

## ***AFTER THIS MANNER THEREFORE PRAY YE***

### **Matthew 6:9a**

#### **The Lord's Prayer – Week 1**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Have you ever heard of MasterClass? It's an online company that provides videos lessons taught by the world's best. You can watch an acting MasterClass taught by Samuel L. Jackson or Natalie Portman. You can take a basketball MasterClass by Steph Curry and learn about shooting, ball-handling, and scoring. You can take a tennis MasterClass by Serena Williams, or a skateboarding MasterClass by Tony Hawk. You can take a cooking class by Gordon Ramsay, or a music performance class by Usher. The idea of MasterClass is to provide tutorials and lectures by the very best in various fields.
2. Over the next few weeks we are going to take a MasterClass on prayer, and the instructor is Jesus Christ, the foremost expert in prayer in the history of the world. One time Jesus prayed and fasted alone in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. After ministering to large crowds He often withdrew for long periods of time to pray. He spent the entire night in prayer before selecting the twelve apostles. One time He prayed with such intensity that His sweat was like drops of blood.
3. Unfortunately we don't have a MasterClass video of Jesus, but He did leave give us all we need to learn how to pray with effectiveness.
4. One time Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray (Lk 11:1)." That's the only time they ever asked Jesus to teach them anything. They could have said, "Lord, teach us to walk on water; to heal people; to cast out demons; to read people's minds; to feed multitudes with just a few loaves of bread and fish." But instead, they asked Jesus to teach them to pray. And the response that Jesus gave them was what we call the Lord's Prayer. You can find it in Luke 11 and Matthew 6. The version that we will be studying is in **Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)**. Let's read it together.
  - i. 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, for ever. Amen.

5. The Lord's Prayer has three parts to it:
  - i. The preface: "Our Father which art in heaven."
  - ii. The petitions: Six in number. Some say there are seven because they separate "And lead us not into temptation," and "deliver us from evil."
  - iii. The conclusion: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
6. Today we are going to start with the preface and some important insights about effective prayer.
7. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,"
8. This morning we are going to focus on the first part of this verse: "After this manner therefore pray ye."

## II. THREE INSIGHTS ABOUT EFFECTIVE PRAYER

### 1. We must avoid the mistakes about prayer.

- i. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,"
- ii. Notice the word, "therefore" in Matthew 6:9. Any time you see the word "therefore" in Scripture, check to see what it is there for. It always points to what was written just before it.
- iii. In the previous passage, Matthew 6:5-8, Jesus mentioned two mistakes about prayer to avoid.
- iv. Two Mistakes to Avoid:
  1. Don't pray like a hypocrite.
    - a. **Matthew 6:5-6** "5 Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

- b. What is the mistake of the hypocrite? Praying to impress others. Using prayer to make yourself look good.
  - c. Hypocritical prayer can take a couple of forms:
    - i. Number 1: You don't really believe in prayer, and you don't ever pray in private, but you are quick to pray when people are watching, or when people are listening, to make yourself look good.
    - ii. Number 2: When you pray in public, you put on a display to impress people. You may show extra fervor, or use big, biblical words, etc.
  - d. The point the Jesus makes is that the purpose of prayer is not to be impressive to people, but to be intimate with the Father.
  - e. Jesus issues a warning. If you use prayer to impress people, then that's all the reward you will get. People may be impressed, but God will not bless.
  - f. When Jesus says to "go into your private room" for prayer, it doesn't mean that there is never a place for public prayer, or corporate prayer. We see that throughout the Bible. The point is that if you pray privately, then you obviously aren't trying to impress people, and that's the prayer that God will bless.
2. Praying like a heathen.
- a. **Matthew 6:7-8** "7 When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. 8 Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him."
  - b. Jesus is warning against the futility of mindless repetition.
  - c. Unfortunately, a lot of Christians make this mistake with the Lord's prayer.

- d. If you have seen some of the Harry Potter movies, then you have seen the way a magic spell works. You just have to say the words, and magic happens. It doesn't matter if the words are in another language; it doesn't matter if you have no idea what the words mean. Just say the words, and magic will happen.
- e. That's the way a lot of people use the Lord's Prayer. They just say the prayer and expect magic to happen.
  - i. Sometimes people say the Lord's Prayer without understanding it, or without thinking about what they are saying. They just believe there is power in the words.
  - ii. Sometimes people say the Lord's Prayer insincerely. They don't really mean it. They are praying, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," but they don't mean it. They just think saying the prayer will give them good luck, or help them win the game, or do well in the test, or win a battle.
  - iii. Sometimes people say the Lord's Prayer repeatedly, say 100 times, assuming that the more they say it, the more likely God is to bless them.
- f. But all of this is nothing more than the kind of praying that heathens, pagans, and idolaters pray. It is ineffective and dishonoring to God.
- g. Instead, pray sincerely.
  - i. Understand what you are saying.
  - ii. Mean what you are saying.
  - iii. And say it simply. Praying the Lord's Prayer once with sincerity is infinitely more powerful than chanting the Lord's Prayer 1,000 times insincerely.
- v. We must avoid two mistakes about prayer.

## **2. We must pray.**

- i. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** “After this manner therefore pray ye”
- ii. CSB: “Therefore, you should pray like this.”
- iii. Notice that this is a command to pray. Prayer is not an option for the Christian. All Christians are commanded to pray.
- iv. **Matthew 6:5-8** “Whenever you pray...”
- v. Jesus didn’t say, “If you pray,” but “when you pray.” It is assumed in Scripture that Christians will pray.
- vi. Why does the Bible command us to pray?
- vii. The **Heidelberg Catechism** was written early in the Protestant Reformation (1563) to teach Christians sound doctrine. Notice how it answers this question. Q&A 116: “Why do Christians need to pray? Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us. And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking God for them.”
- viii. Notice the last part, where it says that “God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray...”
- ix. There is a verse in the Bible, in the Book of James, that says, “You do not have because you do not ask (Jas 4:2).”
- x. God has everything we need for life. Every good and perfect gift comes from Him (James 1:17). But if you want God to bless you, you have to ask.
- xi. **Charles Stanley** “The shortest distance between our problems and their solutions is the distance between our knees and the floor.” But we have to pray!
- xii. **Hebrews 4:16** “Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.”
- xiii. God wants to give us His mercy and grace, but we must approach the throne of grace with boldness. We have to ask. We have to pray.
- xiv. But another reason to pray is simply to grow closer in our relationship with God. God created us to have an intimate love relationship with Him. We cannot have peace and joy and fulfillment without knowing and walking with God. And prayer is how get and stay close to God.

- xv. **James 4:8** “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”
- xvi. God wants to be close to us. He is just waiting for us to draw near to Him, and prayer is how we do that.
- xvii. But that brings up a question: What is prayer? We are commanded to pray, but what is prayer?
- xviii. The **Westminster Larger Catechism** is another early protestant document written in 1647. Notice how it answers this question.
  - 1. Q178: What is prayer? Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.
- xix. Let me point out several things about this definition:
  - 1. Prayer is asking God for things.
    - a. It “is an offering up our desires unto God.”
  - 2. Prayer is more than asking for things.
    - a. It “is an offering up of our desires unto God... with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.”
    - b. Prayer is a conversation with our heavenly Father, and just as your conversation with your earthly Father should involve more than just asking for things, so should your prayers.
    - c. I like to think of prayer as a four-legged stool. Prayer has four legs: Adoration: praise God for who He is. Confession: Ask God for forgiveness. Thanksgiving: Thank God for what He has done. Supplication: Ask God for what you need.
  - 3. We should pray in the name of Jesus.
    - a. Jesus commanded that we must pray in His name (Jn 14:13-14; Jn 15:16; Jn 16:23-24). What does that mean?
    - b. Let me read from the **Westminster Larger Catechism**:
      - i. Q180: What is it to pray in the name of Christ? A180: To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to his command, and in

confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake; not by bare mentioning of his name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.

- ii. Q181: Why are we to pray in the name of Christ? A181: The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access into his presence without a mediator; and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.
- c. Without Christ we are God's enemies. We are under wrath. We are not even God's children. We are separated from God. God doesn't hear our prayers. But on the cross, Christ paid the penalty for our sins, and through faith in Christ we are forgiven and adopted into God's family and have access to God in prayer.
- d. To pray in Christ's name is to look to him as our way of access to the Father (J.I. Packer, *Praying the Lord's Prayer*, p. 28).
- xx. We are commanded to pray.

### **3. We must pray the Lord's Prayer.**

- i. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,"
- ii. Jesus commands us to pray the Lord's Prayer. We are to utilize it. To employ it. To apply it.
- iii. How do we pray the Lord's Prayer?
- iv. There are two ways to utilize the Lord's prayer: Repetition and Reference.
  - 1. Repetition.
    - a. We just saw that God does not value mindless repetition. We must pray with sincerity. We must understand what we pray and mean what we pray.

- b. With that said, the Lord's Prayer can be used by simply repeating it word for word.
- c. **R.T. Kendall** was the pastor of Westminster Chapel in London for 25 years. He wrote, "I would personally urge every church leader to find a place in a service once a week to insert the Lord's Prayer. It will do no harm and only good." (*The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 207.)
- d. **A.W. Pink** wrote about the Lord's Prayer, "In the opinion of this writer, it ought to be reverently and feelingly recited once at every public service and used daily at family worship." (*The Lord's Prayer*, p. 12.)
- e. Perhaps the oldest Christian book in existence is the *Didache*, which means "The Teaching." It was written in the first or second century by the earliest Christian leaders who came right after the apostles – the men who were disciples by the apostles. They are called the Apostolic Fathers. The *Didache* says that the early church recited the Lord's Prayer in Sunday worship, and it told all believers to pray the Lord's Prayer three times a day. (Warren Wiersbe, *On Earth as it is in Heaven*, p. 16.)
- f. So, a perfectly good way to use the Lord's prayer is by repeating it word for word with sincerity.

## 2. Reference.

- a. The second and perhaps more powerful way to use the Lord's Prayer is as a reference for your prayer life.
- b. In other words, let the Lord's Prayer inform how you pray, and what you pray for.
  - i. Start with God's interests before your own.
  - ii. Pray for God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will.
  - iii. Pray for your basic needs, for forgiveness, and for spiritual protection.



- iv. Don't just pray for yourself, pray for others.
- c. **J.I. Packer** explained it this way. The Lord's prayer is "a pattern for all Christian praying. Jesus is teaching that prayer will be acceptable when, and only when, the attitudes, thoughts, and desires expressed fit the pattern. That is to say: every prayer of ours should be a praying of the Lord's Prayer in some shape or form." (*Praying the Lord's Prayer*, pp. 16-17.)
- d. **R.C. Sproul** said, "He did not say, 'Pray this.' Rather, He said, 'In this manner, therefore, pray.'" Jesus did not give His disciples a prayer they should slavishly repeat... Jesus' intent was to give His disciples a model prayer, an example to follow, one that would teach them transferable principles for conversation with God."
- e. R.T. Kendall has a couple of good metaphors to explain the purpose of the Lord's Prayer. He called it a skeleton that we have to clothe, an outline that we have to fill in, or a foundation upon which we are to build.
- f. **R. T. Kendall** writes, "All good praying should, in some way, be consistent with the pattern, order, content and intent of the Lord's Prayer. It is a prayer to be prayed, but the words of the Lord's Prayer serve also as an outline of appropriate praying... Thus, everything we say should be an extension, or filling out, to some degree, of every line in the Lord's Prayer... The Lord's Prayer, therefore, is the foundation; our own praying is the superstructure. The foundation is not intended to be the way we are to pray verbatim all the time... How you and I pray, then, should as much as possible be an extension or filling out of the Lord's prayer; it should be a superstructure on top of the foundation that builds on what Jesus gave us." (*The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 210.)

- g. **J.I. Packer** explains the benefits of using the Lord's Prayer as a reference. "To pray in terms of it is the sure way to keep our prayers within God's will; to pray through it, expanding the clauses as you go along, is the sure way to prime the pump when prayer dries up and you find yourself stuck." (*Praying the Lord's Prayer*, p. 17.)
- h. In other words, the Bible says that if we want God to answer our prayers we must pray according to God's will (1 Jn 5:14). If we pray according to the Lord's Prayer, we will be praying according to God's will.
- i. And on those occasions when our prayers are stuck and we don't know how to pray or what to pray for, the Lord's Prayer gets us unstuck, because it tells us how to pray and what to pray for.
- v. We must pray the Lord's Prayer.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. So, what have we learned today?
  - i. We must avoid two mistakes about prayer: Praying like a hypocrite, and praying like a heathen.
  - ii. We must pray. Prayer is a command.
  - iii. We must pray the Lord's Prayer. We need to utilize it. To apply it. To employ it. Jesus said, "Do you want to pray in a way that gets results? Then pray the Lord's Prayer." This is the prayer that always works.
2. So, let's pray it together again, and this time, I want you to mean it.
  - i. 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, for ever. Amen.
3. On August 3, 1492, three small ships set sail. They were called the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria. The commander of the expedition was Christopher Columbus. His goal was sail across the Atlantic to get to China and India. After two months on the water, they hadn't made it.

On October 9, the three small ships were drifting. They hadn't seen land for over thirty-one days. The captains of the Nina and the Pinta told Columbus it was time to give up and turn around. Discouraged, Columbus agreed. He said, "We'll turn back. But before we do, I want three more days on this route. If we don't see land on October 12, we'll turn back." When the two other captains left, Columbus knelt down in his cabin and prayed for God's help. Over the next three days, amazing things began to happen. The wind picked up, causing the ships to speed through the water. The second day, they spotted a reed and piece of carved wood floating in the water. On the third day, at two in the morning, the lookout on the Pinta shouted, "Land! Land!" When they reached the shore, the sailors knelt in the sand and bowed their heads. Columbus prayed and named the island San salvador, which means "Holy Savior." Columbus had done far more than find a faster route to the Indies; he had discovered the New World.

4. That story illustrates the power of prayer. When everyone else was ready to give up, Columbus prayed, and God did the rest. You could say that you and I are living in the New World today because instead of giving up, Columbus decided to pray and give God time to move.
5. As we continue to study the Lord's Prayer over the next few weeks, I want to make something very clear. I don't just want you to learn more about prayer. I want you to pray more, and more powerfully. I want our church to become a praying church.
6. I want to ask you to do three things before we close.
  - i. Commit to memorize the Lord's Prayer by the end of this sermon series. If you will make that commitment, write "Prayer" on your Connection Card.
  - ii. Commit to being here for the rest of this series. Or if you have to miss a week, then commit to watching the sermon online. I really want our entire church to grow through this sermon series. I want us to become an effective, praying church. I want your personal prayer life to grow. So, make a commitment to be here. If you are making that commitment this morning, then write the word "Attend" on your Connection Card and turn it in.

- iii. If you are not sure you are a Christian, I invite you to put your faith in Christ today. Prayer only works if you are a Christian. Apart from Christ, we are God's enemies. But through Christ, we are forgiven, reconciled to God, and become God's children. So, are you a Christian? Are you saved? Have you been born again? Let me ask it this way: If you died today, are you sure you would go to heaven? If you aren't sure, you may not be saved. How can you get saved and become a Christian? You have to know your ABCs.
  - 1. A: Admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior.
  - 2. B: Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose again.
  - 3. C: Call on Jesus to come into your life and be your Savior and Boss.
- iv. If you are asking Jesus to save you this morning, then on the back of your Connection Card I want you to write the word "Faith" and turn it in.