

"The Danger of Hypocrisy"

Part 7

Matthew 6:1-18

Introduction: The past several weeks we have been looking closely at Matthew 6:9-13. In these verses Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray. Many people understand this to be a prayer that is to be recited over and over again but that is not what these verses are about.

In Matthew 6:7 Jesus told His disciples not to use vain repetition when they prayed so therefore He would not turn around and give them a prayer to recite over and over again. These verses contain an outline which we are to build our prayers upon. These verses are like a skeleton which we are to attach our prayers to. Many people completely misunderstand prayer and they completely misunderstand these verses. They repeat these verses weekly in church but they have never been taught the true meaning of what Jesus was saying here. Churches are full of people who have the wrong perspective on prayer. You see they believe pray is all about asking God for the desires of life. Below is a prayer from a "prosperity" preacher that the writer recommends should be repeated 3 times a day for 30 days and then you will begin to see results. This is an example of what prayer is not.

Dear God —

I surrender my financial affairs and concerns about money to your Divine care and love. I ask that you remove my worries, anxieties and fears about money, and replace them with faith. I know and trust that my debts will be paid and money will flow into my life. I have only to look to nature to see proof of the abundance you provide. I release all

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negative thoughts about money, and know that prosperity is my true state. I commit to being grateful for all that I now have in my life. I learn to manage my finances wisely, seeking help where needed. And finally, I ask you to help me understand my purpose in life and to act on that purpose with courage and strength. I know that prosperity will come, in part, by doing work I love. Please help me use my skills and knowledge to be of service in the world. Thank you, God. Amen

This prayer is all about the person saying the prayer. The person that wrote this prayer believes that God wants all of His children to live in worldly prosperity. They do not believe it would ever be God's will for them to suffer in sickness or in financial difficulties. When they see someone who is sick or suffering they believe it is because that person lacks faith. They believe prayer is for the purpose of asking God to pour out His blessings upon them.

Prayer is not about you and me getting that which we desire in our lives but prayer is about God being glorified in all that we face in our lives. Prayer is not me trying to convince God to accept my will. Prayer is conforming myself to His will.

Notice the words of Jesus in John 14.

John 14:13

*¹³ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, **that the Father may be glorified in the Son.***

Let us look again at our outline of the text that is before us.

- I. **The Seniority of God** - "Our Father which art in heaven"
- II. **The Supremacy of God** - "Hallowed be thy name"
- III. **The System of God** - "Thy kingdom come"

- IV. **The Scheme of God** - *"Thy will be done"*
- V. **The Supply of God** - *"Give us this day our daily bread"*
- VI. **The Security of God** - *"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"*
- VII. **The Safety of God** - *"And lead us not into temptation"*
- VIII. **The Sovereignty of God** - *"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen"*

This outline of the Words Jesus spoke in make it very clear that prayer is all about God. Let's do a review of what we have seen in this outline for prayer so far.

I. The Seniority of God

"Our Father which art in heaven"

Let me share a few thoughts here.

1. **This is why we are able to come boldly before the throne of God.** He is not just our Creator, Judge, King, Counselor, Mighty God and Priest. He is also our Father. This is why we are able to come boldly into His presence.

Hebrews 4:16

¹⁶ **Let us therefore come boldly** unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Notice what Isaiah writes which will lead us directly into our next thought of review.

Isaiah 64:8

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⁸ *But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.*

II. The Supremacy of God

"Hallowed be thy name"

I really need to expound more upon what we considered last week because I am not sure we understand the importance of **"hallowing"** the name of God with our attitude and our actions. There is a reason why Jesus mentioned this as the very first petition in the outline for prayer.

Last week we discussed what it means to "hallow" the name of God. In the Bible names spoke of the character of the person behind the name. A name was not just a **title** but it was something that described the **total** person.

Proverbs 22:1a

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches...

When the Bible speaks of God's name it speaks of His character.

In Exodus 34 God has commanded Moses to make 2 tablets of stone like the first set which Moses destroyed. God then told Moses to come to the top of the mountain in the morning. Moses did as he was commanded and God met Him on the mountain that morning. The very first thing God did when He met Moses was to proclaim His name and we need to look closely at how God did this.

Exodus 34:5-7

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⁵ *And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.*

⁶ *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,*

⁷ *Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.*

When God proclaimed His name to Moses He proclaimed His character.

Now when Jesus told His disciples to pray that God's NAME (character) would be **HALLOWED** (set apart) it means that God's character would be made know in all the world through us. We must remember that Jesus has ascended back to heaven and now we are His body. If God's character is going to be made known it is done in 2 ways.

1. Through the Bible.
2. Through our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:20

²⁰ *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us:*

Therefore we have the responsibility of sharing the Word of God with those around us and we also have the responsibility of showing for the very character of God in our lives.

Notice what is said in Blue Letter Bible about hallowing God's name.

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To "hallow the name" includes not only the inward attitude and outward action of profound reverence and active praise, but also that personal godliness, loving obedience and aggressive Christ likeness, which reveal the presence of God in the life, which is His true earthly glory.

A. The Significance Hallowing God's Name

The order of the outline which Jesus gave to His disciples is very important especially with this first petition. To hallow the name of God with our attitude and our actions is to understand that our lives are now all about Him. If we do not grasp this first petition then it will do us no good to move on in this outline.

If we are not focused upon glorifying God with our attitudes and our actions then we will never be concerned about the next 2 petitions in the outline.

Notice Matthew 6:10

You see if we are living for self and the comforts of this world then we will not be concern about God's kingdom and we will not be concerned about God's will. This very first petition must be understood in order to pray for the other petitions.

If we are not focused upon hallowing the name of God then the very opposite is true, we are focused upon ourselves.

Let me show you a prayer from Jonah while he was in the belly of a great fish.

Jonah 2:7-9

⁷ When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

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⁸ *They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.*

⁹ **But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.**

Jonah glorified God with His attitude which is seen in his prayer while he is in the belly of a fish.

I point this out because we are often faced with some very dark situations in life but unlike Jonah many believers begin to interrogate God for the situation they are facing. They ask, "God why am I here?" or "God what are you doing?" or "God why are you upset with me?" Or "God what are you trying to tell me?" The list of questions goes on and on but behind the interrogation of God there is an underlying problem, we have been deceived somehow into thinking that if we follow God and we stay in fellowship that life will never have any storms or challenges.

Where does the deception come from?

B. The Deception

There are several sources of deception:

1. Our own hearts.

Jeremiah 17:9

⁹ *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

2. Not knowing the Word of God.

Last week in our study I took you to Jeremiah and showed you his prayer while he was in prison for serving God. He began his prayer by hallowing the name of God.

Jeremiah 32:17-20

17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

18 Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name,

19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

20 Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel, and among other men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day;

But there was something that happened to Jeremiah earlier that we need to see because what happened to him happens to many believers.

Jeremiah 20:1-2

Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things.

2 Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD.

Jeremiah was given 40 lashes and then placed in stocks which held the hands and the feet and bent the body over almost double.

Notice now Jeremiah's reaction.

Jeremiah 20:7

⁷ O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

What did Jeremiah mean when he said the God had deceived him?

I believe that Jeremiah had misunderstood the Word of God when he was called.

Jeremiah 1:17-19

¹⁷ Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.

¹⁸ For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

¹⁹ And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

Jeremiah thought that to walk in obedience meant that he would never experience the persecution of his fellow man. He completely misunderstood what God was saying. God would keep him alive because he had a message to proclaim but God never told him he would not suffer. Notice his words in verses 8 and 9.

Jeremiah 20:8-9

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⁸ *For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.*

⁹ *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

Jeremiah said he was done and would not speak of the coming judgment anymore but God's Word burned within him and he had to speak.

Conclusion:

Before Paul was saved his life was all about him but after meeting Christ on the Damascus Road his perspective changed.

Philippians 1:20-22

²⁰ *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

²¹ *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

²² *But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.*

Let me give you a sentence to finish,

For to me to live is _____ !

Isaiah 64:8

⁸ *But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.*