all bigotry and prejudice and social elitism and religious arrogance. No one little group on this planet has a monopoly on Almighty God! He is our Father in heaven.

The prayer that follows naturally divides into two parts. The first part focuses on our Father in heaven; the second part presents our needs. So if your taking notes in the sermon outline, write down that first major heading: Focus on our Father in heaven.

Let’s read Matthew 6:9-10 again. Let’s read together. “.....” Did you notice that one word is repeated three times? What is it? “Your.” Your name. Your kingdom. Your will. You just outlined the first half of this model for prayer. Your name. Your kingdom. Your will. You may want to write those three sub-sections in your sermon outline: Your name, Your kingdom, Your will. We will explain them in greater detail as we continue our study together.

So as we begin our time of prayer, our time of personal communion with our Father in heaven, we pray “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” What does that mean? Hallowed by Your name? The verb is ἁγιάζω, from the noun ἅγιος which means “holy.” Our Father in heaven. Holy is Your name! What is Jesus teaching us to do as we begin our personal

communion with our Father in heaven? Praise Him. Praise Him! How shall we praise Him? With our whole hearts! I love to pray with words of Scripture. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. Jesus began his brief prayer recorded in Luke 10:21 with these words: “ I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.”

Remember to begin your prayer time, your personal communion with your Father in heaven, by praising Him! How do many prayers begin? Requesting. Complaining. Whining. Let Jesus teach you how to pray. Begin by focusing on your Father in heaven, and praise Him! I was told that a great man of prayer who lived in my home town of Bristol, England, was once asked how long he praised God in prayer. Do you know what George Mueller answered? “I praise Him until my heart is glad!” I like that response. Our Father in heaven, hallowed by Your name. Begins your prayers with praise!

What is the next sub-section of this first part of the prayer? “Your kingdom come.” Which kingdom is Jesus referring to here? The answer should be obvious from our study of the great sermon on the mount! Which kingdom is Jesus referring to here? The kingdom of heaven. So what does it mean when we pray as part of our personal communion with our Father in heaven, “Your kingdom come”? Your kingdom come in my own life today. I surrender wholly to you today. Because the kingdom of heaven is in our midst. The kingdom of heaven is a present reality. When you receive Jesus as your personal Savior, you are part of the kingdom of heaven. But the kingdom of heaven is also a future reality. The kingdom of glory, which is to come, when Jesus returns in all of His glory. We can also pray “Your kingdom come” as we long for the glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

How many of you are looking forward to the glorious return of Jesus? A time when, according to Scripture, there will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain! “Your kingdom come!” But remember, if you want to be a part of the glorious kingdom which is coming, you need to be a part of the kingdom of heaven today! You need to trust Jesus today as your Savior and Lord. So as part of our personal communion with our Father in heaven, we pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come!”

If that is all that we pray, that is a powerful prayer, isn't it? Powerful! Praising our Father in heaven with our whole heart, and praying for His kingdom to come, in our own lives, in the lives of those around us, and for His glorious kingdom to come! Powerful!

What's the third sub-section of this first part of the prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples, and also to us? Your name, Your kingdom.....? Your will. “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” It seems to me that this should be a part of the prayer where we are listening and not just talking. If prayer, as Jesus shares it with us here, is a time of personal communion with our Father in heaven, doesn't it make sense to you that we listen as well as talk?

I remember a great man of God who used to wake up in the morning and the first thing that he would do was pray, personal communion with our Father in heaven. Part of that prayer time was listening, and this man of God had a pad of paper and a pen ready to write down specific thoughts that would come to his mind. “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Now, I'm not suggesting that any thoughts that comes ricocheting through your head is a direct message from the Lord. You need to use your reason. You need to seek counsel from godly counselors. But I do believe that our Father in heaven wants you to live, to walk, in the center of

His will. Don't you believe that? We need to take time to listen as we pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The name of an individual may come to your mind. The Holy Spirit may bring a passage of Scripture to your remembrance. Listen. Be attentive. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Do you notice that we haven't started reading our shopping list yet? The whole first part of this prayer is focusing on our Father in heaven. We begin with praise! Hallowed be Your name. We pray Your kingdom come, in my life, in the lives of those around me, and also may your glorious kingdom come! And Your will be done, in every aspect of my life, in my family, in my community, in our world, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That's the first part of this great prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples. How long would it take to pray that first part of the prayer? 30 seconds? Possibly. Several hours. Possibly. That's the beauty of this model for prayer. It can be adjusted to any situation. Jesus didn't just repeat the same words over and over again when He prayed all night. A model for prayer can help you as you spend extended time in prayer. Listen carefully to what you are learning today. Let Jesus teach you how to pray!

What about the second half of the prayer? The first half is Focusing on our Father in heaven: Your name, Your kingdom, Your will. The second half of this prayer is Presenting our needs. Let's read Matthew 6:11-13 together. "....." Did you notice a word repeated in this second half of the prayer? "Us." It is actually repeated 4 times, but I'm going to suggest 3 sub-sections to this second half of the prayer, with the 3rd and 4th "us" joined together.

If you are taking notes, we are in the second half of the prayer, Presenting our needs. What is the first sub-section? Give us. "Give us this day our daily bread." This is a request that

our physical needs be met. Give us this day our daily bread. Unfortunately, Christians have repeated these words so often that I'm afraid we've missed their significance. What is the significance of those words? Who are you to make any request of Almighty God? Who do you think you are? Answer? According to Jesus, we are children of our Father in heaven. Later in this same great sermon of Jesus, He will tell us in Matthew 7:11, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him."

Prayer is a personal communion with our Father in heaven. After we have taken time to focus on Him, His name, His kingdom, His will, it is appropriate to present our needs. "Give us this day our daily bread." I have a question for you. Why not simply pray, "Give us bread!" Or "Give us a year's supply of bread!" Why, "Give us this day our daily bread?" Perhaps it is important for us to recognize our daily dependence upon our Father in heaven. What do you think?

What is the second sub-section of Presenting our needs? Forgive us. "And forgive us our debts and we forgive our debtors." We could spend a whole message just on that sentence. But let's get the main point. We not only have physical needs. We have spiritual needs. We need forgiveness. We need cleansing. Am I speaking the truth today? We don't just need bread. We cannot live by bread alone. We need forgiveness. Please note that there is a correlation between our experience of forgiveness and the way we forgive others. Write this text down for some further study. Matthew 18:21-35. Matthew 18:21-35. I want to suggest to you that those who have experienced the forgiveness of our Father in heaven will act in a forgiving way to those around them. Jesus said, The one who has been forgiven much loves much.

Followers of Jesus ought to be the most forgiving people on the planet. Did you hear me? Followers of Jesus ought to be the sweetest people in the neighborhood. If you are full of bitterness and anger and resentment, Jesus loves you just as you are, but He doesn't want to leave you there! Jesus wants to heal you. Jesus wants to set you free. Jesus wants to bless you. And then Jesus wants to pour rivers of blessing through you to those around you. Yes, even to those who hurt you. Even to those who don't deserve those blessings. Because we have been blessed beyond what we deserve, haven't we?

Give us. Forgive us. And then the third sub-section of Presenting our Needs. "And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one." Deliver us. We not only have physical needs and spiritual needs, but we have a need for deliverance. And I have good news for you today. Our Father in heaven is able to deliver us from the evil one. Yes, He is. He is able. More than able. Call upon Me, He says. Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you. And you will honor me. Psalm 50:15

In this part of the prayer, you might want to put on the whole armor of God. You can read about that armor in Ephesians 6:11-18. If you have never studied about that armor, write that passage down for further study. Ephesians 6:11-18. Our Father in heaven wants us to supply all of our needs: physical needs, spiritual needs, and the need for deliverance, the need for spiritual power and spiritual protection.

How long has it taken us to pray this model for prayer? 60 seconds. Possibly. And that short prayer can be very meaningful as part of **personal communion with our Father in heaven**. But this prayer could also take 60 minutes, or more. It all depends on how much time you have available, time to spend in personal communion with our Father in heaven.

That's really the message in this prayer that Jesus gives to His disciples. Prayer is not a way to draw attention to yourself. Prayer is not a babbling of meaningless repetitions. **Prayer is personal communion with our Father in heaven. Prayer is personal communion with our Father in heaven**

What a precious gift! My appeal to you today is simply this: Let Jesus teach you how to pray. Experience personal communion with our Father in heaven! Let Jesus teach you how to pray.