

PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER

Covenant Life College – Brian Chesemore

Part 1: Prayers to the Father

Matthew 6 And Luke 11

I. Prayer is Natural (Because of the Savior)

"[Prayer] is at the heart of God's plan of salvation...A Christian is someone who knows God through Jesus Christ, and to know God is to converse with him." (Timothy Chester, *The Message of Prayer*, 27)

"It is not too much to say that God made us to pray, that prayer is (not the easiest, but) the most natural activity in which we ever engage." (Packer, *Praying the Lord's Prayer*, 15)

II. Prayer is Learned (From the Savior)

A. Examine our Motives (Matthew 6:1-8)

1. I have a tendency to want a righteous practice for the wrong reasons

* To impress man: "that they may be seen by others." (5)

* To impress God: "heard for their many words." (7)

2. So what's the answer? Should I simply avoid public or corporate prayer?

"It is sometimes said that good private prayer is the foundation of good corporate prayer, but it may be more biblical to say that corporate prayer is the foundation of private prayer. Our experience of God in Christ is

corporate. Western individualism has made the individual alone with God the centre of spirituality. For the people of the Bible it is the relationship between God and his people that is central.” (Chester, The Message of Prayer, 153)

- * The Scriptures call us to pray to the Divine Audience
- The Scriptures call us to pursue Godly Motives

B. Examine our Priorities (Luke 10:38-42)

1. I have a tendency to be distracted by many things

- * The good things of serving
- * Also the things of this world

2. Recognize the “One Thing” Needed: Sitting at the Father’s Feet

“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” (Heb 5:7)

In Luke 11:1 Jesus was actually “praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him “Lord, teach us to pray.”

“No one will learn to pray aright whose lips and heart are not schooled by the heavenly Teacher.” (John Calvin, quoted in Chester’s The Message of Prayer, pg. 152)

"Jesus is not giving words to be repeated verbatim, but a model to shape all our praying. 'This is how you should pray' is literally, 'Pray in this manner' and implies an example to adapt rather than a mechanical formula. While repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer is not to be discouraged, the more important thing is that Christians pray in this kind of way. Whatever it is for which we pray, we should pray with these priorities. Luther said, 'a Christian

has prayed abundantly who has rightly prayed the Lord's Prayer." (The Message of Prayer, Timothy Chester, 157)

"Every prayer of ours should be a praying of the Lord's Prayer in some shape or form." (Packer, 16)

III. Prayer is to the Father (Through the Savior)

A. Who Are His Children?

Implied Question: Are all people children of God?

This is not the natural condition of humanity, left to ourselves.

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...and were *by nature children of wrath*, like the rest of mankind." (Eph 2:1, 3)

"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear." (Isaiah 59:2)

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." (Gal 4:4-7)

"See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." (1 John 3:1)

"Clarity here is vital. Jesus' point is not that all men are God's children by nature, but that his committed disciples have been adopted into God's family by grace." (Packer, pg 27)

"To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God." (Jhn 1:12)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. *In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according*

to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace.”
(Eph 1:3-5)

“The more you are aware of God’s initiative the more you’ll you be overwhelmed by his love.” (CJ Mahaney’s message “God as Father: Understanding the Doctrine of Adoption)

B. What Difference Does Knowing God as Father Make?

1. Jesus Christ is not ashamed to have us as his brothers.
2. We have the privilege of calling God, ‘Abba, Father.’”
3. We are recipients of the Father’s tender care, and the compassion of our Elder Brother.

“Adoption is a family idea. In adoption God takes us into his family and fellowship. He establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, affection, and generosity are at the heart of the family relationship. To be right with God the Judge is a great thing but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater.” (Packer quote from CJ Mahaney’s message “God as Father: Understanding the Doctrine of Adoption)

These points are taken directly from Sinclair Ferguson’s excellent book, “Children of the Living God” pages 32-35.

C. What does Jesus mean by “in Heaven”?

“Our Father’ speaks of the quality and depth of God’s love to Christ’s people—all the sustained care and concern that a perfect father could show. “Who art in heaven” sets before us the fact that our divine Father is great—eternal, infinite, almighty: thus that phrase makes us realize that God’s love is unchanging, unlimited, unconquerable in its purpose, and more than able to deal with all the needs we bring when we pray. Prayer shaped and supported by thoughts like this will not be dull.” (Packer, pg. 35-36)