

SERMON GUIDE

Learning How to Pray - Our Needs

Matthew 6:9-13



1.21.2024

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 6:9-13

SERMON NOTES:

We wrap up our series on the Lord's Prayer today. We could probably go for many more weeks on this subject. We all have lots to learn and room to get better at praying. What we've looked at the first two weeks is how not to pray (like hypocrites or pagans) and how to begin praying (for God's glory: hallow His name, His kingdom come, His will be done). We also talked about the things that keep us from praying: self-reliance, ingratitude, blindness to our need, and wrong views of God.

We have also reminded ourselves that the Scriptures teach us that prayer matters. God uses prayer. He is sovereign over everything, and He is determined to bring about His decrees in the world, yet that doesn't eliminate the need to pray. Prayer is used by God to bring about those plans. Prayer moves God to act on our behalf. We have not because we ask not (James) and the prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much (James).

Today we are looking at how Jesus moves from teaching us to pray for God's glory, to focusing on our needs. And before we look at those particular petitions, I want us to see a few examples from Scripture of God answering prayer.

1. Isaac prays for his wife (Rebecca) to have a child.

There are many examples of the Lord answering the request of barren couples to have children. We read:

Genesis 25:21 -- *And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

2. Hezekiah prays for God to save Jerusalem.

The Assyrians are laying siege to Jerusalem. So Hezekiah, King of Israel, prays to God.

2 Kings 19:19 -- *So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone.*

That night, God answered Hezekiah's prayer by sending the angel of the Lord to slay 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, causing the rest of the army to retreat home without fighting.

3. The church prays for Peter's release.

In the early church, Peter had been arrested for preaching the gospel. The church began praying for him. We read this:

Acts 12:5 -- *So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.*

What happens? God answers their prayer and sends an angel that breaks Peter out. Peter then goes to a home where believers are gathered praying and when the servant tells them Peter is there, we read this:

Acts 12:15 -- *They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!"*

It was easier for them to believe 1. the servant was crazy or 2. it was Peter's angel (presumably a guardian angel) rather than him. I really love this example because as I'm showing these examples of prayer being answered, it is important to remember how quickly we are to disbelieve. We pray by faith. And faith pleases God so much. I was blown away again this week reading through the Gospel of Matthew the number of times the faith of individuals moved Jesus to act on their behalf. Jesus was impressed by, He marveled at, the faith of the Roman centurion. We know from Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it is impossible to please God. So prayer that truly believes God can/will answer requires faith.

My purpose in starting this way is to excite your resolve to pray. I want to encourage you to seek the Lord daily in your life and for your needs.

Exegesis: Matthew 6:11-13

The first 3 petitions of the Lord's prayer create a heart posture that positions us now to ask the Father to meet our personal needs.

I. "Give us this day our daily bread"

The first word of this petition is "give." We are asking God for something. He is the Giver and we are the needy. The "us" is another reminder that while we are praying for our personal needs, we still pray as a part of a whole. We care about others' needs too.

"This day" indicates we are looking for today's provisions. Not that it's wrong to ask for grace and blessing for the future, but our greatest needs are the ones we face today. Plus this teaches us to daily come. This is the same lesson the Israelites learned in Exodus 16 when they wanted to collect manna for the week, but God only gave them enough for the day (and enough for two days over the Sabbath). This asking for daily bread is not simply a food request, it is for all provisions we need: physical, emotional, and spiritual. I pray daily for strength and help to lead effectively. I pray for the daily bread in my family. It's not purely a ritual to ask every day for God's provisions. We need to recognize that any given moment, life as you know it could change: you can lose your job, your health, your spouse, your child, and many other things. We could experience national turmoil, a war, and many other things. Our need for daily bread is literal.

This concept of going to the Lord daily for help, comfort, and strength has been something I have learned through Kaleb's trials and death. For those of you that don't know, my son dealt with medical issues his whole life and died at 15 years old. He would be 20 years old this March. In those trials, and still today, it is relying on the Lord's for day-at-a-time grace. I need daily bread. I need grace for the hour. I've prayed this prayer so many times, and He has faithfully supplied it. NOTE: this isn't a trick to get what I want from God (this is why in the previous petition we prayed for His will to be done).

One of the lessons of Jesus feeding the five thousand in the Gospels isn't just to show He could perform the miracle of multiplying bread and fish, but to show that He was more than able to take care of all their needs. And He does.

Genesis 18:14 -- Is anything too hard for the LORD?

We're reminded God can do any and all things. This petition encourages us in the habit of asking Him.

II. "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"

This petition is more challenging that meets the eye. It is a prayer asking for forgiveness of our sins (which we should seek to confess by name and repent from). And I want to highlight this, because I know many struggle with it, you can truly be forgiven of all your sins if you go to Christ.

1 John 1:9 -- *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

We confess daily because we still sin daily. But I love what Kevin DeYoung writes on this:

"Jesus wants us to relate to God not just as a judge but as a father. This is such an important point and one that sincere Christians often miss. If you think of God only as judge, then you are either innocent or guilty. You are justified or not justified. You don't think in terms of pleasing or displeasing God. You think only in terms of the legal declaration of righteous or not righteous. As important as it is to recognize that God is judge, if that's the only way you relate to him, your Christianity will become stilted and stale."

So as a Christian, I should not fear condemnation from God when I sin. There is no condemnation for those in Christ (Romans 8:1). But my conscience should feel pricked, and I should feel guilty when I do things that deserve to be punished. Sin doesn't sever our justification, but it does displease God. And this is why we confess daily. We want to stay in fellowship with God. This prayer isn't from the mouth of a scared defendant in front of a judge, but a loved child in front of a merciful father.

It begins with the vertical forgiveness we need from God. Then it goes into forgiving others horizontally. This means we are to forgive others who have sinned against us. Notice the language: forgive us our debts AS WE HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS. We are forgiven in the measure we are

willing to forgive. One evidence that we have been forgiven by God is that we are willing to forgive others. This is taught everywhere:

Matthew 6:14-15 -- 14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 18:32-33 -- 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'

Jesus says if we don't forgive others, then we aren't forgiven. People often get confused about this. "Does this mean if we fail to forgive others, we lose our salvation?" No...but listen...it may be evidence that we've never experienced salvation. Forgiven people forgive people. We are never asked to forgive more than God has been willing to forgive us. I don't care how wronged you've been or how ugly someone has sinned against you. Nothing will compare to the wickedness of our rebellion against our Creator. And if we're in Christ, we're forgiven. How could we not forgive others if we have experienced such grace?

Ephesians 4:32 -- And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, as also in Christ God forgave you.

This is really hard, isn't it? Have you felt wronged by people you trusted? Did loved ones let you down? Did someone hurt you, abuse you, leave you? We don't forgive because people are easy to forgive, deserve forgiveness, or even ask for it. We forgive because God told us to and we've been forgiven more.

III. "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

Temptation to sin is all around us. And evil abounds all around us. Each day we wake into a world hellbent (literally) against us. We have an enemy that prowls like a roaring lion seeking those he may devour. Satan and demons are real. Temptation to sin is real. We must be on guard against it. We need the help of God, particularly the Spirit.

The deliverance from evil is not a reference to evil in the abstract, but the evil one. Satan. On this side of eternity, we are never immune to Satan's schemes or temptations. We must be aware of his schemes and designs. We are particularly prone to sins of pride, pleasure, and power. Satan loves to tempt us with things that appeal to us. Not everyone has the same temptations or vulnerabilities. But it is important that we know what ours are. Satan will not fight fair. Like he did with Jesus, he approached him when he was at his weakest physically. He was hungry and tempted Jesus with bread. Satan will look for the most opportune times to come against you.

You'll notice in the KJV translation, the Lord's Prayer ends with a doxology: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. This is not in the earliest manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel. But it does show up in later manuscripts found, clearly showing it as an ancient doxology. But that is why most translations today do not include it. But it isn't wrong to include in your prayers or say it. It was used by many in the early church as they recited the Lord's Prayer.

Every prayer is an acknowledgement that we're not God. The very act of calling out to God shows by its very nature that we are people in need of Him. Prayer is a confession of need. We've started this year out with a look at the Lord's Prayer so that we can see how to pray. I want to close by appealing to your hearts to recognize how desperately you need God.

Whether you are 15 years old or 65 years old, I want you to consider this reality: the best years of prayer can be in front of you. If you have 20 more years to live or 60 more years to live, the best years of praying in your life can still be in front of you. The Lord's Prayer has shown us how to pray. But now we need to remind our hearts of why we so desperately need it.

First, we are weak and needy, vulnerable individuals. Left to ourselves we are a mess. We can destroy ourselves and others with foolish decisions. We chase after things to satisfy our hearts that will never do it. We have great need for the help of the God of the universe.

Second, our hearts are made for God. We are made for communion and fellowship with Him. Christ restores that fellowship through His righteous life and sacrificial death for us. Jesus brings us to a right relationship with God. But we're always learning how to walk closer. We're always trying to dial in that station and get out the static. We're always trying to tune that instrument that makes the music sound a little off. And that is what fellowship with God through prayer does. Through prayer we find nearness to God. Augustine said, "*You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.*" That rest for restless hearts comes from the prayer lives of those in Christ.

As Paul reminded us:

Philippians 4:6-7 -- 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Let's live out this promise in our lives.

LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you GROW in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you GO to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?

BUILD UP

- **REVIEW:**
 - Read Matthew 6:9-13 and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
 - What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
 - Additional Scripture:
 - Genesis 25:21
 - 2 Kings 19:19
 - Acts 12:5
 - 1 John 1:9
 - Romans 8:1
 - Matthew 5:15
 - Ephesians 4:32
 - Matthew 18:21-22
 - Matthew 6:14-15
 - Matthew 18:32-33
 - Genesis 4:7
 - Ephesians 6:10-18
 - 1 Peter 5:8
- **REFLECT:**
 - Why do we ask God for "daily" bread?
 - Why do we ask God to forgive us if our sin has already been forgiven in Christ?
 - Why do we forgive others?
 - Why do we pray to avoid temptation and be delivered from evil?
- **RESPOND:**
 - What are some things you pray for daily?
 - What is one thing that you've taken away from this series that you'll add to your prayer time?

- **MEDITATE:**

- Matthew 6:9-13 --
- *9 Pray then like this:
“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread,
12 and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

- **MEMORIZE:**

- Philippians 4:6-7 -- *6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

SEND OUT

- **GROW:** How will you abide in Christ this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?
- **GO:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story or the gospel?
- **PRAYER:**
 - Pray over any request from your group members.
 - Director of Community - **Laura DiLeonardi**
 - Ministry - **TJC Women**
 - **Pray for our long-term families on the field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
 - **Pray for our mid-term sent ones on the field:**
 - Kaesi
 - **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG):** Bairagi (Hindu traditions) in Nepal



- **Population in country:** 283,000

- **Global population:** 4,768,000
- **Christian Adherent:** 0.05%
- **Evangelical:** 0.00%
- **Primary Religion:** Hinduism
- **Primary Language:** Nepali
- **Summary:** The history of the Bairagi commences with Ramanuja, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and taught in the southern part of India. A proper Bairagi is one whose principal deity is either Vishnu or any of his incarnations, like Rama and Krishna. A mark (tilak) on the forehead and ear are their identification marks. They worship Gouranga as their family deity and Kali, Manasa and Durga as village deities. They are indifferent to the education of girls.
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray the few believers among the Bairagi people would grow in sharing and discussing God's Word with their families and friends. Pray for those that the Lord will soon call to himself. Pray they would be zealous to learn of Christ, and that they would be sent teachers and pastors to help them. Pray they would live holy lives that honor Christ. Pray for the Hindu Bairagi community to make schooling for both boys and girls a priority.
- Want to keep up with other Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>