

How We Should Pray

The Lord's Prayer . Matthew 6:5-13

Peter J. Scott . transcribed 2018

This chapter is an eye opener for any of our atheistic friends. For once in their entire life they can see Jesus isn't a religion. What He was describing in this chapter isn't meant to be in a building. For He starts, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*" Jesus begins to expose and let us understand that there are different rules compared to the religion that existed in that particular day and time. In fact He says over six times, "***You've heard that it was said . . . But I say to you . . .***" Over and over again. "*Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the religious group, you are not going to make it.*" Then at the end of the chapter, "*I want you to be whole. I want you to be complete just like your Father in heaven.*" And so there is a whole different concept of what religion is from who Jesus is. I can see an atheist racing through his mind, "*Well, this isn't the religion I've heard about. This isn't the gospel I heard. I heard you just have to put on things, etc.*" I read these scriptures myself way back when. I wasn't an atheist but I do remember reading this and saying to myself, "*Wow, this is not what I've been taught in Sunday School.*" It wasn't until I heard the parable of the Lost Sheep that I understood the love of God behind what Jesus was teaching in chapter five, the Sermon on the Mount, one of the most famous sermons of all time without equal. But when I looked closely at the parable of the Lost Sheep, then I began to understand how much God loved *me!* Up until that time most Americans said that the majority rules and in democracy if the ninety-nine vote yes and you vote no, too bad.

However in the Kingdom of God He is concerned about YOU. It doesn't really matter what the ninety-nine think or not think. Jesus is concerned for you. And we begin to understand the love of God and then when we give our heart to the Lord as in John 3:16 where it says, "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believed on Him would not perish ever. They will have eternal life.*" When we give our hearts to the Lord then He actually, through the Holy Spirit, embraces us with His love. Now it is no longer an intellectual understanding but it is something we *know* in the Spirit and our heart. Wow. That's how I would like to come to the Lord, *knowing* my Lord and Savior. Isn't He good?

After this, I can hear Him saying, "*By the way, you are praying incorrectly. By the way this isn't how you should pray either!*" We've heard religious prayers. Quite honestly I like some of them. I love prayers put to music but it isn't what our Lord is talking about in chapter six.

*Matthew 6*¹ "*Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.*"

I can just see the unsaved reading that, “*Yeah that’s for sure.*”

² “*So when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full (recognition).*”

That’s it. That’s all they are going to get. Is that what you or I want? No. I can see the atheist reading this and thinking, “*That sounds like religion to me!*” But Jesus says:

“You are going to be different in the Kingdom. This thing that I’m calling you into is going to be different. When you give alms, when you give your offerings do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.”

In other words, it doesn’t matter who does and who doesn’t know.

⁴ “*... that your alms may be in secret and your Father who sees you in secret will repay you.*”

Amen. That’s what He says about giving. And then:

⁵ “*And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*”

That’s recognition by whoever sees them. But there is something more that God wants from us in our prayers. He wants it to be **real**. Prayer isn’t a statement of your faith. It isn’t a statement of anything. It is a **conversation** you have between you and God! I heard it said once, “*I would rather pray for a people who know how to pray than a people who know how to teach.*” I thought, “*Wow.*” There is something wrong with that statement because you **don’t teach without praying!** Prayer is a two way street. You talk to God and God talks to you. That’s the prophetic nature of prayer. You have *no business teaching* unless you are in prayer before, during and after. Your life should be given to prayer. Don’t tell me you can teach without that in place. But when you pray, things happen.

⁶ “*But you, when you pray (don’t be like the hypocrites), go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*”

The idea is that your faith is something private to you. I remember President Nixon always saying that he was born-again but his faith was a private faith. He was a Quaker so that meant something to him. However in actuality there is much more going on in our prayers to God. When we have a conversation with God it is impossible to hide it. You are who you are by the grace of God. You are not going to be able to hide it. Your Father sees what is going on and He is going to bless you.

How We Ought to Pray

Here's one that everyone seems to have forgotten in some denominations:

*Matthew 6*⁷ “*And when you pray, do not use vain (meaningless) repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.*”

I've heard people speak in Tongues the same line over and over again. Well, be more creative. Let your words be meaningful to the Lord even your words in Tongues. It isn't meant to be repetitious. It is a conversation you are having. Often times when I wake up in the night and I'm praying in Tongues, I ask the Lord to let me know who I am praying for or what's going on here. Sometimes I get an answer. Sometimes He says, “*Well, I'm going to use you as the General tonight. You are giving the orders.*” Whoa. I like that!

Other times He says He wants me to pray in Tongues but He wants me to pray for those who are sick from cancer or those who have lost their loved ones. I can feel they are really hurting. It's a different language from a General giving orders. A very different dialogue happens for the sick. I will speak and pray in Tongues and I will speak and pray in English as well.

⁸ “*Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray. . .*”

Now we could think instinctively, “*If there is a God in heaven shouldn't He already know what is going on?*” I think the atheists would ask that question. If God is in heaven and He already knows, why are you praying? That's a good question. How are you praying? It should be different from what the world does. So here Jesus begins to introduce to the world the Lord's Prayer which has been said over and over and over again. But it isn't about the words it is about the *meaning behind the words* that Jesus is trying to get to. We don't condemn people for saying the Lord's prayer but we know it is the meaning behind the words that's more important than the words themselves.

So recently when a woman passed out in one of the Trump rallies, everybody stopped and the President gave about five or more minutes to allow the people around her to minister to her need. They have EMT's already on the scene. With thousands of people gathered the odds are great that someone is going to faint. The people standing there don't get food or water while they are there for two or more hours. She fainted and everyone started to sing “*Amazing Grace*” and said the Lord's Prayer. It is a standard, a base to fall back on of what people deem Christianity to be, the grace of God and the Lord's Prayer.

Therefore it is logical that we should want to know what that prayer is all about.

Defining God . God is in Heaven

*Matthew 6*⁹ “Pray then this way . . . (Not the other way of just repetitious words) . . . ‘Our Father who art in heaven;’ ”

Now our Father God is in heaven. So we are declaring He is in heaven. We know He is omnipresent. We aren’t just saying He is in heaven. We already know He is everywhere. But there is something about *His being in heaven*, the creation of the heavens, that we look to. We see the very nature of God. Everything there is in order, everything is in its place where it is supposed to be in heaven, not so here on earth. There is evil on the earth, *real* evil on the earth. I was sharing earlier this morning that someone fell down on my sidewalk years ago. They got a bump on their head so they went and got a CT scan. They found that their skull had been fractured *years before* this fall. The woman didn’t even remember it! She was in an abusive relationship and she didn’t even know it had happened. I thought how evil the intent of the enemy was. How evil it is when he comes to us even when we don’t know; we cannot anticipate what he might be going to do next. However we know that the Lord protects us and guards us with His angels. Don’t we? Yes.

He’ll leave the ninety-nine just for you and protect you. Amen. Next time you have a bad dream get up and pray. Get up and shake it off and say, “*This is not God. This is the enemy. This is a nightmare from hell and I’m not going to have anything to do with it. Lord, help me focus back on reality.*” Ask Him for someone to pray for. That’s always a good start. Ask Him what He wants in your life, what He is going to bless you with tomorrow. Shake the enemy off and his schemes and throw him away! He doesn’t belong to you nor you to him.

Hallowed be Your Name

*Matthew 6*⁹ “Our Father who is in heaven. (Wow. Like no other god who is on the earth, our God is in heaven!)” *Hallowed be Thy name.* ”

That is how holy is Your name, how totally full of righteousness is Your name. We spoke about His name in many of the songs we sang this very morning. How without equal and totally righteous is His name! There is no name like our Lord Jesus Christ’s. He is called King of Kings and King of Kings, Wonderful, Mighty Counselor. Keep going. The Bright Morning Star. Hallowed be Thy name. Holy are You. Not something to be trampled on. Not something to use as a curse word. Shake it off. Throw it away. If you ever find yourself cursing, say ten times something that is different from what you just spoke, like “*Holy mackerel . . .*” Whatever you want to say, but don’t curse the Lord Jesus.

The Government is on His Shoulders

*Matthew 6*¹⁰ “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth just like it is in heaven.”

Remember we started with “*our God who dwells in heaven.*” Here it goes right back to that theme, “*Your Kingdom come.*” Well wait a minute. What is a kingdom? We don’t know what kingdoms are in today’s world. Two or three hundred years ago everybody knew what they were, a government of the king. It was the property that he owned. It was a territory and a people that were under his control, his government and rules. The Kingdom of God is under One King, King Jesus. He doesn’t have any other pastors that rule. No priests or arch-bishop, no pope, nobody. *There is only One King in the Kingdom of God.*

Here’s a good one for both Democrats and Republicans, Libertarians, Liberals and Independents, “By the way, ***the government is on His shoulders!***” Isn’t that a relief?! Now we can watch the news without being upset, knowing that government is on His shoulders. Ultimately He is the one in charge of the earth, not the governments that we look to. Ultimately He is the one that says Yes or No. He has the last veto NOT the Senate, not the Vice President or the President or even the Supreme Court. Jesus. The government is on His shoulders. His Kingdom, by the way, perfect as it is in space out there, is going to happen here on this earth! Our prayer is, “*Your will be done. Your purposes, Your desire, Your intent, be done. Your heart be expressed, be done here in my life, on this earth, in this government, in this nation just like it is in heaven!*”

That is our prayer every day. If things are going well, it is still our prayer. If things are going bad, it is still our prayer. Yes. Did someone just die in your family? It is still true. The Government is on His shoulders. He is still King of Kings and King of Kings. If the politician you voted for didn’t win, the government is still on His shoulders. Still pray, “*YOUR will be done on this earth, this state, this county, this town, this region just like it is in heaven.*” The will, the intent and the purposes of God the Father is pre-eminent. Pre-eminence takes over, totally cannot be infringed upon, doesn’t matter if it is in our country’s Constitution or not, first amendment, second amendment. The will, the intent and purposes of God cannot be changed. You cannot change God! You cannot change Him. You cannot change His heart from being for you, and will always be for you.

Who You Are . Our Daily Bread

Then a shift happens as we are talking about God. This prayer is also about who you are, about how you relate to society, how you are in your material wealth, your mental health as well. I think this particular verse has less to do with groceries or paying your bills as it does with your soul life. You need something in you, to bring life to you. What brings life to you in the natural is bread. What brings life to you in the spirit is spiritual bread. He says,

Matthew 6 ¹¹ “*Give us this day our daily bread.*”

Our Provision

We don't have to worry much about this but we still pray, "*Let Your provision be for us.*" That's what this is talking about, provision! The provision that I need is more than bread. Jesus says to His disciples, "*Bread? Are you guys still talking about food?*" I need something from my heavenly Father. Lord, give us this day our daily bread, our provision. Lord, I need more in my life than just provision in money and finances, or food, shelter and clothes. I NEED YOU providing for me! A spark to go to work tomorrow! If you pray this prayer He is going to give you that spark to get up tomorrow.

There are days I get up and say, "*Well?*" And zoom, He gives me the spark. He gives me about five different things that need to be done this week and wants to know which one I want to tackle first. I ask Him what I should do first. Almost always the answer is to go love my wife. "*Give her a kiss this morning. Don't just say 'Good morning, honey.' Or how about calling up your sister and encouraging her. How about. . .*"

When out shopping and filling out the credit card, everyone is *looking down* nowadays. Before this time when having a transaction, we would **look at people!** Now we are waiting for the transaction to say, "*Remove your card.*" Before I would look at the sales clerk but now I am forced to look at this monitor. You know what? I'm going to break these rules! "*Hi. Boy it's great out there today!*" What am I really saying? "*I have the joy of the Lord; do you want some?*" Then a big smile comes on the gals face. Why? Because nobody else does that any more. Everyone is waiting for the completion of the transaction. So here's an opportunity for you. "*I think I'll go down and make the clerk happy today.*" They could say, "*Why are you so happy?*" "*Well, because I have Jesus in my heart,*" which can be said in a lot of different ways.

Practice it. I love to share my life because He gave it to me. He put His breath in our lungs. He is the words in our mouth. He is the skip in our step. What would we look like without Jesus? But with Him? Wow! I look into the mirror and think I am not standing up straight enough. "*Straighten up. Here, is that better, Lord?*" There's the smile. Yes.

It is not enough to just pray for provision. God has an adventure for you. Maybe the adventure is to minister to those who are really physically dying of cancer or other things. It is going to be an adventure for you. Are you going through really tough things in life? They will be LIFE for you because you are going to be giving the blessings of God to the people around you. It is more blessed to give than receive.

Non-optional Behavior . Forgiveness

There are some things in scripture we do not have a choice of doing. This one is not optional. You must do this, no choice. We have a choice in a lot of things but this is not one of them. He says:

*Matthew 6*¹² “*Forgive us our debt (or trespasses) as we forgive those who we have debt (or trespasses) against.*”

Which means forgive! Forgive, forgive, forgive.

¹⁴ “*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* ¹⁵*But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*”

There’s a bitterness that enters you when you harbor unforgiveness, when you harbor bitterness from a debt where people owe you something. Well you know, I could look back on my life and say a lot of people owe me something. They never gave back what they should have. But the Lord says instead, “*I want you to make a list of the people who gave to you more than they should have given.*” In my mind I see Dina and Ray Nielson standing over there (brethren from past years long since gone to be with the Lord). I can see Joyce Radcliffe. I can see Dale, etc. I can see a whole host of saints that have encouraged me *beyond* what they should have. They could have stopped at the first sentence or paragraph but they just kept going. Because they wanted to bless. They wanted to encourage. They wanted to instruct. They wanted to give what God had given them to others, to me. I sure am glad they did.

Isn’t that something we should be doing?! It isn’t all about Jesus. It is also what Jesus can do in and through you (which is about Jesus). Non-optional behavior, forgive. Do you think you have to forgive once and it goes away? Is that true? No. Not for me. I forgive and it comes back. Unforgiveness comes back into my heart. “*Are you kidding! I hate this guy.*” That’s a strong word but it is in my heart. The Lord says, “*Well, forgive him again.*” Okay. I went up to give him a hug and he turned away like I didn’t even exist. That’s tough, like a slap in the face. There was a time I wouldn’t have been able to do anything about that except respond in kind.

But not now. Why? Because I have learned to love him. I *learned* that we are not always going to get the embrace. There is going to be a debt owed when you leave. But, it isn’t going to stop you when you pray this kind of prayer. It isn’t going to stop you from loving. Your love is the *secret weapon* that God has, not just for that person but against the work and the schemes of the enemy in you! And for those who are watching you. You don’t think people are watching you? My grandchildren are watching me all the time.

They are not the only ones. My sister is watching. You know how I know that? Because she is submitted to a home group. When you are submitted in a home group there is almost nothing that’s secret. Almost nothing, but you do know when somebody is not doing well. There is submission going on because you want to be covered. You want to be loved. You want the Shepherd to come and rescue you. I do. I still need that, to have those who love me, the Jesus in them to rescue me.

I'm so glad for the songwriters when we sing these songs on Sunday. They rescue and rescue me every Sunday. The words we are singing are awesome, so full of life. How can one remain an atheist when you sing songs like that? When you hear the words that we are singing about grace, about the love of God, it goes beyond an atheist's expectations, way beyond any expectation we might have. Not repetitious. Is God repetitious to you? Think about that for a minute. Does He love you the same? He does but it is expressed *new* every morning. Look at His creation! There are species within species! There is such variation. I study sparrows at my bird feeder realizing not one of them is the same, not just in feathers but in their personality, how they get along with the other sparrows. If God can be so creative in what He does there, don't you think He is going to be creative on how He expresses His love to you?!

He might rescue your lost diamond earrings one day, but something else tomorrow. I've already gone through two cancers in my life, both of them aggressive and thought to be incurable. God healed me from both of them. Yeah, I KNOW God loves me. Amen. To those who are dying of cancer, my heart breaks. Because I see the evil one's schemes so well. He does not want to just bring a disease. He wants to de-humanize you. There are people who don't know him, not just Christians. He wants to de-humanize them so they don't even look human anymore. They no longer respond like human beings anymore. The enemy wants to get them to a place where they think Jesus doesn't love them. That is NOT true. So we reach out and say, "*You know what, Jesus loves you.*"

There was a girl on Facebook last night, she said, "*My mom has just died. She was a deplorable. She was my only hope. She was the only one I had in my life. I'm sick of my life now. I don't love this life. I want to commit suicide.*" Those were the exact words. How would you respond? Any response seems inadequate. My immediate response was, "*I'm praying for you. There is hope. There is always hope even in the darkest place. There is hope. There is a place where God can give YOU the spark that you need in this trial!*" Immediately hundreds and thousands of people responded to her since it was on a public website. It was good that she did that. You know what? Having said that means she really does not want to go through with it.

If you ever read something like this (let me give you some instruction) ask them this question, "*How do you feel about murder? How do you feel about killing someone?*" That brings them back to their senses since they would never even consider killing somebody else. "*Well, you are somebody else. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. God created you. You are the temple of the Holy Ghost.*" You are not going to kill that guy. No way. My life belongs to Jesus and when I go it is up to Him.

Alright. So how should we live in this society, forgiving debts and . . .

Temptation

Matthew 6 ⁶ “*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.*”

Even an atheist knows what temptation is. Here is an experiment scientists have tried. Put a piece of chocolate cake on a table and put a five-year-old close by. Close the door and before you do say, “*Don’t touch that cake.*” **100 percent** of the time, the cake will be eaten or tasted. You come back in the room and the child explains that he only took a little bit, but he had moved it around so you couldn’t see it. So we see where the “original sin” came from, disobedience. We know we shouldn’t do it but the temptation is there. However it isn’t only about physical temptation. It isn’t just the physical temptation that the Lord is talking about. In this scripture it says, “*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from what? Temptation. No. The evil one.*” There is a temptation that comes from the devil himself. Jesus was not immune from the devil coming to Him with those temptations. Remember when He went into the wilderness? I can imagine Him praying this prayer we are studying, “*Lead Me not into temptation but deliver Me from this character!*”

The temptation that we find in our circumstances always has a spiritual component. It is never just about the natural. It is about what is going on in your spirit, what’s going on inside of you. The enemy wants to change you. He wants to convert and divert you into corruption any way he can. It is NOT just temptation in the natural. It is Good verses Evil, righteousness verses sin. We need and *must have* the Holy Spirit to combat this. If it is spiritual warfare, the natural inclination to say, “*I’m not going to eat that cake,*” isn’t going to work. If it is spiritual warfare, we need the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom, understanding and a new tact to be able to confront the enemy effectually. That’s what Jesus was doing in His answers to the devil in the wilderness. He used scripture. Why wouldn’t He? But it was different each time how He confronted and came back at the enemy.

So now when I am tempted I don’t just say, “*aagh, just give me strength.*” We will find all the strength we need when the Holy Spirit rises up within us saying, “*There is something in this we need to look at, the bigger picture than just the chocolate cake on the table.*” But you might say, “*Aren’t you seventy, Peter? You are no longer a child.*” True but there are still similar temptations in my life. That’s why I’ve already prepared myself with this prayer. I’ve prepared myself. I’ll give you an example. There were some very pretty nurses where I used to work. I was prepared. They’d come over and give me a big hug . . . a good place to respond, but I’d already prepared myself. “*Nice day isn’t it!*” They’d come into my office. There’s this nice Valentine’s day card from my wife sitting on my desk. It’s for me, but it is also for those who need to see it.

Lead me not into temptation but deliver us from the **evil one**. I recognize that the enemy wants me. He wants my soul. He wants me to do something that he can have against me. People have come to me saying, “*You did this and you*

did that.” You know what I can say to them? “*Well, no I didn’t.*” Not because I’m righteous but because the Holy Spirit guided me through some very dangerous waters.

He Owns Everything

Lastly, “*For Yours is the Kingdom. . .*” God owns the Church. It doesn’t matter which one you go to; it all belongs to Him. He owns the earth. There is only one so that’s it. The enemy wants it. But God has already taken it! The Lord lives in a space-time continuum that Satan doesn’t have access to. Jesus knows the end from the beginning. He owns the whole universe. “*For Yours is the Kingdom. . .*” It is a re-statement of what we already know. A re-hash to give us that extra dose of an immunization shot, a vaccine against the schemes of the enemy. The Kingdom belongs to HIM, no one else! No Church government belongs to the Church. It belongs to Jesus, Him alone. This earth belongs to Him. It doesn’t belong to the Green party. It doesn’t belong to the Republicans or the Democrats. It doesn’t belong to the EU. It belongs to Him.

“Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever.”

Jesus has power to do anything. Can anyone argue with that? He can do absolutely anything He wants. Bob Mumford (a well-known Christian teacher) used to say, “*No matter what your doctrine may be, give Jesus three percent to do anything He may want.*” He can do anything He wants at any time whatsoever. How does He happen to have the power to do any of the things we are praying? We don’t have the power within ourselves. The only power we have comes from God.

Hebrews 1³ “That He is the radiance of His (the Father’s) glory. . .

Jesus Christ our King, the one that we love, the one who rescued us, the one who has saved us, the one who died upon the cross, that One, He is the glory of God in heaven, all of the stars, all of the galaxies, everything you can think of that has such beauty, the most beautiful thing on earth, that speaks of the glory of God in the heavens above, He, Jesus is the radiance of that. Is He a good facsimile, a good copy, almost, close ? ? NO. He is the EXACT, the ***exact representation of the Father’s nature***. That’s why He could say to Philip, “*Have you been so long with Me that you don’t recognize Me?*” He was speaking as God the Father at that moment. Philip had said to Jesus, “*Well, just show us the Father.*” He answered, “*Have you been so long with Me that you don’t recognize who I am?*” He is the exact representation of the Father’s nature.

³ “*. . . and He upholds all things all things by the word of His power.*”

When the scientists wanted to find something that influences all other particles, they named it the “God particle.” He upholds all things by the word of His power. The word is “I AM.” “*I exist. I have a loving nature this thing that I am.*” God is love not just the characteristics of love. He IS love. He wants us to have that God particle this morning, tomorrow when we wake up and every day.

When we pray this prayer it is not to be repetitious. It will be one we understand because it speaks of who God is, who we are in our society and who He wants us to be, and who He is again, the *radiance of His glory!* He upholds all things by the word of His power. HIS power. Not the power of the courts? Not the power in the judicial systems? Not the power in any person, any institution, anything else. By Him and He alone. He Himself, Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

O Lord Jesus, if there is one word I want to die with on my lips it would be “Jesus.” However, I am not dying. I’m not dying I’m just changing my address. I’m going to live forever. This God who rescued us, is going to rescue me again. He is going to come back in resurrection. He is already going to know me. He says, *“I knew you before you were born. While you were in your mother’s womb I had plans for you, not of evil, but of good.”* So He is with each of us.

Take that message out to the world. Embrace it. Let the Holy Spirit permeate you with it. Then after you’ve embraced it, give it back to this lost and dying world. Say, *“You know what? You can have a God just like this. Not a god of this world but the One who is in heaven. His name is Holy.”* Amen.

Let’s pray. Lord God, we thank You for who You are, who You have revealed Yourself to be this morning and in so many circumstances in our lives. Because these are not just words that represent circumstances. They are actual happenings in each one of our lives to which we can all give testimony and say amen. Lord, I pray that there would be those that hear our testimony in this world, maybe for the first time. It won’t be of a God who just says the rules are different. But it will be of a God who loves man and comes to us as if we were in a dream. We are just waking up, still having that smile on our face. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

