

Matthew 6:5–15

Praying When God Is Your Father

Saturday, March 2, 2024 • Read Matthew 6:5–15

Questions from the Scripture text: What does v5 assume that disciples will do? What are they not to be like? Where do hypocrites love to pray? Why? What do they have? Where does Jesus say to pray (v6)? What does He say to do first? Where is He to Whom they pray? What does He see? What will He do? What else aren't they to do (v7)? Who do this? Why? What is the main command in v8? Why wouldn't they vainly repeat—what does Father know? When? How are they to pray instead (v9)? To Whom? Where? With what desire toward Him? And what desire for/on earth (v10)? And what for their own bodies (v11)? And what for their souls (v12)? With what safeguard (v13a)? And what outcome for us (v13b)? And what outcome toward God (v13c)? Rather than trying to be seen by men, what must they be doing to them (v14)? What will their Father do? But what if they don't (v15)?

What is godly prayer? Matthew 6:5–15 prepares us for the morning sermon on the Lord's Day. In these eleven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **prayer is worship and a means of grace.**

Prayer to the Father Who lovingly sees, v5–6. In the previous passage, Jesus warned against doing works of mercy for the eyes of men like the hypocrites do (v1–2). Now, He warns against praying like they do—praying in order to be seen by men (v5)! Prayer is, first and foremost, fellowship and worship: addressing the only living God Who sees in secret, but doing so as children to a Father—having Him as secret reward now and as open reward forever! Prayer is an act of worship.

Prayer to the Father Who wisely hears, v7–8. In these two verses, the Lord Jesus turns from the hypocrite to the heathen. These attempt to overcome their false deity's resistance by praying many words. But if we think that we need to pray in a way to manipulate God or inform God, then we are not thinking rightly of God, and it is not to Him that we are praying.

True prayer to the true God is not a seeking to overcome His unwillingness but a laying hold of His willingness. We set ourselves before Him Whose will is better than ours, and make our requests while submitting to His wisdom and goodness. He already knows what we need, and He is already going to do it. But, He brings us to pray that we may submit ourselves to Him. Thus, prayer is not only an act of worship, but it is a means of grace that brings us into submission.

Prayer to the Father Who gloriously forgives, v9–15. These two aspects of prayer—the worship of having Father as reward and the means of grace of being brought into submission are now happily combined in what we have come to call “the Lord's prayer.” v14–15 highlight how amazing it is that sinners may be forgiven and come to know the Holy Father and to enter into His glory. Truly, we ask for the opposite of what we deserve, as we yield ourselves up to His will for His Name (v9), this world (v10), our earthly needs (v11), and our spiritual needs (both forgiveness, v12; and the holiness that we must have to see the Lord and enter His glory, v13). Indeed, if we do not pray as people who long to forgive others, this is an indicator that we are not forgiven. If a sinner such as I can ask for glories such as this, then I have received a marvelous forgiveness, and one great part of my holiness, then, is to be a forgiver of others.

How is your praying worship? How is it fellowship? What part does submission to Him have in your heart and mind as you pray? How is your need for forgiveness at the center of your prayers? Whom do you need to forgive?

Sample prayer: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For, Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP1 “How Blessed the Man” or TPH559 “The Lord's Prayer”

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew chapter 6 verses 5-15. These are God's words. And when you pray, you shall not be like the Hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corner of the streets that they may be seen by men. But surely I say to you, they have their reward.

But when you pray, But you, when you pray, But you, when you pray, go into your room and when you have shut your door, pray to your father Who is in the secret place? And your father who sees in secret will reward you openly And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as a Heathen do.

For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore, do not be like them. For your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him. In this manner. Therefore pray. Our Father in Heaven. Hallowed Be Your Name. Your kingdom, come. Your will be done.

On Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation. But Deliver Us from the evil one. For yours as the kingdom and the power. And the glory forever. Amen.

If you forgive men, their trespasses, Your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, their trespasses Neither will your father. Forgive your trespasses. That sends this reading of Gods inspired, and in Aaron toward Remember, the Lord Jesus began the sermon by Announcing to those who, Uh, were his disciples their blessedness in him.

Describing the condition of their heart and mind. Um, conduct. And announcing to them that they are blessed for his sake. Especially because they are persecuted with him. And then he went on to describe to them. The righteousness that they must have in order. To enter the kingdom. And that it had to his righteousness that it must exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees that As the Lord Works in them to produce genuine righteousness.

It's going to be of a different sort than they've ever heard about growing up in synagogue. And we had several comparisons, then between the Bible was read or misread. Um, And, How the Lord Jesus interprets, his own word and applies it to them. And so that was the righteousness that exceeds that to the scribes and the Pharisees.

But now, especially as we turned into chapter six, we've begun hearing about how their religion must exceed that Of the scribes and Pharisees and their religion. Um, respect to others or religion and respect to God the religion even. And respect to themselves. And so, In their Works of Mercy, it must not be done for the eyes of others, but done unto father.

And they're praying unto God. Has not done. Into the eyes of others. But unto their father. And they're fasting. Uh, Uh, religious discipline. Uh, with respect even to themselves is not to be done for the eyes of others. But unto the Lord, and we'll come to fasting next week.

But this week we are on prayer. And so he adds one more thing that they're not supposed to do. Like the Hypocrites. Uh, and by Hypocrites here, he means especially describes and Pharisees as he's going to say later in this gospel, several times woe to you scribes and Pharisees.

Hypocrites. So that's especially whom he's talking about here. And he says, when you pray don't be like they are, they pray that they may be seen by men. And you can tell that they do so because of the place that they love to pray. Now, we should pray in church.

There are many public circumstances in which we ought to pray. And the believer loves the public worship of God. But he does have a special Delight in prayer. That is only between him and God. And so, even when he's in the public worship, he Delights more in the transaction of his between his soul and his God, then he does that, he might be heard to be praying.

Well, Uh, or appear or to be very spiritual. He prays in secret and he loves to pray even when he is by himself where only his father sees because his father is his reward. So again, Uh, God himself is the reward. You can either pray to be seen by men verse 5 or You can pray to be seen.

By your father. Your father with whom you have. This relationship, he is your creator and your Redeemer and your adopting father and you are his creature. And his subject and his beloved child. And so being seen by him is very different than being seen by men. It's not for your praise or your pride.

It is for the pleasure that you have in God himself. And in, whom he has made you to be to himself, and whom he has made himself. To be to you or the relationship that he Uh, given you to have from him. So he says, but when you you and you pray, go into your room.

And when you have shut your door. Pray to your father who is in secret and your father who sees you in secret. Your season's secret will reward you. Openly, and again, the critical text is missing openly But as we confess God, preserves his word pure and entire Uh, in and on to his All right, and so Uh, we do have the word openly here and It will be marvelous for us.

If you have had this life of learning to enjoy God, himself more and more. In your times of secret worship and secret prayer. And you take that into the public worship. And you enjoy. The means of Grace and the public assembly and Um, the way that the Lord Jesus leads, His body in a, in a unique and special way in the public portrait that you can't have in the secret worship, but in the secret worship.

Yeah. But even in the public worship, your whole, your soul is having that secret transaction with God, delighting in God himself and you're praying. And you love that. He's getting the glory. Of the prayers of corporate prayers of his people and the public means of Grace. Well, how much more in the last day?

When all whom he is elected. All whom Christ has atoned for Will have had his Redemption applied to them by his spirit and we every one of us in the innumerable multitude will be perfectly holy in Soul and glorified in body. And still praising and praying. And then, Will your soul have the Perfection, the completeness of that delight and fellowship with God In Prayer, even there in the midst of the public assembly, especially Isn't that glorious assembly?

In the last day. And so we may taste Heaven now. Uh, by that relationship. With God. And so that's praying to father, with respect to what father sees. But we also Pray to Father. As the one who hears or rather. As the ones who have heard him. And so we see that in verse 7, So, verse 6 was when you pray, Pray to your father who sees in secret verse 7 is when you pray Do not use vain repetitions as the Heathen do for, they think that they will be heard for their many words.

So they think to use many words, many repetitions and praying. As a mechanism by making their God, hear what they want. But our God doesn't need to hear what we want. He is pleased to hear his children to have the fellowship with his children to give them fellowship with himself as we heard in verse 6, but it's we who need to hear him because verse 8 says, therefore do not be like them.

For your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him. So what should we be praying for? We should be praying, not for the things that we think we need. But that our father knows that we need. Now, this is difficult. Because, We don't know what father knows.

Where can we find out what our heavenly father knows that we need? The Bible. He has given us all of his word. And so we read the word of God and we pray, according to the word of God. And then we are not overcoming his unwillingness. If we're praying in a way to overcome the unwillingness of God, A will never be able to.

If he's unwilling to give it NB, we wouldn't want to Because if we were asking for something, he was unwilling to give, that doesn't mean that he's not good. It means that what we were asking for isn't good. And so praise God. We are not like the, he the who pray in such a way as if we're trying to overcome God's unwillingness.

We pray in such a way to lay hold of his willingness, for what is good. Does that mean you can't just tell God about your trouble and about your need no, of course not. We are. Be anxious for nothing, but in all things. By prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving.

Make our requests known to God. But we must make them known to God. We must express our requests to God in the same mind and spirit as the Lord Jesus. Who says nevertheless not my will, but thine be done. Even knowing what God's will is. And expressing making using that form of expression.

To describe how difficult it is that he's going to do and yet drawing from his father. Strength in prayer. By the help of the spirit. So that he can go willingly to the Cross as he ought to. And so, his prayer in the garden was Um, Uh, what was a key means by which he marshaled strength from the father and from the spirit In order to go to the Cross.

With a Goodwill with a submissive will. We too then are to submit to our father's will in prayer. And so, he says, Therefore do not be like them for your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him in this manner therefore pray. And now he gives us.

The best prayer that you can pray for yourself. And that is to pray not for yourself. Our Father in Heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom, come. Your will be done. He knows what you need. And so begin. With who he is and what he has done for you and what he has made you to be to himself his own beloved child and how he has given you to know him to yourself.

As your beloved father. But not just your beloved father, but your Almighty father. Not like the Heathen is trying to manipulate a god of his own invention using prayer words as some kind of magic incantation. Like those heathens with The visible. And that synagogue of Satan. Who have their beads and they pray the same prayer over and over again on the beads.

As if it's magic words to make God do what they want. We have a father. In heaven. And he is good but he would he will do. What is good, he's already intended to do. What is good for us before we asked and he is wise. He knows better than we do.

But he is powerful. He is certainly bringing it about And we remember those things. When we begin with adoration. That's so he begins with adoration. Hallowed Be Your Name. Your kingdom, come. Your will be done. On Earth as it is in heaven. And so he's praying for the father's will to be done in the world, but also the he's praying for The father's will especially to be done.

In his own life. Give us this day. Our daily bread. And forgive us our debtors. As we forgive, Sorry and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And you notice the first thing, That we are really asking for that's implied here for each one of us. Is that we would be part of the body of Christ.

That we would be part of a church. That we would remember. That we are not asking merely as individuals. But uh we're asking as those who have been joined to Christ and in Christ have been joined to one another So that we pray corporately. Give us our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And so all of the benefits for which we ask come to us, not merely as creatures. But they come to us in the same love that has bound us to Christ. And made us part of the bride, part of the body, part of the church.

Part of the new living Temple. With Christ as the Chief Cornerstone. And each of us is living stones. To offer up spiritual sacrifice, including the spiritual sacrifice of prayer. And we need, Uh, we need the Regular Provident care of our Bodies note, that the Earthly request here is not for something that our flesh would dream up to have.

It is according to God's Providence and design. We need bread. We need clothing. We need shelter. We need safety. Health and strength and endurance. But what we need, most of all is forgiveness. In every good thing that God does for us, we need forgiveness. Because every good thing is the opposite of what we deserve.

And so we need forgiveness. If we're going to even Grow in Grace and grow in Holiness. We need forgiveness. Because we don't deserve. Be spared to Temptation. We need forgiveness. Because when we're tempted, we don't deserve. To be delivered from the evil. In the Temptation. We need forgiveness, if we're going to be, Forgivers.

And the Lord Jesus really emphasizes. That doesn't he because He comes after the prayer and from this amazing prayer. The one thing that he highlights at the end, Is the necessity of being forgivers of others. No, that's not that surprising to us if we remember. Back to his profile of what a disciple.

In the beginning of chapter five. Blessed are the meek. Blessed, are the merciful? Blessed are the peacemakers. And so one quick way. To call into question whether you belong to God in Christ. Is, if you are an unforgiving person. How can someone who's been forgiven an infinite debt? Not just a thousand talents of silver, but an infinite debt.

How can someone who's been forgiven like that? Remain hard-hearted and bittered, especially if The way he came to be forgiven. Was by the spirit's Grace just work in the heart. And so, when we find that unforgiveness That bitterness and Grudge holding and hard-heartedness That remains from our flesh. Uh, that is in our remaining fleshliness and in our remaining sinfulness We pray to be delivered from that too.

And that's part of what he's saying here. He's not saying look at how well I've forgiven my debtors now or corporately. Look how well we have forgiven our debtors now do for us as we have done for others. We don't want to be forgiven according to the likeness of what we've done to none for others.

We're asking him to make us more forgiving. And recognizing. That. Although, the our capacity to forgive thus far is small. Whatever there is did not come from us? It came from God. And so we are the more encouraged for our ongoing forgiveness by his already begun and ongoing work in us.

And so, we Uh, we pray. Not just for, God's will in the World At Large. For God's will in us as a church. And individuals. And for the end of all of these things, Not merely so that we Have a better time of it. The remaining days and moments that we have in this world.

But because we desire for Christ. To come into the fullness of his kingdom. We desire for God to be glorified. In his son, the last And for the Lord Jesus, to be glorified in his perfected. In the last. And so, as we pray, there's this heaven word Eternal Foc In this conclusion, which Uh, sadly is also Missing from the critical text.

For yours is the kingdom. And the And the glory forever. Amen. So, praise God. Jesus teaches us what it's like to pray. To a father who sees us and our fellowship with him is the great reward in praying. And a father who, Hears. Simply because we're his children. But whom we're not trying to manipulate or make to hear what we want.

But to whom we come trusting his wisdom. Asking him to do. What he wants. And that's how you pray. When the one in heaven is your father. Let us ask him. Uh, to help us pray this way. Our Father in heaven. We thank you that your Holy spirit is Are great instructor in prayer.

And that even after he. Given us all of the words of Christ. So that we have a completed Bible yet. Lord, even with your your Bible. And even after you have graciously, worked in. It is so much the case that We do not know how to pray for what we ought.

We thank you. That your spirit, who knows your mind? Helps us to pray, rightly and intercedes for us. With those groanings those desires. For the coming of the Kingdom in glory, and The adoption of sons and the Redemption of our bodies, That he does that groaning better than our words could ever have expressed.

And so we thank you for that Ministry of your spirit and we pray that you would keep conforming us to Christ. That we would pray more and more as those who are coming to Our father who is in heaven. And, To the one in heaven. Who is our father?

And so help us in our praying, we ask help us in all of our religion, To enjoy that interaction of our soul with you. For, we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.