

REVERANCE IN REVIEW

Friday, February 20

Reading: Matthew 6:9-13

Matthew 6:9 " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, **10** Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

We have come to a transition in the Lord's Prayer. We can see this clearly by the change of pronouns. These first phrases have focused on the reverence of God – "Your name, Your kingdom, Your will." The rest of the prayer turns our focus on bringing our needs to God – "Give us, Forgive us, Lead us, Delivery us."

Sadly, we tend to rush through these opening verses to get the "important stuff" – our requests. We spend the least time in prayer praising God and the most time on our own needs and wants. This is the reverse of what God intends. If we do not give God the reverence and awe He deserves, our requests have a greater chance of being skewed.

Many Christians today have a wrong perception of worship.

What does putting God first in our prayer lives do?

1. **IT INCREASES OUR LOVE FOR THE LORD.** By praising Him, we begin to see Him more clearly. That the Creator of the universe, the all-powerful King of everything, would care for us will make us love Him more and desire to do His will in our lives.
2. **IT INCREASES OUR VISION.** By focusing on the kingdom and will of God first, our prayers will move from "What can God do for me" to "What can God do through me." It refocuses us on what is truly important – God's kingdom, God's will, and God's glory.
3. **IT INCREASES OUR JOY AND RENEWS OUR SPIRIT.** The prophet Isaiah wrote that Messiah would come "...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair" (Isaiah 61:3). When our prayers focus on God and His glory, we take our eyes off ourselves and the things that drag us down and we allow the Holy Spirit to renew our joy in the Lord. As Job's friend Elihu put it: "...then that person can pray to God and find favor with Him, they will see God's face and shout for joy; He will restore them to full well-being" (Job 33:26).

Around 700 years before the birth of Jesus, during the dark days when the Assyrian army threatened the nation of Judah, the prophet Isaiah recorded the following prayer:

Isaiah 33:2 LORD, be gracious to us; we long for You. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress...

5 The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high; He will fill Zion with His justice and righteousness. 6 He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.

When God's people (represented here by Zion) begin their prayers with a focus on our Father in heaven, we receive His strength, help, and a sure foundation. How does your prayer life acknowledge the fear and glory of God? How does praising and worshipping the Lord give us a sure foundation for our prayers and our daily lives?