

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-15

Sermon Outlines

by

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Our Father in heaven

Text: Matt. 6:9-15

Title: Approaching God in Prayer (#1)

Date: April 3, 2013

Sermon Type: Expository Sermon

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Fallen Condition Focus: Believers are sometimes ignorant or confused about how to pray acceptably and effectually.

Propositional Statement: In order to pray acceptably and effectually, you must approach God properly.

Pre-Introduction:

1. Today we begin a series of messages on the Lord's Prayer. This prayer is called *the Lord's Prayer* because Jesus taught it to his disciples, not because he used it himself in prayer. For this reason, some commentators have labeled it instead *the Disciples' Prayer*. Please follow along in your Bibles as I read the text. **{Matt. 9:11-15} Prayer >>**

Lord Jesus,

You taught your disciples to pray.

We wait before you now desiring that you will teach us still,

by your word,

by your Holy Spirit,

and by your servant.

Make your word effectual in our lives

to show us our sins and lead us to repentance,

to reveal to us your truth that we might obey it,

to change us into your own likeness,

and to give to us the spirit of grace and supplications. Amen.

Introduction:

2. Every Christian needs to know *how to pray*. Even more importantly, *Christians must pray!* Prayer was a major topic in Jesus teaching, and he not only *taught* his disciples how to pray, he also *showed* them how to pray by his own example. In fact, Luke 11:1 tells us that it was after observing Jesus at prayer, that one of his disciples asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Christ's response was to teach the pattern of prayer that we have before us.
3. Before we get into today's text, please note some general observations about this prayer.
 - a. Christ never intended for this to be used as a magical prayer formula. He said, "Pray then like this:" It is a *pattern* for believers to follow when they pray, not a prayer for them to

memorize and recite. Unfortunately, believers have often used it as a *vain repetition* (cp. v. 7, “empty phrases”).

- b. As a pattern of prayer, this text shows us (1) *important principles* about prayer in general and (2) reveals *the kinds of things* for which believers ought to pray. Therefore, throughout this series we are going to slowly and carefully unpack what Christ intended to teach us about prayer from these verses.
 - c. Since this is a pattern for prayer, we should carefully note the structure it contains. There are four main parts:
 - i. The believer’s approach to God (“Our Father in heaven”). We must relate properly to God in order to have confidence that our prayers will be acceptable to Him and effectual in accomplishing their purpose.
 - ii. The believer’s priorities in prayer (vv. 9b-10). We must make sure that our requests are aligned with God’s purposes as our first priority. There are three priorities in prayer:
 - iii. The believer’s petitions to God (vv. 11-13). We must obtain the things that we and other believers need by asking God for them. There are three kinds of petitions in prayer:
 - iv. The believer’s self-examination in prayer (vv. 14-15). We must pardon others in the same way that God has pardoned us, in order to pray acceptably.
4. **FCF:** Believers often feel very inadequate in their prayer life. There are several reasons for this:
- a. Some feel inadequate in their personal knowledge about prayer. They feel ignorant and therefore incapable of praying acceptably.
 - b. Others feel spiritually unworthy to approach God. They may feel that they are too sinful, or too weak, or too spiritually immature to come to God.
 - c. Both of these reasons can be overcome. (1) God has commanded us to pray (“pray like this,” v.9, **imperative verb**); God teaches us how to pray (eg. this pattern); God gives us examples of prayer (Christ and others); God invites and desires us to pray! Prayer is one of the essential elements of Christian living. ***A Christian who does not pray is like a clock that does not run!***
5. Today we will begin to look only at the first 4 words [ESV; KJV-6 words; CUV-7 words] of this prayer: “Our Father in heaven.” Before we can pray we must know how to approach God properly. This is foundational. *Many people never pray* because they have never learned how to enter into God’s presence. **In order to pray acceptably and effectually, you must approach God properly.**

There are three essential requirements for approaching God acceptably in prayer. First . . .

I. You must approach Him through a proper relationship. (“Father”)

Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God as *Father*. This teaches us one of the most basic and important facts about prayer: **Prayer is relationship**. It answers the most fundamental question: *What is prayer?* Wayne Grudem defines prayer as follows: “Prayer is personal communication with God.”¹ Charles Hodges say, “Prayer is the converse of the soul with God.”² I repeat: **Prayer is relationship**. If there is no proper relationship with God, there can be no true prayer. But where there is a proper relationship with God, prayer is as natural as a child speaking with a parent.

Therefore, please note three facts about approaching God in prayer through a proper relationship.

A. Consider the necessity for a proper relationship with Him.

1. **Argument:** You call yourself a Christian: How much do you pray? Perhaps in your home it is a normal state of affairs for parents and children not to communicate. I assure you that this is NOT a normal state of affairs. If while my children were at home, one of them would pass a whole day without communicating with me, I would be sure that something was seriously amiss in our relationship.
2. **Explanation:** The only basis upon which any person has a right to approach God in prayer is on the basis of knowing God as Father. God is omniscient; he knows and hears every prayer that anyone may offer to him. But he does not hear all prayers favorably *so as to answer them*. The only people whose prayers he has pledged to hear favorably are *his own children*.
3. **Illustration:** If one of my children e-mails me saying, “I need to buy a \$150 textbook for my class; would you please order it for me online.” I have a certain amount of obligation to purchase what he needs, because he is my child. However, I have no obligation to buy textbooks for other people’s children, even if they ask me to do so. Children generally understand this quite well. They don’t go asking other people’s parents for something they need or want, they ask their own.

¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004).

² Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

4. **Argument:** There are two reasons why you may not be able to approach God acceptably in prayer:
- a. You may not be His child at all. Just because you are willing to claim God, does not guarantee that he is willing to claim you as a child! Jesus often criticized the hypocrisy of the Pharisees of his day. In **v. 5** he warns, “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites.” These were religious people who thought that they were good enough for God. But Jesus said to them, “You are of your father the devil” (John 8:44). If you have never been born into God’s family through repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ, then you are not a child of God. You may look like a Christian on the outside, but God sees the heart. If you do not experience God’s fatherly discipline in your life, then that indicates that you are an illegitimate child (**Heb. 12:5-8**). If you are not a true child of God, God will not hear your prayers favorably.
 - b. You may be a disobedient child of God. There are no perfect children of God; all believers sin sometimes. (This is why God’s discipline is a mark that we are a true child of God.) However, when a child of God sins, he will experience rebuke, first; if he does not respond properly to rebuke, then God must bring chastening into his life. As long as a Christian ignores or rejects God’s correction and refuses to confess and forsake his sin, that sin will hinder his fellowship with God as Father, so that God cannot hear his prayer favorably. **Illustration:** David described the effect that his sin with Bathsheba had upon his relationship with God during the year when he refused God’s rebuke and discipline. See **Ps. 32:1-11**.

Since a proper relationship with God as Father is a necessity in order to approach God acceptably in prayer, then next . . .

- B. Consider the means of a proper relationship with Him.
1. **Argument:** It was Jesus who taught us to pray to God as Father. Nowhere in OT times do we see Jewish saints addressing God as Father in this way. The Jews had many privileges, among which was God’s covenant with the Jewish nation in which he promised to be their God (Ex. 6:7). The Jews prayed to God as the faithful, covenant-keeping God who heard their prayers *because of His covenant with them*. Jesus enables us as NT believers to approach God even more intimately; through Jesus we approach him as Father. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6.).
 - a. Christ offered himself as the sacrifice for our sins. This removed the barrier of sin standing between God and the sinner (See **1 Peter 3:18**). When we believe and accept

what Jesus has done for us, we can become children of God (See **John 1:11-13**). This is what it means to be *born again*. He gives us new life and receives us into His family as children of God.

- b. Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he serves as our High Priest to bring us near to God. This relationship with God through Jesus Christ enables us to draw near to God in prayer. See **Heb. 4:14-16**.
2. **Illustration:** *Prayer is relationship!* However, we must not think that we can establish a relationship with God in the same way that we cultivate relationships with other people *for our own benefit*. In English we have an idiom, “Beware of Greeks bearing gifts!” This saying is based on the story of the Trojan war. After 10 years of fighting, neither side could defeat the other. Odysseus (the Greek) built a great wooden horse and left it at the gates of Troy, then he and his army sailed away. The people of Troy thought it was a peace offering and brought it into the city. That night, Greek soldiers, who were hidden inside the horse, came out and opened the gates for the Greek army to enter and defeat the city.

I have also learned to *beware of Chinese people bearing gifts*. Sometimes, people that I don't know will unexpectedly appear and give me valuable gifts. They do this in order to put me under obligation to them; then they will ask me for a favor, such as teaching their child English. They attempt to use relationship to pressure me to do something for them that I would not otherwise do. People treat their idols in the same way. They will give a big gift to the temple, or they will burn lots of paper money to the ancestors, because they desire their help—perhaps so that their son or daughter will pass a big exam, or so that they can obtain the job they are seeking.

You must understand that this is not how true prayer works. You cannot put God under obligation so that he must then give you what you ask for. In fact, God owes you nothing and you deserve nothing except eternal punishment away from God in hell for your sins. Instead, God himself took the initiative to send Jesus Christ to restore you to a right relationship with Himself. Because of what Christ has done for you, God will receive you freely and unconditionally as his child, but only if you will respond to his gift properly. You must humble yourself and accept the fact that God is the first Gift-giver; He has placed you under obligation to Him!

- 3. **Application:** The only way in which you may become a child of God is by receiving Christ and believing in him so as to experience new birth. Just as you have a physical birthday, every true Christian has a spiritual birthday as well. Your spiritual birthday occurs at the

moment (1) when you confess to God your sinfulness and need of salvation; (2) when you turn away from your sin in repentance; (3) when you turn to Christ and believe what he did for you by suffering for your sin on the cross; and (4) when you turn your life over to him and receive him as your Lord and Master. Do you have a spiritual birthday? If you do, then you have the right to approach God as Father in prayer.

Since Jesus has provided the way for us to have a proper relationship with God as Father. This leads us thirdly to . . .

C. Consider the results of a proper relationship with Him.

1. **Argument:** Those who stand in relation to God as Father can pray acceptably and effectually. However, like an infant who has not yet learned to speak, many Christians have not yet learned to speak to their Father. They need to grow up and learn to pray. Because God is your Father, He wants you to pray, He invites you pray. It pleases Him when the Christian takes the time to spend time with him and talk with him. He also loves to give us what we need in answer to our requests for them. God wants us to pray, not because He doesn't know what we need, but because he wants us to ask him for what we need (See **v. 8**). God's method is to give us what we need in response to prayer. Because we have God as our Father, there are certain results for praying that flow out of that relationship.

- a. **We have access to God: We may approach God boldly at any time and know that he will hear us.** (1) We should not be fearful because of God's greatness, majesty, or power, but should approach him as our Father through Jesus Christ. This is why we pray in Christ's name. Because of what Christ has accomplished on our behalf, God himself receives us as his children. It is not that God unwillingly accepts us because of Jesus; the Father himself loves us because our relationship with him has been changed through Christ! See **John 16:26-27**. (2) God is not too important to be bothered with our needs, but delights in fellowship with us. We too should learn to delight in fellowship with him. See **Heb. 10:19-22**. **Illustration:** Even though Esther was queen, when she entered into the presence of the great king Xerxes to plead for her life and the life of her people, she had to take her life in her hands. But Christians have the right to enter into the throne room of the King of the universe.
- b. **We have confidence in God: We pray to one who loves and cares for us as his children.** (1) We should never have the idea that God is distant and uncaring. Perhaps we have had an earthly father who was not a good father. But our God is a Good Father, who only and always gives good gifts to his children. See **Jas. 1:17; Luke 11:13**. Therefore,

we need to learn *to trust him* by taking our needs and concerns to him. (2) He is compassionate and sympathetic concerning our weaknesses and temptations. See **Psalm 103:13**.

2. **Application:** The number one reason that Christians don't pray is because *they don't really trust God*. They don't believe he really cares; or they don't believe he is reliable to help them; or they think they can get along without him and don't need him. Ultimately, when we don't pray it is a mark of our sinful independence. It is a sin not to pray!

If you have a relationship with God, prayer is the primary means in which you express that relationship. *Prayer is relationship*. A lack of prayer is the sign that there is a problem in your relationship with God. I don't say this to put you on a guilt trip; I say it to encourage you to look at prayer in a whole new light. (1) Do you want to know God better? Then pray! Talk to God about it! (1) As you read His word, pray! Thank him for the things that you learn about Him in his word. (3) When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, pray! Confess your sin to him and ask for forgiveness. (4) Do you have a burden, a problem, a need? Then pray! He is a loving Father who delights to meet the needs of His children. (5) Whatever you do, pray!

PART 1: CONCLUSION

- Today the entire message has focused on one word: Father. That represents the sole basis upon which we approach God in prayer. An American proverb states, "It's not what you know, but who you know that's important." This is a fact that is borne out even more strongly in Chinese culture, where most of our attitudes, actions, and expectations are defined by the relationship in which we stand with one another. To pray successfully we must remember that *prayer is relationship*.
- So we must face honestly three questions: (1) Do I now have a relationship with God as MY Father that allows me to pray acceptably and effectually? If not, you can have this relationship right now! (2) Am I willing to humble myself and approach God on his terms? Can I accept that I am under obligation to Him because of what He has already done for me in Christ? (3) Do I believe what God has said about my privileges as a child of God? Do I pray as though I have the privilege of access into the very throne room of God? Do I pray as though I have confidence in God that He will give to me those good things that I need, when I ask Him?

PART 2: INTRODUCTION:

- **In order to pray acceptably and effectually, you must approach God properly.** There are three essential requirements in order to do so. First, you must approach Him through a proper relationship (“Father”). *Prayer is relationship!* Last week we saw two ways that Jesus Christ brings us near to God as Father: (1) He brings us near through his sacrifice on the cross; he removed the barrier of sin between God and the sinner. When we repent of sin and believe in Jesus, we experience a new birth into the family of God as one of his children. (2) He brings us near to God in prayer through his ministry for us in heaven as High Priest.
- We also saw two benefits that result from our relationship with God as Father: (1) We have the privilege of access. We can enter boldly into the very throne room of God. (2) We have confidence in God as a loving Father that loves us and loves to give good gifts to his children; he is sympathetic to our temptations, sins, and weaknesses.
- Today we will see two more ways that will help you to approach God acceptably in prayer.

II. You must approach Him from a proper standpoint. (“*Our* Father”)

Note: We not only approach God as a Father, but we also must approach Him from the standpoint of our position together with other believers as his children. He is not just my Father, but our Father! Explanation: Nine times (9X) in these verses the first person personal pronoun is used: vv. 9, 112X, 124X, 132X. Argument: Our usual attitude in prayer is “God bless me and give me.” But we must remember that in order to approach God acceptably, I must approach him with and for others.

Transition: **There are two elements in approaching God as our Father:**

- A. We must approach him from the standpoint of our proper relationships with one another.
1. **Explanation:** One of the major themes in this prayer is forgiveness of others as the ground on which we approach God. Verse 12 emphasizes that our request for forgiveness from God is acceptable because we have forgiven others who have sinned against us. Verses 14-15 make this requirement explicit. This one word, “our”, reveals a truth that builds upon what we learned last week. We must have a right relationship with God to approach him acceptably in prayer, and we must also have a right relationship with others in order to be right with God.

2. **Argument:** Primarily this applies to our relationships in two ways:
 - a. **I must be willing to forgive others who have wronged me.** We will be talking about this more when we get to v. 12. Today I will only introduce the topic and then summarize the believer's responsibility in this area. Others have sinned against us all at some time or another. Sometimes the sin is so great and so hurtful that we refuse to forgive. We hold on to our resentment and anger. Such an attitude toward others will hinder the believer from praying acceptably. Our sins against God are much greater (1) in seriousness and (2) in number than any other person's sin against us. You may feel that you have a right to your anger and bitterness against that person, but you do not have that right! You must sincerely and from the heart release your grudge by forgiving them as a precondition to praying acceptably. Cp. **Eph. 4:32**.
 - b. **I must pursue reconciliation with those whom I have sinned against.** When we realize that we have offended another person, we must be willing to go first and honestly seek forgiveness from that person before we attempt to pray to God! cp. **Matt. 5:23-24**.
Sometimes the hardest words in the world to say are "I'm sorry!"
3. **Application:** Wrong horizontal relationships with others, particularly with our own brothers and sisters in Christ, will hinder our ability to relate properly to God in prayer. If prayer is relationship, then in order for me to have a proper relationship with God, I must have a proper relationship with others. (1) If I have a wrong relationship with my spouse because they have injured me, I must forgive; if I know that I have injured my spouse, I must seek reconciliation. Cp. **1 Peter 3:7**. (2) If a brother or sister in the church has injured me, I must forgive them; if I have injured them, I must go to them, confess my sin against them, and seek their forgiveness. In a perfect world, both parties would meet half-way, on the path of reconciliation. Nevertheless, whether the other person moves first or not, you must seek forgiveness and restoration of the relationship.

Transition: Our approach to God in association with others not only requires a proper relationship with others. Also . . .

- B. We must approach God from the standpoint of our mutual responsibility for one another.
 1. **Explanation:** Verse 11 does not request God to *give me my daily bread*, but **give us**. When we approach God in prayer, we must approach with a sense of responsibility for the needs of others as well as our own. We are normally selfish and self-focused in our prayers. However, I must learn to look beyond just myself and see the needs of others also. When we come to God in prayer, he is a loving Father who sees and knows the needs of all of his children.

When we pray for the needs of others, we are demonstrating our fellowship in the loving heart of God. *Part of the process of learning to pray is learning to pray for others.*

2. **Argument:** The Bible term for this type of prayer is *intercessory prayer*. It is prayer offered for the benefit of another. It involves several aspects:
 - a. **Prayer for others in need.** It may be a material need, a health need, a relational need, a financial need, etc. We must learn to evaluate people's needs from a biblical perspective. As we study the Bible we learn God's desires for others. It is not always God's will to give perfect health to a Christian. Nor is it always God's will for Christians to escape all adversity or difficulty. However, it is God's will for every Christian to become more like Christ. When we see a brother or sister with a legitimate need, we should do what we can to help meet that need, then we should help carry his burden by praying for him (cp. **1 John 3:16-18; Gal. 6:2, 5**). To pray for him without helping him would be hypocrisy (cp. Matt. 23:14).
 - b. **Prayer for others in ministry.** Paul regularly requested prayer for himself as he preached the gospel throughout the world. At least three times he said, "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thes. 5:25). We should pray for pastors, missionaries, and other Christian workers and ministries.
 - c. **Prayer for other believers in sin or facing temptation.** Verse 13 makes it explicit that we are to pray "lead us not into temptation." **1 John 5:16-17** reminds us to pray for those who sin. **Illustration:** Abraham and Moses both prayed for others. Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." It always costs us something to pray for others and when we do we are most like Jesus Christ. Jesus is now in heaven as our High Priest praying for us.
 - d. **Prayer for the salvation of those who are lost.** We are to be witnesses to the lost, but also to pray for their salvation. (cp. **Rom 10:1**).

Transition: We approach God as Father, but we must not come alone. We must learn to broaden our focus beyond ourselves and acknowledge both our relationship and our responsibility to others when we pray. This is the proper standpoint from which to approach God. Finally, . . .

III. You must approach Him with a proper attitude. ("in heaven")

The Bible teaches both the nearness of God to us as Father (His immanence) and his surpassing greatness and holiness (His transcendence). In this respect Christianity is unique among the other world religions. When we approach God in prayer we must maintain a due respect of his person. He is our Father in heaven. There is no conflict or contradiction between our drawing

near to God in prayer and our addressing him with an attitude of reverential fear. Both are necessary.

Transition: This attitude is seen in two directions: our attitude in respect to God and our attitude in respect to ourselves.

A. An attitude of reverential fear toward God

1. **Explanation:** When Jesus instructs us to address God as “our Father in heaven,” this is a reminder that our attitude toward God will influence the way that we pray and the things that we ask for. Cp. **Eccles. 5:2**.
2. **Argument:** This proper attitude for the child of God is termed, the *fear of Lord*. This is an attitude toward God of love, respect, and reverential fear. This is the attitude that all children should maintain toward their parents. Cp. **Mal. 1:6-14**. Just as the Jewish priests lost their reverence for God, sometimes Christians approach God without a due sense of respect for God when they pray. These are some marks of prayer without the proper fear of God.
 - a. **Prayers that demand God to give or do something.** Sometimes Christians act like spoiled children in department stores that throw tantrums and demand that their parents get them what they want. God is not our servant but our Father. Cp. **James 4:3**. Christian prayer includes the thought, if not the actual words, “Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt.”
 - b. **Prayers that we offer out of habit only or from an insincere heart.** When we address God with our mouth, but not from our heart, this is hypocrisy. God is the great all-knowing God. When we pray words that we don’t really mean, we despise Him, shame Him, and offer Him a polluted sacrifice that He will not accept. Cp. **vv. 5-8**.

Transition: The proper approach to God is not only evident in our attitude with respect to God, but also in our attitude with respect to ourselves.

B. An attitude of humility before God

1. **Explanation:** The counterpart to reverential fear toward God is an attitude of humility. Humility and the fear of the Lord are twin virtues: they always go together. They are like the two sides of a coin. Reverence involves my attitude toward God; humility involves my attitude toward myself. Because God is in heaven and I am on earth, I should have an attitude of humility when I approach God.
2. **Argument:** Humility makes prayer acceptable before God. cp. **James 4:6**. There are two reasons that we should approach God in prayer with humility:

- a. **I am a creature before my Creator.** God is my Creator, I belong to him by right of Creation. I owe him my worship, obedience, and love. He owes me nothing! Therefore it is fitting for me to be humble before him. Because God invites me into his presence I should be filled with humble praise for God’s merciful condescension. As a creature I am dependent upon God for everything. Therefore I should humble myself before him to ask for the provision of my creaturely needs. This is the basis on which we humbly ask “give us this day our daily bread” (v. 11).
 - b. **I am a sinner in the presence of the Holy God.** I have failed to give God the glory he deserves. I have sinned against him. I deserve his wrath and punishment. Yet he has brought me near to himself through Jesus Christ. This ought to produce great humility in his presence as I consider my sinfulness and his holiness, my demerit and his grace. When we approach God humbly, he opens the floodgates of his grace to pour out his blessings on us. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. This is the attitude in which we humbly pray, “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (v. 13).
3. **Argument:** The combination of these two elements of reverence and humility during prayer is found in **Psalm 34:1-22**. This is further demonstrated in **Isaiah 57:15**. When we learn to approach God with reverence and humility, we will experience freedom to approach God with prayers that are acceptable and effectual.

Conclusion:

- The first line of the Lord’s Prayer instructs us how to approach God properly in prayer: He is Father; He is not just my Father, but our Father; He is not just our Father, but our Father in heaven. Therefore we must come near in prayer . . .
 - Possessing a proper relationship with him as Father, which gives us access and confidence through Christ
 - Possessing the proper standpoint of relationship and responsibility toward other believers
 - Possessing the proper attitude of reverential fear and humility
- However, all of this is meaningless if you don’t pray! The more you read the Bible, the more it should create in you a desire to pray. Prayer is relationship, so you should have a desire to express yourself in prayer to God. The things we have learned last week and today will help you to begin learning to pray.
- **Illustration:** When I taught conversational English in the past, there were always some students who were not afraid to speak up. They made a lot of mistakes, but they also made the best progress in learning to speak. Those who were afraid to make mistakes, never did learn to speak

English. Don't be afraid to make mistakes when you pray! Praying is the only way that you will learn to speak to God. Furthermore, God does not listen to our prayers critically. He is like a proud father; He eagerly listens to hear the voice of his infant children as they learn to say "Daddy!" cp. **Rom. 8:14-16**. So go and talk with your Father.

Hallowed be your name

Text: Matthew 6:9-15

Title: Agreeing with God in Prayer: Hallowed by your name

Date: Thursday, April 18, 2013

Sermon Type: Expository Sermon

Author: Matthew W . Hanna

Fallen Condition Focus: People often fail to set God apart as Holy.

Propositional Statement: You must agree with God by praying that He will be set apart as Holy.

Introduction:

1. Pre-Intro:

- a. Over the last two weeks we've discovered how to approach God properly in prayer: We approach him as "Our Father in heaven." This week we will begin the second section of the Lord's prayer. >> TEXT [Matthew 6:9-15] >>
- b. Prayer

Holy Father,

The seraphim surround your throne, saying,
Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.

Teach us, like them, to pray:
Hallowed by your name.

Cause us
to seek you and your purposes first in our prayers,
to love and thank and worship you in the light of your holiness,
to become holy in your likeness
through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit
and your Holy Word.
and to reflect your glory to a watching world.

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

2. Review: In order to approach God in prayer properly, you must approach him as Father. Furthermore, you must come to him in right relationship with others and carrying the burden of their needs on your heart. And you must come with a proper attitude of reverence and humility.
3. Today we will begin to examine *what kinds of things we should pray for*. Too often, we jump into prayer and immediately begin to pour out our list of requests, needs, and wants. But in the pattern of prayer that Jesus taught us, he indicates that you ought to begin by considering first God, his wants, his plans, and his purposes. "Hallowed by your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This is the proper starting place for prayer. In prayer as in life, "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you"

(Mt 6:33). When we pray, we must learn to agree with God's purposes when we bring our requests to him.

4. The first prayer request is "Hallowed by your name." It is important that we not only learn to pray these words, but more importantly, to learn all that God intended for us to include in our prayers from this statement. The truth is that few Christians understand the significance of asking in prayer for God to make his name holy. The first three of the Ten Commandments deal with the holiness of God's name (**Ex. 20:2-7**). Paul quoted the OT which accused the Jews: "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (**Ro 2:24**). *I wonder how many Christians are there today of whom God could say the same thing?*
5. "Hallowed by your name" informs you that **you must agree with God by praying that God will be set apart as holy among men.**

Praying that God would be set apart as holy includes three fundamental aspects of prayer. First, . . .

I. You must seek *to know God* through prayer. ("Hallowed be your name.")

In order for you to seek God successfully, you must understand two basic facts.

- A. God *desires* for you to know him personally.
 1. "your name" **Explanation:** *God's name* is the representation of his whole person, character, and works by which he is known to men. Since God is deity, the only way that it is possible for man to know God is because he has revealed himself to them. Therefore, *God's name is his self-revelation made to man in time and history.*
 2. **Argument:** In fact, all of history is evidence of God's desire to be known by man. Consider the history of biblical revelation from Adam to Christ.
 - a. God walked in the garden and sought Adam (Gen. 3:8).
 - b. God walked with Enoch (Gen. 5:21-24) and Noah (6:8).
 - c. God revealed himself to Abraham (Gen. 12:1ff.), to Isaac, and to Jacob.
 - d. God revealed himself to Moses (Ex. 33:9-11, 17-23; 34:1-9).
 - e. Cp. Heb 11:32, "time would fail me to tell . . ."
 3. **Application:** God desires a personal relationship with you, as well. We are used to speaking euphemistically of "knowing God" through salvation. This is true, but we must never forget that knowing God means knowing him in a way that is similar (at least) to the way we know other people around us in a personal relationship. It includes personal intimacy, communication, and friendship. Do you have that kind of prayer relationship with God?

Not only does God *desire* for you to know him, but also . . .

- B. God has *made it possible* for you to know him personally.

1. “hallowed” **Explanation:** means to “make holy” or to “consecrate, set apart” something for God’s special use. This is a prayer that God would set apart his “name” as holy, that he would demonstrate or show his person and character to me personally. To pray this means that I am agreeing with God’s desire to make his character known to me, because I am actively seeking to know God through his self-revelation.
2. **Argument:** God’s has objectively revealed himself to men throughout history in three ways: **in Creation, in Scripture, & in Christ.** Cp. Ps 19:1ff., 7ff.; Heb. 1:1ff. You must seek to know God objectively through his self-revelation.
3. **Argument:** But believers also have subjective and experimental means of knowing and relating to God personally: **the Spirit of God & prayer.** Cp. Rom. 8:14-16; 26-27. God still walks and talks with those who desire to know him, as he did in days of old.
4. **Application:** 1 Chr. 28:9; Ps. 27:8; Is. 55:6; Lam. 3:25. Praying “Hallowed be your name” is to seek God sincerely from the heart. It means to set God himself apart as holy and to pursue a relationship with him. Why must you seek the Lord?
 - a. Because of spiritual hunger (Matt 5:6). Only a relationship with God can truly satisfy your heart. If you are experiencing spiritual dryness, then seek God in prayer.
 - b. Because of discipline. You must repent and turn from your idols to seek God with your whole heart (cp. Deut. 4:25-29). If God is rebuking or disciplining you because of your heart idols, then tear down the idols and seek God through prayer.
 - c. Because of a crisis. You must seek God’s special comfort and help (2 Chron. 20:2-4). Are you facing a personal crisis that seems impossible to face, the seek God in prayer.
 - d. The result of seeking the Lord is spiritual revival! God promises that those who seek him with a whole heart will ALWAYS FIND HIM! God gives joy, help, peace, spiritual power, and victory to those who seek him. Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” (Re 3:20).
 - e. To pray “Hallowed be your name” is to seek God and desire to know him in a personal relationship.

Not only must you seek to know God through prayer, but second, . . .

II. You must seek *to be like God* through prayer. (“Hallowed by your name”)

To seek to be like God means two things:

A. Pursue *the imitation of God* before the world.

1. “hallowed” **Explanation:** means to “make holy” or to “consecrate, set apart” something for God’s use. This is a prayer that God would set apart his “name” as holy, *in me and through me* before the world.
2. **Argument:** We must understand that one of God’s purposes in our salvation is to restore us to the image of God, which was ruined through sin. God created man in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). But when man sinned, man’s nature was corrupted, so that he is no longer like God in His holiness, love, righteousness, truth, etc. However, through salvation, God is at work restoring us in the image of God (Eph. 4:20-24; Col 3:10). The Bible term for this process of restoration is Sanctification. God commands, “You shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16). *Sanctification is the process of becoming holy, as God is holy, so that we can reflect his glory in the world.*
3. **Application:** So to pray “Hallowed by your name” is to pray that God would form his character in me, so that I become like God in my character and actions. Since I am an image bearer of God, I must seek to be like him (Eph. 5:1).
 - a. I am spending regular time in the word of God.
 - b. I am spending regular time in prayer.
 - c. I am meeting faithfully to worship God and fellowship with God’s people.
 - d. I am living a holy life of separation from the sins of the world.

In seeking to be like God you must not only pursue imitation of God, but also . . .

- B. Pursue *the mission of God* in the world.
 1. **Argument:** Our imitation of God as his image bearer is closely related to our *mission from God*. cp. **John 17:1-26**. Christ was sent by the Father into the world to reveal the Father’s glory to men (vv. 1-5). Christ faithfully delivered the revelation of the Father to the disciples, who kept that revelation (vv.6-16). Christ left the world and sent the disciples into the world to reveal his (and the Father’s) glory to men (vv. 17-19). The disciples in the world show that God sent them, by their unity with one another, as they display God’s image to one another and grow in their knowledge of Christ and God (vv. 20-26).
 2. **Application:** Therefore to pray “Hallowed by your name” is to express your desire that God would make you like him, so that you can be a witness to make him known to others through your life and words. It means to pray that God would transform you into his holy image and then use you to reveal God to others, so that they too can know him. We are sent to display God to:

- a. **The lost.** Family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. Are you fulfilling your mission to the lost world?
- b. **Christian brothers and sisters.** In church ministries, in prayer for them, in fellowship with them. Does your life reflect God, so that you are building up your Christian brothers and sisters in the knowledge of God?

You must seek to know God through prayer; you must seek to be like God through prayer; and thirdly, . . .

III. You must seek to magnify God through prayer. (“Hallowed be your name”)

You magnify God in prayer in two ways.

A. Magnify his person and character.

1. “Hallowed be your name” **Explanation:** As God reveals himself and his character to you through his word, it should cause you to respond to God and his revelation with praise, worship, and adoration. God’s name, his person and his character are already holy. We cannot add to his holiness, nor can ask God to make his name more holy than it is, since he is already perfectly holy. But we can magnify his holiness and his character and his glory and cause it to be magnified in the sight of others, of ourselves, and even of the watching angels. When we pray “Hallowed be your name” we are seeking to magnify God and his glory.
2. **Argument:** This is part of God’s purpose in salvation: to bring glory and honor to himself through the people he has redeemed. Therefore, the worship, praise, and adoration of God should have a central role in our prayers.
3. **Application:** This is why you should always read Scripture with a prayerful heart. Reading the Bible should be a two-way conversation between you and God. God by his Spirit reveals himself and his glory to you as you read and study the Bible; then you reply to God by magnifying the truth about himself and his ways that he has revealed to you.
 - a. If God shows you the truth of his holiness, you should praise him for his holiness and ask that he would make it more visible and glorious in your sight and in the eyes of others.
 - b. If God shows you the truth of his love, you should praise him for his love and ask that he would magnify his love to you and cause others to recognize it as well.
 - c. Learn the practice of PRAYING GOD’S CHARACTER BACK TO GOD by making it an occasion for worship, praise, and adoration.

You can also magnify God in prayer by . . .

B. Magnify his redemptive and providential works.

1. **Explanation:** God's self-revelation occurs through specific acts which he performs on our behalf. Therefore, when you pray "Hallowed be your name" you must also respond with thanksgiving for the benefits which you receive from him.
2. **Argument:** God's acts are of two general kinds:
 - a. **His great redemptive acts:** the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, etc.
 - b. **His personal providential acts:** providential acts leading to your faith and salvation, your new birth into God's family, answers to prayer, provisions, help, comforts, blessings, etc.
3. **Application:** When you pray "Hallowed be your name" you are thanking God for his personal acts toward you by which you have come to know him and his character. Thanksgiving is an essential element of prayer. We are quick to ask God for things we need or want, but we are often very forgetful to give thanks for what we have already received from him. When you fail to give thanks, you are ignoring God's desire to make himself known to you in a deeper way.

Conclusion:

- "Hallowed by your name" means that you begin praying by agreeing with God's great purposes. His greatest purpose is that he himself will be set apart as holy.
 - Pray seeking to know God yourself.
 - Pray seeking to imitate God and make him known to others
 - Pray seeking to magnify God through praise, worship, and thanksgiving.
- God's purposes include
 - To make himself known to you and others in a personal relationship.
 - To sanctify you and make you like himself
 - To reveal himself to others through your life and words
 - To glorify his own name through your worship
- Are these your purposes when you pray? They should be, and they can be if you will follow this pattern for prayer which Jesus gave us. **SO PRAY FIRST FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.**

Your kingdom come

Text: Matthew 6:9-15

Title: Agreeing with God in Prayer: “Your kingdom come.”

Date: April 24, 2013

Sermon Type: Expository Sermon

Author: Matthew W . Hanna

Fallen Condition Focus: People often pursue their own agenda when they pray.

Propositional Statement: You must agree with God in prayer by praying for the arrival of his kingdom.

Introduction:

1. **Pre Intro:** Praying the Lord’s prayer means that we must approach God properly as “our Father in heaven” and that we must begin by agreeing with God’s desires before we bring our own. Last week we saw that we must pray, “Hallowed by your name.” Today we will look at the second way in which we must agree with God in prayer: “Your kingdom come.” >> [read text] >> Prayer.
2. When we pray, “Hallowed be your name” we are agreeing with God’s desire that people know him and set him apart as holy. God’s first concern is for his own glory. We must pray for the glory of God!
3. What does it mean to pray, “Your kingdom come”? We must first consider, What is *the Kingdom of God*? The kingdom of God has different meanings in Scripture and has different manifestations in human history. Consider five manifestations of the Kingdom of God. First . . .
 - a. **The Kingdom of God is a universal kingdom.** God is the ruler of all of his creation. Even though Satan, demons, and evil men have rebelled against his authority, God still rules. Nothing happens in God’s universe except what he allows. **Psalm 103:19.**
 - b. **The Kingdom of God was an historical, earthly kingdom over Israel.** God established David and his descendants to rule over the nation of Israel. God was the King, but he appointed earthly representatives to govern. The Davidic kings failed to govern in submission to God and his Law, so God finally removed the crown. **2 Sam. 7:11-16.**
 - c. **The Kingdom of God is a present, spiritual kingdom (The Church).** When Israel rejected the King, Jesus, God began a new program to build his Church, which is his spiritual kingdom. Jesus said, “I will build my church” (Matt 16:18). Christ is now reigning over his people from heaven; all power has been given to him. **Matt. 28:18-20.**
 - d. **The Kingdom of God is a coming, glorious kingdom.** When Jesus returns he will defeat all enemies and establish his kingdom on earth. This will bring in a 1000 year kingdom (the Millennium). **Matt. 25:31.**
 - e. **The Kingdom of God is an eternal kingdom.** After the 1000 year reign of Christ, God will bring in the New Heavens and New Earth which will last forever. **1 Cor. 15:24-28.**
4. It should be obvious that when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are praying for the arrival of the promised Millennial Kingdom, which Christ will establish when he returns; but how and why should we pray for the arrival of this kingdom? That is the subject of our message today.
5. **Part of our problem with this prayer is that we usually approach God with our own agenda:** our own kingdom, power, rights; or our own pleasures, wealth, comforts. But God wants us to

pray for his concerns first. “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Mt 6:33). **You must agree with God in prayer by praying for the arrival of his kingdom.**

Transition: John Broadus in his commentary on Matthew notes that the word “kingdom” in Scripture includes **three elements** that are useful to guide our thinking about this topic.³ The Kingdom of God has **a ruler**; it has **a realm** (both a land and a people who are governed); and it has **a rule** (involving the exercise of executive, legislative, and judicial authority, Is. 33:22). When we pray, “Your kingdom come” we must include each of these ideas. **The first element of a kingdom is the presence of a ruler. Therefore, . . .**

I. Offer your petitions for the enthronement of the King. (The ruler has already been revealed.)

Transition: The King of God’s coming kingdom has already been revealed, when Jesus was born to be the King of the Jews. Jesus announced, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus himself brought the kingdom when he came (Luke 20:20-21). But he was rejected and crucified by the Jews (John 1:11). His resurrection from the dead proved his claim to be King Messiah. When he ascended to heaven, he promised that he would return to reign. We are now in the mystery age of the kingdom. Therefore when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are praying that men would submit to the King now, while they still have opportunity, before he comes back to reign.

Therefore, we are concerned for how men relate to the King now in two ways:

- A. Sinners must come to know, believe, and receive the King before he returns so that they may enter the kingdom.
 - 1. **Argument:** Jesus came first to proclaim salvation from sin. He announced, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for sin on the cross.
 - a. **People must know who Jesus is** as both Son of God and as a true man. They must realize that he died for their sins.
 - b. **People must believe and receive Jesus.** They must repent (turn away) from their sins and trust him. They must receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.
 - 2. **Illustration:** Nicodemus, John 3:1-15. (1) He recognized (“know”) Jesus’ source from God (v. 2). (2) Jesus required a “new birth” by the Spirit of God (vv. 3-8). (3) Jesus required that people “receive” him and his testimony (vv. 9-13). (4) Jesus

³ John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, An American Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Alvah Hovey (Valley Forge, VA: Judson Press, 1886), 35 & 134.

described his death on the cross and demanded that people “believe” (or trust) in him to gain eternal life.

3. **Application:** Because the King is coming back soon, people must respond to the opportunity to repent and enter the kingdom before it is too late. Therefore, when we pray we should be asking the Lord for the repentance and conversion of the lost. We should pray for spouse, children, family, friends, etc. to turn to Christ before it is too late. When we pray for this we are agreeing with God in prayer and seeking his desires first. We should be praying

Transition: We must not only pray for the lost in light of Christ’s soon return, we must also pray for believers to relate properly to the King before he returns.

- B. Believers must obey, love, and serve the King before he returns so that they may be rewarded in the kingdom.

1. **Argument:** Christ spoke many parables to his own disciples warning them to be ready for his unexpected return in order that they might not lose their rewards.
 - a. **Luke 19:11-27**— The man who was not faithful lost his reward; those who were faithful received rewards. We must pray to God that we and other believers will be ready so that we may be rewarded.
 - b. **Luke 21:34-36**— Jesus warned us to be ready for his return and commanded us to watch and pray in order that we might not be entangled in temptation. This is related to the request “Lead us not into temptation” (v. 13). This type of praying is not easy. **Mark 13:32-37.** Prayer is the primary way in which we watch for the Lord’s return. Right watching in prayer will lead to right serving.
 - c. **2 Tim. 4:8.** We pray this way because we love the Lord Jesus himself and love his appearing.
2. **Illustration:** Peter, Matt. 26:41.
3. **Application:** If we truly love the Lord Jesus, we will talk with him in prayer about his soon return. We will watch for his return by praying that we might avoid and overcome temptation and sin.

Transition: When we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are not only praying for the King to come, we are also praying for his people and place to be made ready for him.

- II. Offer your petitions for the expansion of his kingdom. (He is now building the realm, his church.)

Transition: The first time Jesus came, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (Jn 1:11). Now during this period between his first and second coming, Christ is working to build his kingdom so that when he returns, he will have a people prepared to receive him as King. Jesus said, “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). Christ has sent believers into this world on a mission to build his kingdom. Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18-19). When we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are praying that God would build his church. Praying for the church involves two particular meanings of the word “church” in the NT.

A. *The Church Which Is His Body* has a mission to prepare for his coming.

1. **Argument:** When Christ said, “I will build my church,” he was referring to the larger spiritual body of Christ, which includes all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. This is not a particular denomination of Christianity nor is it the sum total of all denominations. It includes those who have truly experienced regeneration by the Holy Spirit and have been added to the Church Which is His Body.
2. **Argument: Christ has sent Christians into the world to build the Church.** This involves (1) making disciples, (2) baptizing them, and (3) teaching them to obey Christ’s commands. This is the *Great Commission*. Christ builds his church by using his people who obey his commands. This great mission of the church ought to be one of the major topics of our prayers.
3. **Argument:** In fact, prayer is an essential element of the our working with Christ to build his church. We must not draw a distinction between prayer and work, between prayer and witnessing, between prayer and serving. **We cannot truly serve, witness, or work without praying.**

Transition: The word “church” in Scripture not only means the larger Church, but also includes the Local Church. We must also pray for the Local Church.

B. *The Local Church* has a mission to prepare for his coming.

1. **Argument:** The word “church” in Scripture usually is a reference to the local church (such as the Church of Corinth, 1 Cor. 1:2). It is a local representation of the body of Christ. The local church is central to God’s plan for building his kingdom in the present age. The local church evangelizes, disciples, organizes, trains, and equips believers to do the work of the ministry and build the church. The local church supports and sends missionaries at home and abroad. Therefore the mission of the local church should also be a major topic of the believer’s prayer.

2. **Argument:** When Christ returns, believers are the people of the kingdom over which Christ will rule. Therefore when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are working with Christ to build his kingdom in the world in preparation for his soon return.
3. **Application:** You must learn to pray for Christ to build his church. This means more than praying “God bless all the missionaries around the world.” It means being aware of the work that God is doing and praying intelligently and specifically for God to advance his kingdom in the world. It means getting involved in the work of your local church. It means witnessing to those around you. It means reading the missionary letters and then praying for God’s work in other places as well.

Transition: Not only must you pray about the coming of the King and the expansion of his kingdom in the world now, but there is another element of this kingdom praying. **We are praying for the King to come and establish his ruling authority on earth.**

III. Offer your petitions for the establishment of his rule. (His ruling authority will be established in the future.)

Transition: *We must clearly understand that all of our working and praying for the expansion of Christ’s kingdom through the Church can never succeed in making the world into a Christian kingdom. Our job is to evangelize the world, not to convert the world. Our job is to establish local churches worldwide for the witness of the gospel, not to establish Christian political institutions to rule nations. Only Christ has the power and authority to establish his earthly kingdom himself when he returns. Therefore, when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are asking Christ to come and do what only he himself can do! In order to pray properly, however, two things are necessary:*

- A. The basis of praying for the arrival of his kingdom: Investigate the promises.
 1. **Argument:** Christians cannot pray intelligently and acceptably until they understand exactly what God has promised and predicted that he will do. Since OT time, he clearly promised that he would send his Messiah at the end of the age to establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth. **Dan 7:13-14.**
 2. **Argument:** When Christ returns he will judge and destroy all the sinners who have rebelled against his authority and refused to receive him as King. Then he will cleanse out of his kingdom all wickedness and sin. Matt. 13:36-43.
 3. **Application:** When we look around at the wickedness in our world today, we see wickedness internationally in terrorism, genocide, natural disasters, and wars. We see wickedness in our

own nation, government, and society. We see unfaithfulness and unholiness in Christianity and even in believers in our own church sometimes. These things should cause us to pray, “Your kingdom come.”

4. **Argument:** But this demands that you know what to pray for. You must carefully and prayerfully investigate the promises of God in his word concerning the kingdom that Christ will establish when he comes. Use the opportunities available to you to increase your understanding about God’s kingdom by studying your Bible systematically. Attend not only the worship service, but also attend adult S.S. and mid-week prayer meeting. Take a course at the Bible School if you have the chance.

Transition: Investigating God’s kingdom promises and prophecies should lead you to go a step further.

B. The urgency of praying for the arrival of his kingdom: Invest in the promises.

1. **Argument:** There are two errors that Christians commonly make: (1) Some people never make the effort to learn about God’s promises or prophecies. Therefore, they are unable to pray, “Your kingdom come.” (2) Other people have a curiosity and desire to learn about God’s prophetic truth, but they never do anything useful with their knowledge.
2. **Application:** Many believers already know basic facts about God’s kingdom, but this knowledge doesn’t affect their thinking, choices, or behavior. The reason for this disconnect between their belief and behavior is that they have not invested anything into what they say that they believe. *People are motivated to act when they have a personal investment involved. Prayer is the method by which the Christian invests in the Kingdom of God.* If you will pray intelligently, earnestly, and sincerely, “Your kingdom come,” then your belief in Christ’s return to reign will become a powerful influence to change the way you think and live.
3. **Application:** Christians whose lives are worldly, whose lives are lived for their own comfort, pleasures, and desires, are Christians who have never learned to pray, “Your kingdom come.” As you begin to pray for Christ to come and establish his kingdom, it will turn your affections from the temporary to the eternal things; it will motivate you to work and witness to expand Christ’s kingdom the Church on earth; and it will cause you to depend on God to escape temptation and sin.

Conclusion:

- Praying, “Your kingdom come,” means praying for the coming of the King, for the building of his Church, and for the establishment of his rule.

- If you are honest, how many of these themes enter into the content of your prayers? Truth doesn't have any personal value until we obey it and practice it. Maybe we need to begin to think more carefully about *what* we pray. When we approach God in prayer we must agree with his desire to establish his kingdom on earth. Therefore in our prayers we must seek first the kingdom of God.
- The very last prayer of the Bible needs to have first place in our prayers: "Come, Lord Jesus!"
Amen.

Your will be done

Text: Matthew 6:9-15

Title: Agreeing with God in Prayer: “Your will be done”

Date: May 2, 2013

Sermon Type: Expository Sermon

Author: Matthew W . Hanna

Fallen Condition Focus: People usually seek their own will through prayer, not God’s will.

Propositional Statement: You must agree with God in prayer by praying for the accomplishment of his will.

Introduction:

1. Pre-Intro
 - a. Today we continue our studies in the Lord’s Prayer. We will look together at the third way in which we must agree with God in prayer: “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Please follow along as I read once again our text.
 - b. [Matt 6: 9-15]
 - c. Prayer.
 2. **Gen 2:16-17.** Since the dawn of time, Scripture shows us the great collision between the will of God and the will of man. God said, “Thou shalt not...” and man willfully rebelled and chose to do his own will instead of God’s. History is the record of man’s will set up in opposition to the will of God.
 3. **Rom 6:17-18.** But because of Calvary, we have been set free from sin and brought back under God’s authority through Christ. **1 Pet 2:24-25.** It is only a believer who can truly pray “Your will be done.”
 4. But just because we acknowledge Jesus as our Shepherd and Overseer does not mean that we always automatically submit to his authority. Submission to God’s will and obedience to his authority is a conscious choice that we must regularly make, under the control of the Holy Spirit. Our prayers reveal the true condition of our hearts. It is unfortunately true that *often we pray in order to get what we want, not to seek what God wants.* We ask for things according to our own will and desire, not according to his. That is why you must learn to pray sincerely, “Your will be done.”
 5. So far in our studies in the Lord’s Prayer we have learned how to approach God as Father. We have learned the priority of prayer—praying first for God’s agenda. We have seen that we must agree with God in prayer by desiring to know him personally and to make him known to others so that he might be set apart as holy; we have seen that we must seek first the Kingdom of God. Today we learn our next priority: *You must agree with God by praying for the accomplishment of his will.*
-

Transition: When we pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in done in heaven, it is because God's will is not now done on earth as in heaven. We are reminded that currently this world is in rebellion against God's will, God's rule, and God's authority. When Satan rebelled against God he said, "I will..." (**Is. 14:13-14**). *On earth*, Satan, his demons, and evil men refuse to obey and submit themselves to God; but *in heaven*, the angels always hear, receive, and obey God's will: **(1) joyfully, (2) immediately, and (3) completely**. This is the kind of obedience to God's will that we pray for on earth. This prayer involves three elements. First...

I. It is a prayer of submission of my will to God's will.

Transition: Theologians have distinguished different aspects of *the will of God*. I must personally respond to God's will in relation to each of these various aspects:

A. I must submit to God's providential will for me.

1. **God's secret will or will of decree. Explanation:** God planned and determined everything that will take place in his creation before he created it (**Eph. 1:11**). These plans are hidden in the mind of God and we only learn what God willed when those things actually come to pass. This will or plan is comprehensive and includes all events of men, nations, and history. If I am a believer, it is because he chose me personally for salvation (cp. **1:4-10**). Furthermore, he ordained all of those circumstances and events that he would use to conform me to the image of Christ and bring me to glory (**Rom. 8:28-30**).
2. **Argument:** Therefore I can be assured that whatever takes place in my life is part of God's plan, purpose, and will for me. When my circumstances include trouble, sorrow, difficulty, and discomfort, God's will may be hard for me to accept. Then I must be willing to surrender my will (what I want) and accept God's will. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane facing death on the cross, he prayed, [**Matt. 26:39, 42**]. This is the model for our response, when we are tempted to grow bitter, angry, and resentful against God under the blows of life.
3. **Argument:** This type of response is not merely (1) resignation or (2) fatalism. Resignation is to accept things stoically—to face trouble with a stiff upper lip; but the Christian response is to accept even bad circumstances joyfully in faith, because the believer knows that God's will really is good and will produce good fruits in his life! (cp. **James 1:2-5**). Similarly fatalism is the attitude that nothing that I can do will affect the outcome, since they have been predetermined; therefore I must just accept events as inevitable. This too falls short of a Christian response. My choices really do matter; prayer really does change things. Therefore, Christian submission to the will of God believes, obeys, and expects that God will change me—and may change my circumstances too—through my prayers, for the sake of his own glory. There is a process that the believer passes through as he learns to submit to God's will:

- a. Surrender to the will of God. I give up my displeasure, anger, and irritation against God and accept his will.
- b. Harmony with the will of God. I agree with God's will as good and learn to be content in my circumstances.
- c. Sympathy with the will of God. I am joyful in actively pursuing God's purpose in my circumstances (for his glory).

Transition: Not only must I submit to God's providential will, also . . .

B. I must obey God's will of command.

1. **God's revealed will or will of command.** **Explanation:** A second aspect of God's will is his will of command. God has clearly revealed his will for men in the commandments, laws, prohibitions, and authoritative principles of his word. The Ten Commandments are an example of God's revealed will that men are obligated to obey. It is God's will that men do not commit murder, steal, lie, etc. Other positive commands in the OT include loving God and loving your neighbor. There are also commandments in the NT which believers are obligated to obey, such as, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk. 16:15) and "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).
2. **Argument:** In heaven the angels of God obey his will joyfully, immediately, and completely (cp. **Ps. 103:20-21**). When you pray "your will be done, on earth as in heaven," you are stating your obedient submission to his authority, and your desire to do his will from the heart. We cannot pray that God's secret will be done when we do not know what it is. But God's revealed will, his will of command, is given in order that we might obey it. We show our submission to God's will by obeying his commands (**De. 29:29**).
3. **Application:** When you do not obey his commands you cannot pray, "Your will be done." You have no right to come to God in prayer. This does not demand perfection, but it does demand sincerity and submission to God and his will. When you have knowingly disobeyed a command of God, you must bring a frank confession of your disobedience and submit yourself to obey God's commands.

Transition: Submission to God's will involves surrender to God's providential will and obedience to God's will of command. It also means that . . .

C. I must pursue God's directive will in my life.

1. **Illustration:** It is sometimes amusing to ask little children what they want to be when they grow up. This little boy wants to be a fireman, or an astronaut, or a doctor; that little girl wants to be a mommy, or a teacher, or a nurse. Sometimes, if you ask the same child a week

later, he will have changed his mind and wants to be something else. Children don't have the wisdom or experience to really know what they want to do or what course to follow in order to get there. However, if I ask that child's parents what they want them to become, they often have a very clear goal for their children. They may want their child to become a bank president, or a university professor, or a businessman. Furthermore, they know exactly what path their child must follow to achieve that goal.

2. **God's directive will. Explanation:** God has a specific will for every person's life. We often think about WHAT I WANT TO DO, or WHAT I WANT MY CHILD TO DO, but have we even considered WHAT GOD WANTS ME OR MY CHILD TO DO?
3. **Argument:** God reveals his directive will through both objective and subjective means. Objectively, God uses his word, our providential circumstances, and godly counsel to guide us. Subjectively, he directs us by his Spirit, through communication with him in prayer, and by the peace which he gives. This process of discerning and following God's directive will must begin with a decisive act of self-surrender in which we yield ourselves to God to do his will (cp. **Rom 12:1-2**). When you pray, "Your will be done." you are expressing to God your determination and desire to follow his will and plan for your life and the surrender of your own ambitions, goals, and plans.
4. **Application:** You must have the attitude of Paul on the Damascus Road, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10). You must submit to God's providential arrangements in your life; you must obey God's commands; and you must follow God's will and plan for you. No one ever follows God perfectly, but prayer should be the compass that points us back to due North through confession and repentance, so that we can say from the heart, "Your will be done."

Transition: When we pray, "Your will be done." this is not only a prayer of submission of my will to God's will, but also...

II. It is a prayer according to God's revealed plans and purposes.

Transition: In every prayer that the believer offers, he must pray according to the will of God (cp. **1 John 5:14-15**). This prayer promise of Scripture is qualified by the necessity of aligning our requests with his will in order to have assurance of receiving what we request. Since God alone knows his secret will, we can only pray with certainty for those things that God has revealed to us in his word. These include two things.

A. God makes known his will for his people in Scriptural prayers.

1. **Argument:** When someone is sick, we immediately think that we ought to pray for them to get well. But how do we know that it is God's will to heal them? We can qualify our prayers

and say, “If it is your will to heal them, then please heal them.” But God has other goals for people than health, wealth, and prosperity. In fact, we need to learn to pray for the spiritual needs of people ahead of their physical needs. Prayers found in the Bible are one source for learning what we should be requesting in prayer for others. One way to learn to pray is by following the example of men and women who prayed in Scripture.

2. **Explanation:** Last week we looked at one of David’s prayers. In fact, the book of Psalms contains dozens and dozens of David’s prayers. Nehemiah prayed, Jeremiah prayed, and Hannah prayed. The previous week we looked at Jesus prayer for his disciples. Paul also has recorded many of his prayers for the people in the various churches to which he wrote. All of these prayers are rich in providing examples of the specific things for which to pray for others.

Transition: Bible prayers are not the only source for knowing what to pray for...

- B. God makes known his will for his people in Scriptural prophecy.

1. **Argument:** This is a reminder from last week’s message on “Your kingdom come.” God has revealed some of his secret will, so that we do know some of God’s plans for human history. While the kingdom of God is an important topic of Biblical prophecy, there are also many other specific things that God has revealed to us through prophecy that you ought to receive as an invitation to prayer. You must learn to pray prophecy.
2. **Application:** When you see wrong and injustice all around you, it should drive you to pray for God’s vindication, like the widow (**Luke 18:1-8**). When illness and death intrude themselves into our lives, we should look to great prophetic promises about the rapture and the resurrection and turn them into prayers for the Lord to come quickly. Some people become embittered by the injustices they see around them. But that is because they have failed to exercise faith in God’s prophecies and promises through prayer.

Transition: Praying, “Your will be done.” is a prayer of submission to God’s will; it is also a prayer offered in line with God’s revealed will in Scripture; and third, ...

- III. It is a prayer for other believers to obey God’s commands.

Transition: The will of God should always be a major theme in our prayers for other believers. God’s will is known by his providential arrangements in the lives of his people, by his published commandments in his word, and by his directive guidance in their lives. Since believers are still sinners in a sinful world, we must pray for them to obey God’s will.

- A. Pray for them to grow in their knowledge of God’s will.

1. **Explanation:** This is what Paul prayed for: **Col. 1:9-10**. This shows how we also ought to pray for other believers. God's desire is "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). Therefore we should pray that God would lead believers into a knowledge of his will.
- B. Pray for them to choose to obey God's will.
1. **Argument:** When we see believers facing trouble, we can pray that would learn submission to God's providential arrangements in their lives. We can pray that they will "count it all joy" (James 1:2). When we see them struggling with rebellion and disobedience to God's commands, we can pray that they would submit to God's authority and respond correctly to God's discipline. When we see them aiming their lives for selfish, worldly goals, we can pray that they would surrender their own will to do God's will for their lives.
 2. **Explanation:** We can understand that God commands us to pray, but it is mysterious to us how prayer can have any real effect. When we pray for others to submit to God's will we bump into one of the great mysteries of Scripture. In fact, this mystery is involved in our prayers in two ways:
 - a. **The mystery of God's sovereign will and man's free choice.** If man truly has a free will, how can God in response to my prayers cause him to submit his will to God's will? If God truly has a pre-ordained plan for men and nations, then is man's will truly free?
 - i. The only answer is to assert that the Bible clearly teaches that God is in control. The Bible also clearly teaches that man has the responsibility to choose properly. In some mysterious way, God fulfills his own will completely and perfectly, without ever violating the free choices of men.
 - ii. Therefore, although it is mysterious, it is entirely right when we ask God to cause a person to change his mind, his actions, and his will, because God can accomplish these things without ever destroying the individual's own free choices.
 - b. **The mystery of God's sovereign will and the believer's prayer.** If God has already determined what he will do, then how can my prayers make any difference? The answer is that God has chosen to use the prayers of believers as part of the means by which he accomplishes his purpose.
 - i. We must here discern another element of God's will: God's compassionate will (**2 Peter 3:9**). God never forces any person to get saved, but he compassionately desires it. Nevertheless, not everyone will be saved; only those whom God has chosen.

- ii. The truth is that we don't know who will be saved until they actually believe in Christ. Therefore, we should pray for the salvation of the lost. God can save sinners in response to prayer and in accordance with his eternal will, without ever violating their free will.

Conclusion:

- Prayer is essential for every believer. When we pray, "Your will be done." we are asking God to align our wills with his will. Although God's will is secret and mysterious in many ways, this is not an excuse to stop praying, but rather a reason and motivation for us to pray even more.
- Furthermore, God has revealed exactly what his will is in many particulars. For these things we can and should pray. These include God's commands to be obeyed, God's plans, purposes, promises for the lives of believers, and God's prophecies for human history.
- When we pray we must begin with God's priorities:
 - We must pray for God to be known by men so that they may set him apart as holy. This is prayer for the glory of God.
 - We must pray for the arrival of God's kingdom represented by men's response to King Jesus, the building of his church in the present age, and the establishment of his rule when he returns.
 - We must pray for God's will to be done in our life, the lives of other believers, and for the lost.
- We must learn to pray in this way so that we may offer prayers that are pleasing to God and effectual in accomplishing their purpose.

Give us our daily bread

Text: Matthew 6:9-15

Title: Petitions of need: "Give us this day our daily bread"

Date: May 18, 2013

Sermon Type: Expository Sermon

Author: Matthew W . Hanna

Fallen Condition Focus: Believers fail to pray for their needs and act as if God did not exist.

Propositional Statement: You must depend on God in prayer by offering to him your requests to supply your personal needs.

Introduction:

1. Today we begin to consider the next section of the Lord's Prayer. [read text] [pray]
2. The Lord's Prayer teaches the believer how to pray and what to pray for. It shows us the priority of prayer. We need to offer first to God our **petitions of purpose**: (1) Hallowed be thy name. (2) Thy kingdom come. (3) Thy will be done. Today we will begin to look at the second element in our prayers: our **petitions of need**: Give us this day our daily bread.
3. The first lesson in the school of prayer is that believers must approach God as Father. Sadly, many believers live prayerless lives from day to day and fail to ask God to meet their needs; they act as though God does not even exist. They have never come to depend upon him for their daily needs. A person's actual behavior shows what they truly believe, no matter what they may say: The prayerless life is a godless life. On the other hand, when a believer depends on God as his heavenly Father, this fact will be evident from his regular habits of prayer, asking God to supply his daily needs.
4. The believer's dependence on God as a little child is a major theme of Christ's teaching in this section of the Sermon on the Mount, which contains the Lord Prayer. Note the following:
 - a. **Vv. 5-8.** Lack of prayer or improper praying is evidence that a person is proud, self-sufficient, and independent, like the Pharisees. The believer should rather be humble and dependent upon God like a little child.
 - b. **Vv. 19-24.** Lack of prayer or improper praying shows itself in greedy, selfish, and materialistic attitudes and behavior. We should instead be seeking to lay up treasure in heaven. Prayer is one of the ways in which we invest in heavenly treasure.
 - c. **Vv. 25-34.** Lack of prayer or improper praying shows itself in anxiety, care, and worry. Rather, we should be seeking first the kingdom of God and bringing our needs to God in prayer. These facts show the importance of this petition: "Give us this day our daily bread." You must depend on God in prayer by offering to him your requests for the supply of your personal needs.

Transition: If you will request sincerely, "Give us this day our daily bread." your prayer life will be strengthened in two ways: First...

I. This petition will train you to pray in faith. “give us”

Transition: Faith is a fundamental requirement for genuine prayer. Prayerlessness is practical atheism, because it demonstrates your unbelief toward God. *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.* (Heb 11:6.) This request, “Give us this day our daily bread.” will express your faith in three ways.

A. You will express your humble dependence upon God in faith.

1. **Explanation:** Prayer is one of the primary ways in which the believer expresses his dependence on God. In **Matt. 18:1-4**, Jesus argues that believers must become like little children. What he is describing is the attitude of trusting dependence such as a child has toward his parents. The opposite of dependence is pride, self-sufficiency, and independence. Prayer is learning to come to God as our heavenly Father and humbly depending upon him for the provision of our needs.
2. **Application:** Often, however, believers are more like the two-year old who refuses his parents’ attempts to help him by stubbornly insisting, “I can do it myself.” When you try to “do it yourself,” instead of depending on God, you are (1) proudly declaring your independence from God and (2) cutting yourself off from receiving the spiritual and material blessings that God wishes to give you. You need to learn the attitude of approaching God humbly as a little child and praying to him as your heavenly Father for your needs.

Transition: Not only does this petition express the humble dependence of faith, but also...

B. You will express your personal trust in God by faith.

1. **Explanation:** When you pray or fail to pray for the provision of your needs, you are showing what you really believe about God.
 - a. The person who brings his requests to God shows that he believes God to be a loving Father who is willing to give good gifts to his children and to provide for their needs. On the other hand, the person who never prays shows that he does not think that God is a good, loving, and kind God. He has a false and perverted view of God.
 - b. Similarly, the person who prays regularly for God to provide his needs demonstrates his faith that God is able to provide his needs. The prayerless Christian shows his unbelief in God’s ability to provide for him.
2. **Argument:** Prayer is the thermometer of the Christian life and the instrument which shows the true condition of his faith.

Transition: “Give us this day our daily bread” expresses the humble dependence of our faith and our personal trust in God, but also...

C. You will express your confident expectation to receive from God through faith.

1. **Explanation:** God has promised to meet the needs of his children through prayer. **Mark 11:22-24.** Of course, there are important qualifications to this promise. **1 John 5:14-15.** But when the believer prays within the will of God for legitimate needs, he exercises faith in God’s promises and has expectation through faith for God to hear and answer his requests.
2. **Argument:** Christians may fail to ask for their needs from God, because they don’t have the faith to put God to the test. We must distinguish between PROVING God and TEMPTING God.
 - a. Tempting God is an action of unbelief in which we presume upon God. **Illustration:** Israel at Kadesh-barnea (cp. Num 14:11, 22). God promised to bring them into the land of Canaan, but they disbelieved God and tested God. **Illustration:** Satan tempted Jesus to presume on God by jumping off the temple to prove himself the Messiah. But that would have been tempting God.
 - b. Proving God is believing God’s promise and acting accordingly so that you can appropriate and receive the promised blessing.

Transition: Notice the second way in which this prayer request will strengthen your prayer life. James warns us, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” (Jas 4:3)

II. This petition will train you to ask properly from God. “daily bread”

Transition: As you begin to practice coming to God in prayer and asking him for the provision of our needs, it will teach you two practical lessons about how to ask from God.

A. This petition will teach you to evaluate your true needs in the presence of God.

1. “Give us this day our daily bread” **Explanation:** Bread is the staple of life. In ancient times it was the general term for food. Here it describes the basic necessities of human life for which believers are to ask God. It is a summary of all of the individual’s basic human needs. (1) food, (2) clothing, (3) shelter, (4) breath, (5) water, etc. As a good, loving, and mighty Father, God invites us to make our requests for the things that we need. **Philip. 4:6-7.**
2. **Argument:** But the difficulty for us in considering this petition is in the difference between us and the first century culture to which Jesus spoke.
 - a. The Jewish people of Jesus day lived primarily in an agricultural, rural society, but we live in an advanced, urban, technical society. We have other “needs” that they did not

have, which are mostly defined by MONEY. We need money for (1) rent/mortgage, (2) vehicle, (3) education, (4) medical care, etc. Our “needs” are determined to a certain degree by the society in which we live.

- b. A further consideration is our greater capacity today for things which take a disproportionate amount of our time, attention, and money, WHICH ARE NOT TRUE NEEDS. These include our comforts (expensive furnishings, luxury items), conveniences (electronics, appliances, etc.), and pleasures (entertainment and media). All too often we become confused about what we NEED and what we WANT. **Php. 4:11; 1 Tim 6:8-11; Heb. 13:5.**
 - c. Finally, we must remember that sometimes God tests us by putting us in a position of lack so that we can discover that our only true need is to do the will of God and obey the word of God. cp. **Deut. 8:1-20.**
 - d. So we can distinguish between (1) our basic needs, (2) our societal needs, (3) our wants or desires, and (4) our true primary need, which is to do and obey God’s will. Learning to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Will train us to evaluate our needs properly in the sight of God as we bring them to him in prayer.
- B. This petition will teach you to renew daily your requests before God.
- 1. “this day our daily bread” **Explanation:** Jesus commanded that believers pray for today’s needs, not tomorrows. This means that tomorrow I must come again and renew my petitions for my needs and the needs of others on this day. It is like eating and drinking. Today you can eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, but tomorrow you will need to eat again to satisfy your body’s need. So it is with prayer. It is like a relationship with your spouse, parent, or child; you may have had a good communication and relationship with a person yesterday, but if you don’t communicate and relate properly to them today, then the relationship will wither and die. Similarly, we cannot pray today and be done with it. Prayer is a discipline because we must renew our requests in the context of our relationship with God as Father on a daily basis. As our needs are renewed daily, so our prayer to God to provide our needs must be renewed daily.
 - 2. **Illustration: Exodus 16:13-21.** God supernaturally provided for the physical needs of Israel in the wilderness by giving water from the rock and bread from heaven. Nevertheless, God also commanded that they had to go out daily and gather it. This pictures the way in which the believer also receives his supply from God on a daily basis through prayer. Some preachers use manna as a picture of the believers need for spiritual bread by having devotions on a daily basis. However, this misses the point. Yes, we do need to read our Bible and pray

every day; but it is by asking God in prayer for our daily needs that we renew our relationship with him as Father by expressing our dependence. So it is while we pray for our daily basic and societal needs that we also open God's word for the spiritual nourishment that we need and for the strengthening of our faith for obedience to his will and commands.

Conclusion:

- Jesus instructs you to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." You must come to God on a daily basis to receive from him the things you need. This practice will have a training effect upon your prayer life. It will discipline your prayer life.
 - First, it will train you to pray in faith, trust, and dependence upon God.
 - Second, it will train you pray properly so that your prayers will become effectual.
- When we look at instructions like this one, it causes us to reflect on our own practice of prayer. While few of us really pray as we ought to pray, this is no excuse for us to continue on with the same prayerless habits and lifestyle that we have always had. Instead it should lead us to do two things:
 - Repent. If your life is characterized by a lack of prayer, this is sin. Cp. **1 Sam 12:23**. If you sense that you have become proud, self-sufficient, and independent of God, then you need to confess and forsake that attitude.
 - Make purposeful changes to your schedule and make time to pray. True repentance is shown by a change in direction.

Forgive us our debts

TEXT: Matthew 6:9-15

TITLE: Forgive us our debts

DATE: May 26, 2013

SERMON TYPE: Expository Sermon

Author: Matthew Hanna

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS: People minimize their own sins against God and maximize the sins of others against themselves.

PROPOSITIONAL STATEMENT: You must depend on God in prayer by offering to him your petitions for forgiveness of sin.

Introduction:

- 1) **Pre-Intro.** We come today to the second petition of need in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our debts." >> [read text] >> prayer.
- 2) We must remember that the Lord's Prayer has 6 petitions. The first three are petitions of purpose in which we pray for those things that are important to God: his name, his kingdom, his will. The second three are petitions of need in which we depend upon God for the provision of our needs. Only the first of these is concerned with our physical and material needs. The fourth is concerned with our relational needs (our relation to God and others) and the fifth is concerned with our spiritual need to avoid sin and temptation.
- 3) When we pray, "Forgive us our debts," we are offering our petitions for a proper relationship with God as Father. *Prayer is relationship.* As this petition indicates, we must also have a proper relationship with others in order to be right with God.
- 4) **However, we often attempt to minimize our own sins against God, while we tend to maximize the sins of others against us!** This attitude will lead to our failure in prayer. Apart from a right evaluation of our sins, so that the barriers in our relationship with God and others are removed, *there can be no effective prayer!* **You must depend on God in prayer by offering to him your petitions for forgiveness of sin.**

Transition: This petition teaches you three truths about getting right and being right with God in prayer. First, ...

I. It teaches the necessity for self-examination in prayer. "our debts"

1. **Explanation:** The Christian's sins are described as "debts" (cp. "trespasses" vv. 14-15). It emphasizes our unfulfilled obligations toward God. We have a dual obligation toward God, first because he has created us and secondly because he has redeemed us. We owe God a debt of obedience, love, righteousness, faith,

worship, etc. However, every believer fails often to render to God what he is worthy of and therefore he must ask often for forgiveness of his sins.

2. **Argument:** The sin here described is the sin of Christians, since it is sin against the “heavenly Father” (2X, vv. 14-15). Christians must recognize that they have a fundamental need for forgiveness and restoration of their relationship with God on a daily basis, and this need should be a major topic of their prayers. Not only must believers pray for God to provide for their daily needs of life (v. 11), but they must seek a right relationship with their Father when sin has broken their fellowship with him. Therefore, it is imperative that you conduct a thoughtful self-examination of your life before God as an essential element of your prayers.
3. **Explanation:** Self-examination takes place when the believer submits himself to the Holy Spirit and allows the Spirit to apply the truth of God’s word to his conscience, which passes judgment on his behavior. Cp. **1 John 1:5-10**. When the Holy Spirit convicts the believer of sin, it is so that he can confess and forsake it and receive forgiveness, so that his relationship and fellowship with the Father can be restored. As long as the believer refuses to respond to the Spirit and to his own conscience, his peace with God will be broken.
4. **Application:** You must regularly examine your own life before God in prayer in three areas.
 - a. Have I sinned against God? Have I committed sins of the flesh or of the spirit? Have I done right things with wrong motives? Have I disobeyed the will of God or the command of God?
 - b. Have I sinned against other people? Have I sinned with my tongue by being unkind or untruthful to others? Have I defrauded another person by taking what belonged to him or her? Have I rebelled against those who have authority over me? Sins against others are also sins against God.
 - c. Has someone else sinned against me? If so, how did I respond? Did I respond sinfully with anger or resentment? Did I seek to “get even” with that person? Sinful responses to the sins of others are still sin.

Transition: This petition not only teaches you the necessity for self-examination, secondly, ...

II. It teaches the elements of confession in prayer. “forgive us our debts”

Transition: There are three elements of confession.

A. You must submit a proper acknowledgment of your sin and guilt to God.

1. **Explanation:** The path to forgiveness always begins with your agreement with God about your sin. You must accept God’s diagnosis of your condition and behavior. You must not just feel bad about your sin, you must also tell God that you have sinned. That is why prayer is so crucial to forgiveness. People who do not pray, cannot maintain a proper relationship with God, because confession takes place through prayer. As long as you hold on to your sin you cannot have a right relationship with God.
2. **Argument:** Acknowledging your sin before God means—
 - a. Humble yourself before God in repentance. It means expressing genuine sorrow over your sin. Cp. **Jas. 4:8-10**. Proverbs promises, “He that covereth

his sins shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” (Pr 28:13)

- b. Give glory to God in confession. When we make a clean confession of our sin, we give glory to God by magnifying his righteousness and holiness which we have violated. Cp. **Josh. 7:19**.

Transition: Acknowledging your sin and guilt is the first element of confession. The second step is...

B. You must offer to God a proper suit for forgiveness.

1. **Explanation:** The goal of confession is so that we might make request for forgiveness and restoration to a right relationship with God. But because God is both our authority and the offended party, we must humble ourselves and come to God on his terms. We cannot come with conditions or provisions to our request, nor can we seek to “cut a deal” with him. Rather we must seek to make our request for forgiveness properly.
2. **Argument:** This means primarily two things:
 - a. We must seek forgiveness through God’s appointed means, which is God’s sacrifice for sin through Jesus Christ on the cross. God offers forgiveness to us freely, but it was costly for God to provide it. We must respect the great cost at which we are restored to a right relationship with God.
 - b. We must seek forgiveness with faith and hope in the effectuality of God’s provision. We do not come doubting whether God will really forgive us or not. Rather, we come with the joyful assurance that when we “confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” (1 John 1:9)

Transition: The third element of confession is...

C. You must make a proper response after receiving God’s forgiveness.

1. **Argument:** When you experience God’s forgiveness after self-examination and confession of sin, you will experience a renewal of joy, peace, and fellowship with God. This should lead you to a two-fold response to God’s forgiveness:
 - a. First, you should respond with thankful praise to God for the grace and mercy shown to you in restoring you in your relationship with him. **Is. 12:1-6**. Thus confession and forgiveness in prayer should lead to praise and thanksgiving in prayer.
 - b. Second, you should respond with merciful forbearance toward the sins and provocations of others against you. You should be willing to bear long with the sins of others, because God has borne long with your sins and treated you with mercy and grace. **Eph. 4:32**.
2. **Application:** How much do you love God? Our response to God’s forgiveness is an infallible proof of whether we have truly experienced it or not. When we have little sense of gratefulness for God’s mercy and forgiveness, it simply means that we have only experienced little of God’s forgiveness. Cp. **Luke 7:36-50**. *Our much love to God is evidence that we have received much forgiveness from God.*

Transition: Thirdly, this petition...

III. It teaches the requirements for forgiveness in prayer. “if you forgive others their trespasses”

- A. You must forgive others in order to receive God’s forgiveness. “Your heavenly Father will also forgive you”
1. **Explanation:** Vv. 14-15 (“For if...” Ἐὰν γὰρ) connect logically with v. 12b. They provide the extended explanation for this petition, and they should be considered together with this petition.
 2. **Explanation:** This verse plainly states the fact that God places conditions upon his forgiveness. In order for his children to stand in right relation with him, he requires that they stand in right relation with others. The condition here stated is that we must forgive others in order to be forgiven.
 - a. This is not the forgiveness of salvation, but of family reconciliation with your heavenly Father.
 - b. This requires God’s children to practice forgiveness toward those—especially toward brothers and sisters—who sin against them. Cp. **Matt. 5:23-24.**
 3. **Argument:** This involves two aspects of forgiveness which need clarification:
 - a. The attitude of forgiveness. I must sincerely forgive others from the heart no matter how great the injury that they have inflicted, even if they show no remorse for what they have done. True forgiveness is costly, because in order to forgive, I must cancel their debt and personally accept the loss. This is how God forgave us in Christ as pictured in the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18:21-35). Jesus demonstrated this type of forgiveness on the cross when he prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).
 - b. Reconciliation. This is the goal of forgiveness, but we have no control over the response of others. In order for true reconciliation to take place the offending party must express his repentance and desire to be forgiven. The barrier is on the side of the one who sinned. When someone else sins against me, I must have an attitude of forgiveness, in which I release his debt. But the relationship is still broken until forgiveness is sought and received by the one who sinned. This is also a reflection of God’s forgiveness: Christ’s sacrifice is sufficient to cover the sins of all men, but only those who repent and seek forgiveness will receive it.
 4. **Illustration:** A practical illustration will help to make the difference clear. Suppose you discover that your co-worker has told your boss a malicious lie about you that causes you to miss a promotion and a pay raise. When you confront your co-worker with the lie he told, he denies the whole thing and accuses you of being jealous. Every day you have to work side-by-side with him in the office. How will you respond?
 - a. You must forgive him. This means that you release the debt and treat him with kindness and mercy. You commit the whole thing to God and ask God to take care of the loss you have suffered. You surrender your anger and desire for revenge. But your relationship with that person is divided by a barrier, not on your side, but on his. You have an attitude of willingness to forgive, but the relationship is still broken.
 - b. You work with him in the office on a daily basis and refuse to retaliate against him or try to get even. Three months later he comes to you and admits that he

lied to the boss and he's sorry. At this point you can truly forgive him and the relationship can be restored. True reconciliation has occurred.

- B. Your failure to forgive others is proof that you are not in right relationship with God. "neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"
1. **Explanation:** Those who refuse to forgive others stand objectively unforgiven by God. Your lack of forgiveness is objective evidence that your relationship with God is not right.
 2. **Argument:** Lack of forgiveness indicates two possibilities:
 - a. Perhaps you do not forgive, because you have never personally experienced forgiveness. Perhaps you are not a true child of God at all. Forgiveness is difficult and costly. Only those who have personally experienced God's forgiveness are equipped through the Holy Spirit to exercise forgiveness toward those who have wronged them.
 - b. If you are a child of God and refuse to forgive, you will yourself experience God's chastening. In some ways, lack of forgiveness is its own punishment. Anger and bitterness often lead to physical consequences in a person's health. God may use this to discipline you. God will also bring rebuke and chastening in other ways as well. Only when you acknowledge your lack of forgiveness as sin against God and forgive from the heart can your relationship with God be restored.
 3. **Application:** Lack of forgiveness will hinder your prayer. Cp. **Mark 7:25-26**. When you come into God's presence in prayer, you must come with a clean conscience in relation to others in order for God to hear and respond favorably to your petitions. Your petitions must include: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Conclusion:

- 1) Since prayer is relationship, if the relationship is broken by sin, there can be no genuine prayer. We must come to God humbly and in faith in Christ's provision to seek the forgiveness of our sins from God.
- 2) You must forgive those who have wronged you in order for God to forgive you. A true Christian does not lose his salvation through lack of forgiveness, but he does lose his fellowship with God and his ability to pray effectively. Cp **Is. 59:1-2**. The solution is to pray sincerely and from the heart, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Lead us not into temptation

TEXT: Matthew 6:9-15

TITLE: The Lord's Prayer: Lead Us Not Into Temptation

DATE: May 31, 2013

SERMON TYPE: Expository Sermon

Author: Matthew Hanna

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS: People attempt to face temptation in their own strength, instead of depending on God.

PROPOSITIONAL STATEMENT: You must depend upon God in prayer by offering to him your petitions for deliverance from sin and temptation.

Introduction:

- 1) Today we look at the final petition of the Lord's prayer. [read text] >> [pray]
- 2) On July 4, 1776 the Congress of the 13 united American colonies ratified a Declaration of Independence from Great Britain. It contained a declaration of their separation from the rule of Britain in order to establish themselves as the United States of America. This famous document has become a symbol of the rights of man to self-governance, self-reliance, self-respect.
- 3) Too many Christians live independently of God, as though he were tyrant ruler instead of a loving Father. But rather than publically declaring their independence from God, they simply ignore him and treat him as insignificant to their lives. They may not realize it, but they are proudly attempting to succeed by their own efforts, when they should be turning humbly to God and asking him to provide for their needs. Prayer is the Christian's **Declaration of Dependence!** Prayer is the believer's statement that he needs God.
- 4) Christians need God to provide their daily needs; they need him to forgive their sins; and they need him to keep them from temptation. **But many people attempt to face temptation in their own strength, instead of depending on God.** But when Christ instructed us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," he was teaching us we must not attempt to face temptation alone. **You must depend upon God in prayer by offering to him your petitions for deliverance from sin and temptation.**

Transition: This petition teaches us three truths about prayer, about temptation, and about ourselves. **First,** ...

- I. It teaches us the danger of temptation.

Transition: Practicing the use of this petition will teach you about two serious dangers that you face.

- A. You face the danger of suffering a catastrophic defeat.
 1. **Explanation:** The "evil" referred to at the end of verse 13 is the Evil One, the personal Devil. Cp. Matt. 13:19 (the exact same expression is so translated here). This helps us to determine that verse 13 contains one petition, not two. The same request is offered from two different viewpoints:
 - a. The first half of the verse views the situation from the perspective of the *internal nature* of temptation which arises from our own sinful lusts.
 - b. The second half views it from the perspective of the *external source* of temptation, the Devil, the Tempter.

2. **Argument:** When we pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” we are requesting that God would keep us from being led into temptation and sin by our own sinful desires. Cp. **James 1:13-15**. Temptation is the first stage in a process that ends in death. Temptation leads us to sin, because we have a sinful nature that desires and pursues after sinful things. The end result of the process of temptation and sin is death. Only God can rescue us from the disaster that our own sinful desires will bring upon us. We must depend upon God in prayer and ask him to lead us away from situations in which we will fall.
3. **Illustration:** David illustrates the subtle dangers and spiritual disaster that hovers over the lives of us all. Although he was one of the greatest OT saints, he was a man after God’s own heart, he received magnificent promises from God, and experienced military victory, material prosperity, and mighty blessings from God. But in a moment of unguarded weakness, he fell under temptation and committed adultery and murder. His after life is the story of all the consequences which came upon him as a result of his sins. Unless we depend upon God to keep us from temptation, we face the danger of falling in the same way. Cp. **1Cor. 10:6-13**.

Transition: In addition to the danger of catastrophic defeat, ...

- B. You face the danger of powerful spiritual enemies.
 1. **Explanation:** Just as the first half of the verse emphasizes the danger of your own sinful nature leading you to fall in temptation, the second half of the verse emphasizes the external source of temptation: the Devil. In Matthew 4:3 he is called “the tempter.” Satan is a real being, though a spiritual being. Satan is the enemy of God, God’s kingdom, and God’s people. Jesus described him as a liar and a murderer (John 8:44); he attempts to deceive people so that he can destroy them. Satan desires to destroy you! When you pray, “deliver us from the evil one,” you are asking God to deliver you from falling into the power of the devil who desires to deceive you, tempt you, and ultimately destroy you.
 2. **Argument:** Satan does not work alone. He leads a vast army of demonic beings who roam the earth and attempt to destroy believers’ testimony and effectiveness through temptation. He not only has his demonic angels, he also has his human agents that do his bidding. Satan, demons, and evil men have a two-fold method: (1) They attempt to seduce believers away from God by appealing to fleshly appetites and sinful desires. When believers fall into the trap of worldliness, they end up like Lot, who lost his possessions, his wife, and his married children in the destruction of Sodom; he lost his testimony before men; and he lost his surviving daughters to the value system of the world. (2) Satan and his agents also attempt to intimidate and destroy believers through persecution and physical attack. This brings the temptation to deny Christ in order to escape persecution and death.
 3. **Application:** These real dangers should drive the believer to prayer. It is when we recognize our vulnerability and danger that we turn to God and seek his protection and deliverance from temptation. Lack of prayer indicates that you do not really take the danger seriously. “Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Co 10:12).

Transition: This petition not only teaches us about the serious dangers that we face from temptation, but **second**, ...

- II. It teaches us discipline through prayer.

Transition: Prayer is one of the primary means of spiritual discipline available to the believer. When we pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” it trains and disciplines us in at least two areas.

- A. It trains you to watch against temptation in prayer.
 1. **Explanation:** Christ instructed us to pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” This is an echo of Christ’s oft-repeated command to watch in prayer.
 - a. Christ warned Peter, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mt 26:41).

- b. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Lk 21:36).
- 2. **Argument:** Prayer is the training ground that equips the believer to face temptation; it is grueling spiritual exercise that strengthens the spiritual muscles of the believer; and it teaches the believer to see his sinful inclinations more clearly and to guard against them.
- 3. **Illustration:** Peter illustrates the importance of this most clearly. Christ warned him of his danger, but Peter boasted that he would die before he denied Jesus. Peter slept in the garden when he should have been praying. When temptation came he ran away, sat with the enemies of Christ, and then publicly denied the Lord three times. Only when exercise the spiritual discipline of watching in prayer against temptation will we have the strength to stand when the test comes.

Transition: It not only trains and disciplines you to see your vulnerabilities and to stand guard over them, also ...

- B. It trains you to wage spiritual warfare in prayer.
 - 1. **Explanation:** Just as we have a great spiritual enemy, the Devil, so we must learn to engage in spiritual warfare through prayer. This warfare is defensive: cp. **Eph. 6:10-18**. The Christian arms himself with the armor of light in order to guard himself from vulnerabilities to temptation and sin. Prayer is the means by which he puts on his armor and fights the battle.
 - 2. **Argument:** People have many misconceptions about spiritual warfare. It is not to march, sword in hand, into invisible heavenly battlefields and fight demons on their own turf. Rather, it is to wrestle with God as I face the reality of my own inner inclination to sin and the outer solicitations of the world. It is to turn in dependence upon God for victory against the powers of sin, self, and Satan on the battleground of the human soul.
 - 3. **Illustration:** It is to lift up my arms like Moses did when the children of Israel fought against Amalek. As long as Moses raised up the rod of God, the Israelites experienced victory. But when Moses grew tired and let his hands down, the enemies of Israel began to prevail. We must learn to fight the battle of Christian living on our knees or we will fall in defeat to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Transition: The **third** truth that this petition teaches us is ...

III. It teaches us dependence upon God for victory.

Transition: Prayer is the way in which the believer expresses his dependence on God. A failure to pray means a failure to depend upon God. Consider this.

- A. You are utterly weak and doomed to failure when you depend on yourself.
 - 1. **Argument:** Because temptation has its source within my own heart, I cannot escape it by running or hiding. If I face it on my own I am bound to fail.
 - 2. **Argument:** During the middle ages, many European Christians attempted to escape the world by entering into monasteries and nunneries. They tried to avoid temptation by shutting out the world. They tried to defeat temptation by beating, starving, and weakening their bodies. But all of these methods failed, because their sinful nature remained. What we need is not to avoid the world or destroy our physical bodies, but we need to turn to God in prayer for victory over temptation. Paul himself said, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.” Our sinful human nature is incapable of resisting or defeating temptation to sin. (Ro 7:18).
 - 3. **Application:** When you face temptation with human wisdom and human methods, you are doomed to fail. You can try avoid temptation, resist temptation, or ignore temptation, But all of these human methods are manifestations of pride and merely prove the reality of your sinful nature. There is only one biblically endorsed method for facing temptation: It is humbling yourself, admitting your need, and praying, “Lead us not into temptation.”

Transition: But even though you are weak when you depend on yourself, ...

- B. God is fully able to deliver you when you depend upon him through prayer.

1. **Argument:** In **Romans 8** Paul describe how life in the Spirit is what sets the believer free from sin (v. 2). And the Spirit teaches us to cry “Abba! Father!” (v. 15, cp. vv. 26-27). God delivers the believer from the power of sin and temptation when we depend upon him in prayer under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Argument:** The Bible promises that God tests believers, but he never tempts them. Satan is the tempter. God is the one who delivers you from temptation. Cp. **2Pet. 2:9**.
3. **Application:** You must learn to pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” God and his grace is greater than all of your sin and weakness. But you must receive the help you need by depending on God in prayer

Conclusion:

- 1) Christians are surrounded by real spiritual dangers, dangerous enemies, and the potential of catastrophic defeat through temptation. The wise believer takes this threat seriously and therefore accepts the necessity of prayer.
- 2) In order to defeat temptation you must practice the discipline of prayer. Prayer is boot camp for the Christian soldier. It teaches you to stand guard against the threat of temptation and to engage in spiritual warfare to resist it.
- 3) Finally, prayer is the means by which you show your rejection of independence from God. Prayer is the Christian’s ***Declaration of Dependence***. God is able to keep you from inner temptations that arise from your own sinful flesh and to deliver you from the temptations of Satan and the world. But to obtain the deliverance that we need, we must learn to pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Kingdom, Power, & Glory

TEXT: Matthew 6:9-15

TITLE: The Lord's Prayer: Kingdom, Power, Glory

DATE: June 8, 2013.

SERMON TYPE: Expository Sermon

Author: Matthew Hanna

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS: People often rush thoughtlessly into God's presence to offer their petitions and then rush out again.

PROPOSITIONAL STATEMENT: You must conclude your prayer purposefully.

Introduction:

- 1) Pre-Intro: Today we conclude our series on the Lord's Prayer. Please follow along as I read our text once more: [read text] >> [Prayer].
- 2) Prayer is often merely a matter of habit for us. We go through a set pattern of speech. We frequently use the same expressions over and over again. And we conclude our prayers with exactly the same words: "...in Jesus' name, amen." If prayer is relationship, then we need to learn to really communicate with God. This includes how we conclude our prayers.
- 3) **Argument:** However, there is a well-known textual problem in this verse. The oldest Greek manuscripts of the NT do not contain any of this closing; they conclude verse 13 after the phrase "but deliver us from evil." It is not until the middle ages that this phrase suddenly appears in the text; the phrase was most likely added to the Lord's Prayer in order to make it more suitable for congregational recital during public worship. Apparently this phrase has been borrowed from David's prayer in 1 Chron. 29:11. Because it is such a familiar, traditional prayer, some modern Bible versions retain the ending, while others have chosen not to include it. After reviewing this verse in 18 different versions of the Bible (15 English versions and 3 Chinese versions) I discovered that 9 versions retain the ending and 9 versions omit it. Most of the versions (12), whether they retained or omitted it, marked the problem with a footnote or brackets.
- 4) **How should we face this issue.** FIRST, Even if we conclude that Jesus never spoke this ending when he gave the prayer to his disciples, there is nothing wrong or unbiblical about using it. In fact, its contents come right out of other portions of the Bible. Therefore, we can still benefit by studying and learning what it tells us about prayer. SECOND, We can consider the question of why Jesus taught this prayer without even supplying an *amen* at the end. The reason seems to be that Jesus never intended us to use this prayer as a memorized prayer or one that we merely recited. Rather, he intended it to function as a model of how God's children should communicate with their heavenly Father. *Prayer is relationship!*
- 5) **Conclusion.** Therefore, we can study this prayer ending by examining its source in other Scriptures and learning the Biblical principles about prayer that it can teach us. The truth is, how we end our prayer is not nearly as important as how we begin. However, the way we end our praying can reveal a lot about our relationship with God, our attitude toward God, and our understanding about prayer. From this prayer ending, **please consider with me three elements of prayer that are highly appropriate when we bring our prayers to a conclusion.**

Transition: FIRST,

- I. Conclude your prayer with an affirmation of your faith.

Transition: We have already considered the importance faith to praying in earlier verses. But there are two ways in which faith plays a special role in concluding our prayers.

- A. Express your assurance of God's sovereign rule over the affairs of men.
1. **Explanation:** As we mentioned, this ending is most likely borrowed from 1 Chron. 29:11. However, there are several important passages in the OT that combine the elements of God's kingdom, power, and glory in prayer. These prove beyond a doubt that the ending of the Lord's prayer (as it stands in our Bibles) expresses biblical truth.
 - a. **1 Chron 29:10-13.** David offered this prayer for the future building of the temple and the ascension of Solomon, his son, to the throne of Israel. It praises God as the only glorious ruler of the universe who is the source of all blessing to his people.
 - b. **Psalm 145:10-13.** This is also a prayer of David. It emphasizes the importance of God's people praising God for his ruling power and glory.
 2. "Thine is the kingdom and the power" **Explanation:** God's kingdom and God's power are two ways of saying the same thing. Both refer to God's ruling authority. In v. 10 Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come." God's kingdom will come visibly when Jesus returns to rule. But God has always exercised ruling authority over the universe. Satan rebelled; man rebelled; but God still rules. When we pray, "Thine is the kingdom and the power," we are expressing our confidence in God's control of all that happens, both on a personal level and at the cosmic level.
 3. **Argument:** Since true prayer is impossible without faith, and since true prayer is conducted in faith, therefore we must also end in faith. When we end our prayer by vocally expressing our faith, it is a declaration to God and a reminder to ourselves that God himself must exercise his sovereign, ruling power to bring to pass all that we have requested. This is an effective summary of our faith regarding the first three petitions: "Hallowed by your name; your kingdom come; your will be done."

Transition: Not only should you express your assurance of God's sovereign rule, but also you should...

- B. Express your confidence in God's ability and desire to provide your needs.
1. "For thine..." **Explanation:** The particle "for" indicates that this ending represents the reasons for which you expect God to hear and respond to your requests. Our faith is offered up as one of those reasons. It is a summary of our faith in our petitions for our human needs: daily bread, forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from temptation. We can make our petitions for these needs and then leave the place of prayer in perfect confidence that God will provide all that we need, because he is still on the throne.
 2. **Application:** When things in the world, nationally or internationally, spin out of control and appear to be headed for disaster, you can calmly turn your cares and concerns over to your heavenly Father who has all these things under his control. When things in your own life fall

apart; when trouble or disaster strike you personally, then you can calmly pray and turn them over to God. After all, he is working all things together for your good and his glory (**Rom. 8:28**). *If you rise from prayer with the same worries, concerns, fears, and cares that you had before you began to pray, then you have either not prayed truly, or you have not prayed long enough!* It is only when you have gained the calm assurance of God's care and provision by casting all of your cares upon him (**1 Peter 5:7**) that you are ready to conclude your prayer.

Transition: Faith is an essential mark that we are ready to conclude prayer. SECOND, there is another important element to include when you finish praying.

II. Conclude your prayer with an affirmation of your worship.

Transition: We have termed the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer as *petitions of purpose*. They are concerned with God's desires and goals in this world. The conclusion of prayer should re-emphasize our identification with God's purposes in two ways:

- A. Declare your praise, worship, and exaltation of God's person.
 1. "Thine is ... the glory" **Explanation:** Prayer is not only relationship, but also *prayer is worship*. Here we see not only that God's concerns come first in prayer, but they also come last! The word "worship" means worth-ship; it means to give that which God is worthy to receive. The single all-encompassing word for what God is worthy to receive is the word GLORY. The holiness of God's name (v. 9) is related to his glory which he has revealed through Jesus Christ. Cp. **John 1:14; 7:18; 8:50**. That is God's objective glory. Because he is glorious, he is worthy *that we ascribe glory to him* by our praise and worship.
 2. **Argument:** There are two NT passages in which we see the themes of God's kingdom, power, and glory combined; both are in the book of Revelation.
 3. **Rev. 4:10-11.** The angels around the throne of God in heaven express their worship and praise of God. They exclaim the worthiness of God to receive glory, honor and power.
 4. **Rev. 5:13-14.** This describes the worship of every creature in both heaven and earth. They declare the worth of the Lamb and of God on the throne. He is worthy of honor, and glory, and might.
 5. **Argument:** The conclusion of prayer, then, should be the expression of our worship of God. Much that is today called worship, is, in fact, self-worship not the worship of God. Christianity today is dominated by man's concerns instead of God's concerns, human reason instead of divine revelation, and man's pleasure instead of God's glory. Prayer should be the reaffirmation of our agreement with the divine order in prayer.

Transition: You must not only conclude with praise and worship, but also...

- B. Declare your commitment to God's glory as your highest goal.
 1. **Explanation:** When you pray "Thine is the glory" you are making a personal commitment to make God's glory the aim and purpose of your life. When we conclude prayer it is to go out and live in a way which is consistent to what we say and ask in prayer. This request will help to readjust our living to conform to our praying.

2. **Argument:** Personal commitment to God’s glory is part of our worship. Cp. Rom. 12:1, “reasonable service” = “spiritual worship.” When we offer our lives up for the glory of God we are performing an act of worship.
3. **Application:** You have not finished praying until you have come to surrender your own plans, desires, and goals to the supreme goal of God’s glory. When you pray for your need of human provision, it should coincide with God’s goal to bring glory to himself. When you pray for forgiveness it should result in thanks, praise, and worship of God as worthy. And when you pray for deliverance from sin and temptation, it should be for the honor and glory of God’s name to be made known on earth.

Transition: Faith in God’s ruling authority and commitment to God’s glory are essential elements in concluding prayer. **THIRD,**

III. Conclude your prayer with an affirmation of your agreement.

Transition: We close our prayer with an “Amen!” Amen is like the closing argument by the prosecuting attorney in a jury trial. The lawyer makes a final appeal to the jury based on all the evidence already presented. No new information is introduced, but the effect of it all is brought to bear in a final summation argument. When we say amen at the end of prayer, we are arguing two facts:

- A. Saying *amen* argues for the sincerity of your praying.
 1. “Amen.” **Explanation:** The word Amen is a Hebrew word used in the OT prayers and in synagogue worship. It was carried over into Greek, for use by Christians in NT prayer and worship. The Hebrew root means “true, firm, solid, certain.” It is a term by which we add our “YES!” of agreement and affirmation at the end of the prayer.
 2. **Explanation:** The word Amen occurs 56 times in the Bible (22+28, ESV); 60 times (28+32, CUVNP). It is used generally to express ones agreement before God.
 - a. Used as a solemn agreement with a curse upon lawbreakers. Cp. **De. 27:15-26.**
 - b. Used as a joyful agreement with blessing to God in public prayer. Cp. **1 Chron. 16:36** (at the end of David’s song of thanks when the ark was brought to Jerusalem); **1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Pet. 5:10-11.**
 - c. Used as a believing agreement with God’s promises. Cp. **2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 1:7; 22:20.**
 - d. Used as an affirmation of prayer. Cp. **Gal. 6:18** (Paul’s prayer for the Galatians); **1 Cor. 14:16.**
 3. **Argument:** Therefore, when we say “Amen.” We are expressing our agreement with our requests and petitions, including the three petitions of purpose and three petitions of need. In essence we are declaring the sincerity of our requests. Since God sees our hearts when we pray, he already knows whether we are sincere or not. But when we say “Amen.” It should be a reminder to us that we must say what we mean and mean what we say when we pray.

Transition: Not only are you arguing for the sincerity of your prayers by saying “Amen!” but also...

- B. Saying *amen* argues for the right of your petitions.

1. **Argument:** If you have prayed thoughtfully and carefully, you will have prayed for those things which were right, those things which are according to his will; you will have prayed in faith because you asked for the things that pleased him. Saying “Amen!” is adding your final argument to your prayer that God should answer your prayer *because you have only asked for those things that are right.*
2. **Argument:** Not only have we asked for the right things, *but we have also asked in the right way.* Jesus promised that when we ask anything in his name, he will hear us:
 - a. **John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26.**
 - b. To ask in Jesus’ name means to ask on his authority and in accordance with his will. It is not a magical formula or incantation that guarantees we can get whatever we want, but rather it is a promise that when we ask for God’s things in God’s way, he will certainly answer. Even if we don’t use these exact words, when we say Amen, we are intentionally arguing for God to hear and answer our prayers because we have asked properly in the authority of God’s own Son.

Conclusion:

- 1) Thus we see three essential elements that should be present when we conclude our prayer: Faith in God, Worship of God, and Agreement with God. “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”
- 2) We can summarize some of the things that we have learned about prayer:
 - a) Prayer is relationship
 - b) Prayer is petition
 - c) Prayer is worship
- 3) Nothing we have said about prayer will be of the least use if you do not pray. We need not just to learn HOW to pray, but we must learn TO PRAY.