

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adult Sunday School

SERMON ON THE MOUNT (II)

LESSON ONE: THE LORD'S PRAYER (I)

I. PASSAGE

Matthew 6:5-15, “⁵ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. ⁶ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. ⁷ But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. ⁸ Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. ⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. ¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

II. INTRODUCTION

Prayer is communication with God. It is the highest form of communication that we can ever know in this life. Prayer does not need internet. There is no need to use a telephone line. There is no need to connect to satellite or wifi. Prayer means we can talk to God straightaway. We do not even need to see Him. He is everywhere and He can hear us when we pray. However, it is reserved for a special group of people called Christians. Only true Christians are able to communicate with the one living and true God.

From the Lord's Prayer, the Lord taught His disciples how to pray to God. However, He wanted His disciples to possess a right attitude and motive in prayer before He introduces the Lord's Prayer to them. There are at least three important points to take note: a) Do not be hypocrites (verse 5), b) Pray secretly (verse 6), and c) Avoid vain repetitions (verses 7-8).

III. DO NOT BE HYPOCRITES (Verse 5)

Hypocrites are those who pretend to be what they are not. They pretend to be good when inside them is full of wickedness. Prayer becomes an area that they hide their hypocrisy. Their hypocrisy may be hidden from men but God can see through them, for nothing escape His eyes.

Prayer was supposed to be made unto God and yet hypocrites wanted their prayer to be seen by men. They love standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets mean everyone is paying attention to what they are doing. They wanted to be seen. They wanted people to look up to them. Hypocrites wanted that kind of attention. They wanted men's praise. And the Lord says, “They have their reward.” This is what they sought after, and they received it. They had succeeded in getting men's attention and their praise. But, is not prayer made toward God? They should be seeking after God's attention and His praise.

Do not be hypocrites, the Lord says. We are not to seek after men's attention and their praise. Our prayer is for God to see and hear. We are to seek God's attention and His praise.

IV. PRAY SECRETLY (Verse 6)

Hypocrisy in prayer is what we must avoid. But what must we do then? The Lord says, “When thou prayest, enter into thy closet.” Closet is where one changes his clothes. No one changes his clothes in an open area but behind closed doors. This is what the Lord meant. This is where you are all by yourself. The Lord is speaking about our own personal prayer life. It is our Quiet Time which we spend with God day by day. There is nothing to show off. We pray secretly behind doors where we have our privacy, alone with God. There is no need to make a public announcement that we are going to do our Quiet Time. It is our own private time with God. That’s what secret means. It is to be done privately, not in the open where man can see you or hear you. Prayer is between us and God. There is only one who should see and hear us, and He is God.

V. AVOID VAIN REPETITION (Verses 7 - 8)

There is yet another problem which some had when they pray, and that is the problem of vain repetition. How many times do you think one need to pray before God will hear him? Some believe that once is not enough. They must repeat the same prayer as many times as possible. The reason in so doing is not because they believe in “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). They did so because they had this idea that God must be busy and one must keep repeating and make their prayer long in order to get His attention. The Lord says, For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. This is vain repetition.

The Lord is not against repetition. It is vain repetitions that He is against. Repetitions mean repeating the same thing again. When we pray without ceasing, surely our petitions will be repeated many times over. There is nothing wrong with repetitions when we pray sincerely and with the right motive. The key word to avoid is “vain.” This is what makes repetitions evil and meaningless. Vain means empty and useless. We must never think that God hears only long prayer and despise short prayer. Vain repetitions are useless. God already knows what we are going to pray before we even uttered them out.

It is important to bear these three important points in mind when we study the Lord’s Prayer. We make sure our attitude and motive are right when we pray.

VI. PREFACE OF THE LORD’S PRAYER (Verse 9)

What is the preface? Preface means the introduction to the content and message. The preface of the Lord’s prayer is: Our Father which art in heaven. This is the opening address. This preface itself opens up and introduce to us what prayer is all about. We are addressing no one else but God who is our heavenly Father. In other words, we must know whom we are praying to. This is very important. Many do not know whom they are talking to when they offer sacrifices and love offerings to idols to seek for a good life, good result, good business, for marital blessing, family blessing, for good health and so on. They do not really care who they are praying to as long as they receive what they want.

Does God want us to do that to Him? No, He wants us to know Him so that we will know what to ask for when we pray to Him. Do we really know God? As God’s children, we are to know our Father which art in heaven. The only way to do so is to know His Word which He has providentially given to us.

To call Him Father means we acknowledge that we are His children. Such an address sets our relationship with right from the beginning. There is no basis in which we can utter this prayer to God unless we are His children. It proves we are saved and bound for heaven. And this is the power of God through Christ who has saved us from our sins. Are we saved? Are we His children? May God help us. Amen.