

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

Part 27

“The Lord’s Prayer”

I. Introduction

1. Welcome to our verse-by-verse study of the Sermon on the Mount, where we have now arrived at the very center of the Sermon, the most famous prayer in the Bible, and even in the world...

“The Lord’s Prayer”

We are on holy ground here because this is the only place in the Word of God where the Lord teaches His people how to pray. It begins in Matthew 6:9 where He begins...

“Pray after this manner...”

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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

2. How many millions of times do you think this prayer been prayed over the past 2000 years? How many times have *you* prayed it? And that might be a problem because we can be so familiar with it that we can miss out on much of its meaning!

3. I want to set the stage for our study with 3 things you need to know about the Lord's Prayer: what it is and what it isn't:

3 Keys to Understanding the Lord's Prayer

- The Lord's Prayer is a model, not a mantra
- The Lord's Prayer is personal, not universal
- The Lord's Prayer is relational, not religious

III. 3 Key Things You Need to Know about the Lord's Prayer

A. First: It is a Model not a Mantra

1. Jesus was not teaching His disciples to pray this prayer word for word as some kind of spiritual "mantra", like an oft-repeated spiritual chant!

a. Here's a good example of how we misunderstand the teaching of Jesus; almost every churchgoer knows the Lord's Prayer, but very few have noticed how he *introduces* it...

"Pray after this *manner*..."

Matthew 6:9

b. The Greek word means "in this way"; "in this manner" or "after" this fashion.

c. Jesus wasn't saying "memorize this"; He was saying "pray like this".

"I very much question whether Christ intended this prayer to be used as a constant form of prayer. It seems to me He gave it as a model by which we are to fashion all our prayers."

Charles Spurgeon

2. This doesn't mean there's anything wrong with praying the prayer word for word! But it's a mistake to limit our prayers to simply repeating this prayer over and over every day. Jesus meant it as a model!

a. In his book "Studies in the Sermon on the Mount," the great David Martyn Lloyd-Jones says...

"This prayer is undoubtedly a pattern prayer. He introduces it with 'Pray after this manner'. So we might say that what we have in the Lord's Prayer is a kind of skeleton."

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

3. In other words, this "Lord's Prayer" is like a map or a guideline for all of our prayers. For example, when most people pray, they begin immediately to present their petitions to God and ask Him for things. But that's out of order!

4. **The Lord's Prayer is a "pattern" for all our prayers:**

- We are to always begin our prayers with relationship: "Our Father who art in heaven"
- Then we proceed with worship: "Hallowed be Thy name"
- Then we pray for God's will to be done: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"
- Only then, after we have done these things, are we to present our petitions for personal needs! "Give us this day our daily bread"!

5. So first, it's a model, not a mantra.

B. Second: The Lord's Prayer is Personal not Universal

1. I hope I don't offend you when I say that the Lord's Prayer is not to be prayed by everyone!

2. Like everything else in the Sermon on the Mount, it only applies to the true Disciples of Christ; as Lloyd-Jones puts it...

“It is only those who are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who can say, ‘Our Father’. It is only the people of whom the Beatitudes are true who can say with any confidence, ‘Our Father’.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

3. We have been stressing from the beginning of our studies that the Sermon on the Mount is addressed only to believers.

4. The Sermon describes the “normal Christian life” and we have seen how different it is from the world!

“This prayer was never meant for universal use. Jesus Christ taught it not to all men, but to His disciples, those who are truly converted. It is entirely out of place on the lips of an ungodly man.”

Charles Spurgeon

5. But here come the humanists who tell us that the Bible teaches the universal fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; that God is every man’s father and every man is my brother.

“Some say that the Fatherhood of God is universal and that every man, because created by God, is necessarily God’s son. I disagree! This prayer is for those who look to God as our Father by creation, but as our Father through adoption and the new birth!”

Charles Spurgeon

6. There is a false, humanistic form of Christianity out there that teaches everyone can call God their “Father”. Like the Pharisees in John 8 who told Jesus that God was their Father. But He said...

Who is your Father?

"If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. "Why do you not understand what I am saying?"

It is because... **"You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.**

John 8:42-44 NLT

**You are the children of your father the devil,
For you love to do the evil things he does.**

John 8:44 NLT

7. You go to church. You've been baptized. You pray the Lord's Prayer, calling God your Father; but do you love your sin? Do you keep God's commandments? No? Hear Lloyd-Jones...

"Any sinner who calls God His Father is a hypocrite. No one who holds affection for sin in his heart and practices sin every day can pray the Lord's Prayer because God is not His father! Any sinner who says "Our Father" is a hypocrite. Why? Because you cannot be a son of God unless you are born of God."

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

8. How casually do we treat the Lord's Prayer if we teach sinners to pray it?

a. Testimony: We lament the fact that prayer has been removed from our public schools. But I remember as a schoolboy, standing with my class every day, reciting the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Now I realize that I had no business with the Lord's Prayer at all. Nor did most of my classmates.

b. But who knew? I had no one to teach me that the Lord's Prayer is not universal; it is personal, only for those who are born of God.

9. Which leads me to my final, and perhaps most important point...

C. Thirdly: The Lord's Prayer is Rooted in Relationship, Not Religion

1. If there is any one thing I would that you take away from the message today, it is this; the root of all true prayer, the very starting place, is establishing our relationship with God.

2. The most important words in the Lord's Prayer are the first 2 words...

"Our Father..."

3. Testimony: Preparing this message brought me a fresh revelation of the power of these 2 words. I have spent all week soaking in the riches of being able to start all my prayers truly saying, "Father"...

Do you know that the essence of true prayer is found in the two words in verse 9, 'Our Father'? I suggest that if you can say from your heart, whatever your condition, 'My Father', in a sense your prayer is already answered. It is just this realization of our relationship to God that we so sadly lack.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

4. Before we ask God for anything; before we ask His will to be done and His kingdom to come; even before we try to worship Him...these 2 words come first!!!

"Our Father"

5. You say it's hard to find time to pray; you say you don't know how to pray; let me help you...

If you get no farther in prayer than bathing in the glory of being able to say "Our Father", you will find renewal! This is the wisdom of the Church...

"Throughout the centuries, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, all have been agreed about this, that the first step in prayer has always been what they call 'Recollection'. You approach in relationship."

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

- a. In “recollection”, you need say nothing except “my Father”.
- b. You just rest in this amazing fact; God is your Father; you are His child.

6. Testimony: Are you confused? Are you overwhelmed? Have you no idea what God is doing or why you are facing what you are facing? I can relate! But here’s help. Start here. With these 2 words. “Our Father”. Just be quiet and meditate on having a heavenly Father and being His child; think of all that means.

7. To say “Our Father” means 2 things:

- a. We have Sonship with God
- b. We have Brotherhood with Christ

“There is a double relationship here. There is sonship because God is ‘Father’; there is brotherhood because we say ‘Our Father’.”

Charles Spurgeon

8. If God is my Father, and Christ my older brother (along with all saints), what fear can I have?

III. Review:

A. The Lord’s Prayer is the Center of the Sermon

1. There are 3 things we need to know...

3 Keys to Understanding

1. It is a model, not a mantra

2. It is personal, not universal

3. It is relational, not religious

2. In our next study, we will look deeper at the meaning of “Our Father”!

ALTAR CALL AND PRAYER