

Saturday, March 9, 2024 • Read Matthew 6:7–15

Questions from the Scripture text: What aren't believers 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)?

How should we pray to a Father Who knows what we need? Matthew 6:7–15 prepares us for the morning sermon on the Lord's Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when you pray to a Father Who knows what you need, prayer is an embracing of His will.**

Christian prayer is not like pagan prayer. Pagans have to make themselves heard (v7). They are trying to manipulate their "god." But we must not come in such a way to the true God. He is not to be manipulated. His will is supreme. So our praying must be an embracing of that will.

Embracing His will by hallowing His Name. To honor and glorify His Name is the first and great priority of God in the world. Just as Jesus calls God "Holy Father" (cf. Jn 17:11) and asks Him to glorify His Name (cf. Jn 12:28, 17:1), so He teaches us to pray that God's Name would be hallowed.

Embracing His will with reference to the world. "Your Name" ... "Your kingdom" ... "Your will" ... just as heaven is all about the Lord God, so also everything on earth is from Him and through Him and to Him. When we pray, we should willingly submit ourselves to His will. He knows how to bring about His glory and the salvation of His elect. We do not pray for our names to be esteemed but His. We do not pray for our influence to be wielded but His. We do not pray for our desires to be fulfilled but His.

Embracing His will with reference to the church's needs. Note that the prayer begins with "our." Now, in v11–13, we see the corporate nature of the prayer in this series of first person plurals... us, our, us, our, our, us, us. We do not pray merely as individuals but as members of God's kingdom, Christ's church, Christ's bride, Christ's body. We know that His will toward us is good in physical things. He has created us with the need of food and drink and clothing, assigning the proper amount to each day (cf. v33–34). So, He tells us to pray for it daily, in submission to how He has made us. There is no encouragement here to bring Him a shopping list of fleshly desires.

We also know that His will toward us is good in spiritual things. Most of all, we need forgiveness. The provision of bread is itself a matter of forgiveness (cf. Gen 3:17–19). Every morsel of the believer's food tastes like sweet forgiveness. The believer has begun by forgiving grace (cf. 5:3–9). Now he must continue in it. This is how God's children pray. This is how His church prays. And if we do not pray as these needy ones, we do not pray like Jesus taught us.

We pray to be forgiven so that we might not only be cleared of guilt, but also advance in holiness. We know how strong is that sin which remains in us, and so we pray that God would mercifully spare us from situations where we might more readily give in to it. We pray that we might be delivered from the evil that is in every situation. Not just the evil one who is against us, but especially that evil that remains within us.

Embracing His will because it depends entirely upon His grace. We do not have any power within ourselves to serve the Lord's kingdom. But His kingdom will be served by means of His power unto the end that is His glory. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory! So, in addition to being a means of grace by which our wills are conformed unto God's will, prayer is also a means of grace by which we are brought into further dependence upon Him.

What have you been praying about lately? What would it look like to pray for that in a way that submitted to His will in it? What daily needs of yours have been sweetened by asking them of the Lord and receiving them as daily gifts from a loving Father? How has this sort of praying helped you submit to His good will for your earthly needs? For what spiritual needs have you been praying?

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 6 verses 7 through. 15. These are God's words. 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 is 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. So, for the reading of Gods, inspired and inert word.

When we read in verse 7, Not to be like the Heathen. There are two problems with the Heathen. The first is technique in prayer, and the second is purpose in prayer. Many, I think understand the prohibition against technique. Because it's more directly. A consequence of the grammar here, do not use vein repetitions And although many understand that, this means that in prayer, you must not use, vain repetitions, That has not stopped whole branches of the church facing almost, their entire Theology and practice of prayer on vain repetitions.

They would say, they're not vain, they're demonstrations of devotion because of how many times you can repeat the same thing and you're supposed to mean, it every time and whatnot. Whatever. it's vain repetitions. Indeed, all use of form prayer tends towards vain repetition. Even the Lord's Prayer is used in a way in many churches that lends to vain repetition, where it comes in the place every week in the order of worship.

and it is treated as its own sort of element. Of worship and the and therefore, it lends itself very easily. Unfortunately. To being said, mindlessly. Emptily as the word vein. Means. As we're not to use vein repetitions, we're supposed we're to pray. Meaningfully and we are to pray.

Formulating words from the heart, every time that we pray. Now, if We are formulating those words according to the exact form. Then that's fine. But, since the Lord

Jesus gives us a template of prayer. Immediately upon saying Nadia's. Vain repetitions. It is unwise. To overuse a particular form rather than Taking it as instruction.

Generating a Varied and sincere. Well, there's then the prohibition against the technique in prayer. but the prohibition against purpose and prayer is found in the last part of verse 7 for. They think that they will be heard for their many words. In other words, The purpose in prayer is to make themselves heard in heaven.

Which was a very distrusting and wicked attitude towards God. As if he would not hear us, as if he is not inclined to us in love, and then making yourself heard. in heaven also assumes that God Would not do what is wisest and best without our help?

or without our even worse manipulation. And so, rather than having the purpose and prayer to make ourselves heard, We ought to have the purpose and prayer to submit ourselves. To him. And that is a big part of the teaching of verse 8. Therefore do not be like them for your father.

And have your father knows. The things you have in need of before you ask him. And so prayer. Ought to be. Not a making our voice heard in heaven. But a response to God, having made his voice. Heard on Earth, the father, who knows what we need is? Also given us his scripture.

And so prayer ought to come off to spring from reading and understanding the Bible. This is one of the reasons why it's very helpful. in your secret worship. having asked God's help for the understanding of his word to read his word and then To take as prompts for prayer, what he is teaching you in his word.

Because he knows what you have need of. And so you listen to him and based upon and shaped by what he says, then you pray And now you are praying in submission. And so, We pray as a means of Grace, a means of Grace in two different ways. One, the very fact of reality of prayer, in this way, trains our hearts to submit and trains us To bring ourselves low before him

So, that we come in an attitude of humility. Trusting, his will like children of a good father who know that father's will is best And receiving instruction for my heavenly father. we Choose what we want. According to, what he People's taught us. And so, It is a means of Grace first in training.

The attitude of submission, the humility of bringing ourselves low before God and viewing him as great and good and wise but second That prayer is a means of Grace for the actual forming of our minds and thoughts to be like his So as we come in the right way responding to scripture as we comment that right attitude that prayer itself forms.

We also more and more think upon the Bible because we are thinking from his word about how to pray to him. Trusting that he is going to do what's right and wanting to participate. In his doing what's right by praying for the things that he would have us pray for.

And so this means having our minds and hearts brought more and more Into Conformity. With what God says in the Bible. Therefore, what it means is that, we pray, especially for the glory of his name. We pray, especially for the good of his church. And when we prayed for the good of his church, we pray as those who are part of his church with the confidence.

That the reason that that we are going to be heard he is going to do us. Good is because he has taken us. As subjects of his kingdom. He has taken us as adopted children. In the Lord, Jesus. As body parts of the body of Christ, as members of the bride of Christ.

So we have a great confidence as part of his church as we come to end. and We know that the way he has chosen, To be glorified and honored in the world. Is by the Gathering of his church to himself and by doing his church good especially that good.

Not only of sustaining us every day with what we need, the food and drink and clothing and trouble that we need every day. And we're going to hear about that a couple weeks time at the end this passage when he again, says your father in Heaven knows what you have need of.

Before you ask him. with respect to food and clothing. But then having said that he says, do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow. We'll take care of itself, sufficient for each day is its own trouble. That each day has its own, it's assigned and then to have trouble.

So give us this day our daily bread, we are praying. That we would have on that day, not just more bread for a day. But the particular bread that God has assigned to that day. And therefore also for the particular Drake, the particular clothing, the particular, Protection, the particular strength, the particular energy particular, wisdom, everything that we need according to God's Providence.

And so far from encouraging us to pray, according to the dictates of our Craving fleshly Hearts. For exceeding riches in this world. Which God does sometimes? Enrich. Faithful Believers. And that's not the riches are not wronged in and of themselves, but far from encouraging us to pray that way.

The Lord encourages us to pray in a way that responds to the way. He has designed us, the way he's made us the basic needs that we have in order to serve him and to serve others. And to receive each day's portion as particularly assigned in his good Providence.

so that asking for things this way and receiving them in this way, we receive each part of our portion every day as a love gift from our father. Our Father, who is good and desires to do us the best. Our Father, who is wise and knows exactly what that day's portion should be our father who is faithful and gives us that exact portion that he knows that we should have.

And this. Trains us further in submission so that we don't Grumble against his Providence. We don't receive. Whatever the portion is and say I don't like that. I would like whatever else it is. Our heart would like over against what we are receiving from God. No, we don't respond that way.

We receive it as a particular portion assigned from them and our hearts are chained in cheerfulness and thankfulness and how content. Then shall we become with the good Providence of our good. God every day a new set of particularly designed portions in his Providence, discovering that his mercies are indeed new.

Every morning. and so That's part of what we pray for as part of his church. But the other part the greater part is each day's sanctification. As God who has saved us, not so that we would be merely be forgiven and remain as we are, but that we would be holy That we would comment last into perfect Holiness and perfect happiness.

Enjoying his kingdom. Enjoying his glory, enjoying Those things he has trained. To pray for for the owner of his name because the owner of his name is our great pleasure. And how will we enjoy the honor of his name if we are still? Filthy with sin. And so he is cleansing us from our sin and so we recognize that remaining sin and we pray for God's help against it particularly in that part of his help that is his Providence and there's occasions knowing that there are those occasions where our remaining flesh overwhelms us and asking that he would keep us from such.

Occasionally, that's not into temptation not because God's Providence ever offers sin to us but because our remaining sinfulness is always eager to sin and there are

those At times in his good and wise, Providence to us where we are offered to choose righteousness, in what for us is, a more difficult situation, but we would be overwhelmed.

And so we pray as those who are weak and those who are needy and those who suspect ourselves and are at war with our sin and we say lead us not into temptation, yet praying, whether we're in one of the more difficult situations or when we're in the less difficult situations because you and I know, The midst of a comparatively easy situation in which to be Godly and righteous and serve God.

We often still sin, even in that situation. And so whatever the situation, whether difficult or whether easy we pray that God would deliver us from the evil. That is in it. The evil one who is always offering to us to sin. Sometimes the idea. That we might send right now, doesn't even come from our flesh.

It comes from inside from the devil or one of The many Devils that are under the Satan. Lucifer the Fallen Angel. So there are the there are offers to send that come from him. There's a desire to sin that comes from the flesh that remains Within. And there's a world that is glad to have us in with him, or with them the scoffers, and the mockers and the Sinners.

That Psalm 1 says we would avoid the evil ones, Proverbs warns don't go with them, their path leads to death, they lie and wait for blood. And so forth. And so, the world, the Flesh and the devil. Are always. Attempting to do us, the greatest amount of harm, which is not the sort of harm.

that the devil accomplished. in the case of job, but the sort of harm that he was attempting. Remember he accomplished and hurting job very much economically, and in his family and bereiving him, and even in his own flesh and his own health, and yet in all this job, did not sin against God.

He was delivered from the evil. In those situations, sin is the greatest evil. It is the evil. Of evils. And so, as we as we come to God, praying for The glory of his name and everything that happens on Earth. Bringing at last whatever is necessary to bring in the new heavens and the new Earth in which the two will be the same spiritually.

Where his will will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Because in the new Earth, there will be no sin and so the first three petitions, those your your How would be your name? Your kingdom come your will be done. Desiring for the same thing that the creation runs for.

In Romans 8, we who have the first fruits of the spirit grown for, and the spirit himself as he intercedes for his groans for As. As we pray for ourselves, we are praying to be able to enjoy that to be admitted to participate in it as those who have been made.

Holy and therefore we need to keep being forgiven and we keep needing to be more and more forgiving. And so he concludes By saying. Mario's on the wrong page of my Bible. 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.

Well this is important in two ways. One if we are not forgiving people and those who seek over against the resistance of our flesh and the weakness that we have due to our remaining sin if we are not those who forgive and who seek to forgive, then we're not actually children of our Father in Heaven.

We're not actually those who are described by God's grace by the spirit's work who are described in the opening verses of chapter 5 who are poor in spirit and mourning and meek and peacemakers. A Christian is fundamentally a forgiving person. But then we know that although that's what a Christian fundamentally is, and what a Christian functionally ought to be that we're not always that way.

And so our good and gracious Father in Heaven, not wanting us to be hardened in our unforgiveness will often afflict us note that this is especially verses 14 and 15 addressed to those who know God as their father in Heaven. And he says, if you are an unforgiving ununderstanding, unmerciful person, then you can expect hard providences from God, why?

Because if you are, his he is determined to sanctify you And he is not going to let you just keep on careening in sin. As if you're on your way to hell instead of on your way to heaven. And so, when we pray, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors We are praying that God would keep treating us not according to our sin but according to the righteousness of Christ and therefore he would give us our competent daily portion every day and he would also give us To be delivered from the evil as he makes us more and more holy we need daily continual forgiveness.

As if he is going to keep doing those things, he never once. Looks at the Merit of how we are doing and says he deserves his daily bread. Oh, she deserves not to be led into temptation and to be delivered from the evil. No, he looks at Christ's Merit and Christ's righteousnesses Jesus deserves her daily portion for her and Jesus deserves for him to be delivered from the evil in that situation.

Pray, forgive us our debts. We're praying. That we would be treated according to Christ's righteousness but we also pray. As we forgive our debtors recognizing that. The greatest thing that we need is to be made more and more like our God, our gracious Heavenly Father who forgives us our savior, God the son.

A man and lived and died in order that we might be forgiven Conformity to him himself. Not just freedom from our remaining sin but Conformity to him himself is the thing that we most need. So this as we forgive our debtors far from saying if I for if I am a forgiving person then I will earn from God the good things.

That I want what a mess reading. That would be of verse 12 and verse 14 and verse 15. No it's praying for the greatest thing for us. That is or the greatest need for us that is in this prayer that we would be conformed to the image of Christ, who is the great forgiver, who went to the Cross, to forgive his debtors, that we would be conformed to our Father in Heaven.

Be made children of Our Father in Heaven blameless, and pure Complaining. Not grumbling, not attacking others. But, Living walking in love. like children of our heavenly father in the midst of a corrupt and first generation, And so, what request that one is. as we forgive our debtors and so at all of these In all of these things.

As we pray for all of these things. What's happening? However, else we came to to our time of prayer, whatever else, our priorities were As we pray, instead, not according to our flesh. But according to scripture, We have our thoughts and our desires and our Delights all brought more into line.

With what father tells us in his good instruction with what the son is on our behalf, and what he is making us to be like, as the spirit makes us more like he is And so prayer, really is. This great means of Grace, it's one of the Advancements from the middle of the 16th century and What's called the three forms of unity to the middle of the 17th century, and the Westminster confession and catechisms the three forms of unity.

Identify the primary means of Grace as word and Sacrament, and they teach about prayer and they teach, right? And good things about prayer. But this necessity of prayer is a means of Grace. As an instrument that the Holy Spirit uses, To bring us more into submission to God and loneliness of loneliness, of heart that worships him and adores and is grateful and cheerful and thankful.

And to conform our thinking, our priorities, our Pleasures, our desires. more to God prayer as a means of Grace. in the In the further 100 years or so, almost century of reformation between the two. The Ministers of Christ in. Congregations had learned and discovered and grown in recognizing prayer.

As a means of Grace. and this is what we expect even from the Bible. Because in Hebrews chapter 4, it does not say that we would come boldly to the throne of grace. Requesting and asking or start requesting and searching for Grace and mercy. But to obtain and receive Grace.

And mercy. And so indeed prayer is as it were a great part of its own answer to itself. It is a fellowship with God, like we heard last week. In which God gives us. To be more submitted to him. And more conformed to his mind by his Spirit, we obtain Grace, we find Mercy.

To help us. In our time of need what a wonderful thing. True, biblical prayer is and how Dreadful if we pray like the papist, if we pray like the Pagan Then we Implied, awful things about God and we make an awful display of our own flesh. And we miss the great gift of God, that prayer itself is And so we are grateful to our Lord.

Jesus. For his instruction here. In prayer. As a means. Of God's grace. Let us ask him. That his Spirit would bless this portion of his work to us. Lord Jesus. We thank you for This part of your word, we Thank you for correcting us and

Teaching us. We pray now that By your spirit, you would use this part of your word to train us. To train us and how we think of our prayer and how we come to God, how we come to you. That you would give us. Wonder at your greatness and confidence in your wisdom and your goodness.

That your spirit would train us into submission. And that your spirit would also. Train us then into Conformity that The distorted and corrupted and A small. Priorities of Of our flesh. Would be overwritten by your own priorities. As you have taught us about them in your word. And as you have modeled, The praying for them in this prayer.

And so, help us to use it while we ask. In your name. Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.