

## The Lord's Prayer II – Matthew 6:11-12

**INTRODUCTION** – Addressing God correctly and seeking God's glory in prayer are the preliminary prerequisites in prayer that the disciples of old were not used to. This is closeness with God that was not common in the days of the Old Testament. In OT times, the LORD God was seen as someone who was High up in the heavens and all men had to approach Him with the deepest sense of awe and reverence. The closeness aspect was present but not commonly taught. In times of great distress we can see the prayers of his servants like King David crying out to God personally in the psalms. But to approach Him as in a Father-child relationship was definitely not common.

However, when Christ taught His disciples and us to pray, this is the manner that we need to approach God without crossing the line from reverential closeness to the domain of rudeness and callousness. Based upon this Father-child relationship, we think of our daily needs and heart conditions. Our daily needs will reveal the kind of heart that we have - is it one of faith and trust or is it one of faithlessness and no trust in God's provision as we serve on earth? This is where our testimony is seen by the people around us and why Christians are left behind after salvation. Since believers witness for Christ in their mortal flesh, this mortality will become the target of attack by the evil one. He uses seduction and persecution to attack this earthen vessel. He attacks the mind, the heart and the body. He will not stop until he succeeds or until the believer is taken home to glory by God. The antidote against this incessant attack is to protect the mind and heart. This is what Christ emphasized next in His prayer.

- I. **Faith in Prayer (6:11)** – “Give us this day our daily bread.” The literal translation is “Our daily bread, give us this day.” The emphasis is on “our daily bread.” The word “daily” means needful. We are to pray for what we need and not what we want. Trusting in God to provide for our physical needs allows him to focus on all things eternal and spiritual. This is exactly what Christ taught a few verses after verse 11. **Matthew 6:31-33, “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”** [Emphasis added] This enables the believer to become a godly witness continuously as he will not be distracted by worries about the material realm. The spiritual realm requires the believer's single minded focus. Any distraction, even in the slightest, will result in an unholy witness. How many believers have tried to balance carnality and holiness thinking that they can love both or have their heart and mind on both? All have failed miserably. The result is a wasted life. Every minute lived in carnality or for mammon is a minute lost for eternity. It is spent promoting the devil and demoting the Name of Christ, for Christ's Name has been profaned by the believer's minutes of loving mammon instead of loving God.

This is the life of faith that Christ wants all believers to have. We must live on a day by day basis. When we live in this manner we will need to deal with problems the size of a day. When believers live on a weekly basis, they carry on their shoulders problems of a week. When they live on a monthly basis which is what the world programmes us to do by the use of a monthly income instead of a daily wage, they have to deal with one month size problems, which is huge. No man can do that! Imagine a mother worrying about washing one month's worth of her family's dirty clothes! The thought of it would deflate her spirit. If she were to think of the load she has to wash on a daily basis, the task is immediately very manageable. This is true for all believers in all areas of their lives. From studies to exams to work commitments to projects, all

things when reduced to a day size become manageable suddenly. This is what Christ wanted all believers to pray for. Our daily bread, i.e. needs, is supplied every day by our heavenly Father. Let us ask ourselves if we have enough food and clothing to eat and wear today. I am sure all of us can say yes. Imagine if we only have only two pieces of garments. Our apartment design would be drastically different, in terms of size and content. If we have only two garments, one we have on and the other is in the laundry to be washed and dried, there would be no need to design cupboards in our bedrooms. Cupboards are to cater to our extras! Some are desirous of a walk-in cupboard as if it is better than having no cupboard at all. These are all the fruits of the world's ideas of buying and possessing more and more. This kind of life that amasses possessions is the cause of depression and heartaches. Myriads of believers have lost sleep because they worry over their future and what they might have when they grow old or in 20 years' time. They fret and suffer depression by their worries. Their concept of the world is to accumulate as much as possible for a rainy day. However, that rainy day may not come at all and the worry is for nothing! Trust God to take care of our future as children of God. Live day by day by faith, trusting in our heavenly Father to take care of our future by trusting Him to take care of our daily needs.

Didn't God provide manna for the Israelites on a daily basis in the wilderness? He fed more than two million of them for 40 years! There was no lack. All of them ate to their fill every day. **Exodus 16:16-18** ***"This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating."*** [Emphasis added] The Israelites were forbidden to keep extra for tomorrow. In other words there was no saving! If they kept extras the extra would rot and stink. **Exodus 16:19-21** ***"And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted."*** [Emphasis added] God taught clearly to live day by day trusting in Him to care for their tomorrows. This is the lesson we need to learn today! This is what Matthew 6:11 is all about. The only day that the Lord did not provide manna was the Sabbath Day. The Israelites were taught a precious lesson of faith. Trust the LORD to provide by resting on the Sabbath Day. **Exodus 16:25-27** ***"And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none."***

Keeping the Sabbath day holy is the expression of the believer's faith in God to provide. Those who do not keep the Sabbath day holy do not live by faith, which also implies that they do not live by faith day by day as well. They worry and live as if God has deserted them or God is unable to help them! They cannot pray meaningfully what Jesus taught in His prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." These faithless ones want Jesus to give them this month their monthly bread. The world is pressing believers into this mould through the monthly salary. Believers plan their lives on a monthly basis and their future on a yearly basis. This is to carry our monthly problems on a daily basis. No man can carry such a load and not lose sleep over it. Pray to God "to give us this day our daily bread." This is the life of faith that God desires for all His children. Remember how important faith is in a believer's life. Whatever we do that is not of faith is sin! (cf. Romans 14:23). Also in **Hebrews 11:6** ***"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."***

- II. **Forgiveness in Prayer (6:12)** -- One of the most deadly sins in the believer's life is the refusal to forgive. This has hindered many born again believers from having their prayers heard and answered by God even though they may pray correctly. Their heart is not right because they refuse to forgive. The prayer of the believer to God is to forgive them because they have also forgiven. What is the meaning of forgiveness? Forgiveness has two parts: to forgive for being hurt or sinned against and to ask for forgiveness for sinning against another. Genuine forgiveness always results in reconciliation. When God forgives the sinner through Christ, there is reconciliation between God and that sinner. God saves him and transforms him into a saint after he has been forgiven by God through Christ. He is reconciled to God and is no longer called an enemy of God but a child of God. When a believer sins against God, there is a rift in the relationship whereby God will no longer hear the prayers of the believer. The Father-child relationship is not broken. Fellowship with God is broken as God will not hear the believer unless he repents of his sins. This was the psalmist's experience when he penned **Psalm 66:17-20** **"I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."** [Emphasis added]

From the above explanation regarding forgiveness, we see that there is the one who must always be ready to forgive, like God who is always ready to forgive when the sinner comes to Him. God knows every sinner's heart and whether he is sincere in his repentance. Whether there is actual reconciliation which results in salvation between a sinner and God is known only to God. However, in the case of a believer, he must always be ready to forgive, like God, so much so that he harbours no ill will toward the person who has sinned against him. This heart of forgiveness and readiness to forgive must be found in every believer's life. This protects the believer from the sin of bitterness, anger and hatred and, last but not least, an unforgiving spirit. This is important for every believer to realize and apply to his heart. As all believers are called to suffer for Christ, they will experience injustices in life repeatedly. If they do not possess this ever ready to forgive spirit, they will fall into sin. This is what Satan wants. It will cripple the believer's life and service. Bitterness and an unforgiving spirit will eat inside the person like canker. It will rob the believer of the joy of the Lord and service. He becomes useless to God and to everyone. This means that he must forgive anyone who has sinned against him and comes to him in repentance. The result is reconciliation.

How many times must the believer forgive the sinner who sins against him and keeps on returning to apologise? Jesus says there is no limit to the believer's forgiveness. He must keep on forgiving. Jesus taught clearly in **Matthew 18:21-22** **"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."** What if his repentance is not sincere? No believer can read hearts. Jesus' command here is clear. The believer has to keep on forgiving. This spirit of forgiveness is for the spiritual benefit and protection of the believer and not the one who sinned against him. Know that the failure to forgive will result in sin. Possessing a readiness and spirit to forgive is spiritual protection against sin for the believer. This includes forgiving unbelievers who persecute us. They may never come to ask forgiveness till the day they die in their sin but the believer must not harbour ill will and must forgive in his heart all who persecute him.

The one who has sinned must go to the person and apologize with all sincerity. If reparation has to be made, then he must make it. Words alone are not enough when the transgression requires reparation. The offer of reparation is the evidence of true repentance. Bearing the consequence of the sin is also another evidence of true repentance. Sincerity on the part of the sinner is crucial

in reconciliation. Time will heal and time will also reveal. As long as the person pretends to repent when there is no sincerity, he remains in a state of sin. He knows it in his heart, unless his conscience is seared. He also knows that God knows. Of course, the person who is dead in sin will never know. However, the believer who is in sin will know. The Holy Spirit in him reveals it to him. There will be no peace in his soul, only turbulence, like a calm sea (at salvation) that suddenly turns boisterous because of the wind that blows (no repentance). The peace of God is gone. The prayers are not heard! He is suddenly rendered spiritually useless in the cause of Christ. He cannot pray for anyone, not even for his own family. He is like a man naked and exposed to the elements of the world without any protection. He will come under all sorts of spiritual attacks from his mind to his emotions to his heart and actions as the Lord will not hear his cry for help unless he repents.

When the one who is hurt forgives and the one who has sinned truly repents, there will be genuine reconciliation. It does not mean that everything will suddenly go back to normal as if the person has not sinned; for if the transgression is serious like adultery, it will take time for hearts to heal and the original trust in the relationship to be fully restored. This is exactly what this portion in the Lord's Prayer means: **Matthew 6:12 "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."** The cry to our heavenly Father is to forgive us. This is a strong request from the one who prays as seen in the use of the imperative. The focus is on the request to God to forgive and not on the time or how many times we ask. All believers will sin as they serve on earth in this mortal body. There are no exceptions. Asking God to forgive must be a daily request. It must be done from the heart in all sincerity. We cannot hide from God. We must never try to hide from God. We only hurt ourselves when we do that. The word "debt" means "something owed." In the moral sense it means "a fault." In this context it refers to a fault or a wrong done against God.

The basis for asking God to forgive our debts is that we have also forgiven our debtors, i.e. the ones who have sinned against us. This is more than just referring to an actual reconciliation; it also includes the believer always possessing a forgiving heart and spirit. The believer must keep on forgiving his debtors even as he asks God to forgive him his debts. This is a very good soul searching way of guarding against the sin of bitterness and possessing an unforgiving spirit. Every time we ask God to forgive us, we are reminded of the truth of whether we have forgiven others who have sinned against us.

**APPLICATION** – Faith and forgiveness are Christian virtues that God knows the believers need the most in order to be a holy and effective witness for Christ. Without faith we cannot please God. Everything that we do that is not of faith is sin. Not forgiving someone who has sinned against us is sin and will result in bitterness and hatred. These two parts of the Lord's Prayer will greatly help all believers who serve on earth to maintain holiness and an effective witness for Christ. This will also protect them from the attacks of the evil one who will keep trying to destroy their holy witness. Amen.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between the way a life of faith is measured for a believer who lived in OT times as a national witness, and a Gentile believer today as a church witness? What is the best measure of a life of faith for Gentile believers today?
2. How should we teach our children from infancy the life of faith as they grow up in a Christian home?
3. What is the life of faith like for a fulltime housewife, a working adult, a student, and a fulltime worker in a church?
4. Is there a difference between forgiveness experienced by unbelievers and by believers? Will they experience genuine reconciliation? Elaborate.
5. Husbands and wives keep hurting each other, so how long must they continue to forgive? Does the nature of the transgression make a difference to your answer?

**The Lord's Prayer -- Matthew 6:9-15** "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."