

Session 9 The Most Famous Apostolic Prayer: The Lord's Prayer

I. THE MODEL PRAYER (MT. 6:9-13)

- A. What a gift and privilege it is to learn about prayer from the One who is the greatest teacher and who had the greatest prayer life!

*Matthew 6:9-13 is commonly called **The Lord's Prayer**. This is the greatest apostolic prayer. In our last session, session eight, we were talking about the value of apostolic prayers. Jesus is the chief apostle. He is the main apostle. This is the primary apostolic prayer that He taught us. It is a most remarkable and most important passage because Jesus Himself taught us; the great Intercessor said, "This is how you do it." Every line represents a body of truth that is obviously bigger than just the line. This is more than just a poem that we quote. They are the great subjects that the Father delights in when we come before Him in prayer.*

It is a great gift to learn about prayer from the One with the greatest prayer life and the greatest teaching ministry in history. The greatest intercessor and the greatest teacher, He lays it out for us. It is one of the most familiar passages in the Word. When we search it out, we find that, like other passages, there is tremendous treasure beneath the surface. I want to encourage you to resist the over-familiarity that we have with this passage. Resist being content with just the broad-strokes approach to it, the superficial view of this passage, when it has glorious depths and content to it.

- B. Jesus gave us a model of prayer (Mt. 6:9-13) based on what God is like and on the nature of the kingdom. It covers all the foundational basics that are expanded upon throughout Scripture. Jesus told us the things that we must know and keep central in our quest to grow strong in prayer.

⁹In this manner, therefore, pray: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. (Mt. 6:9)

*Jesus said, "In this manner." In other words, this is a model of prayer. It is not just that we quote these words, although these words are good to quote, but He says "In this manner," meaning these are principles. This expresses the nature of the kingdom. This prayer reveals what God is like, the principles of the kingdom that He wants emphasized, the nature of the kingdom, the priorities of the kingdom. That is what it means when He says, "In this manner pray." It covers all the foundational, basic issues of the kingdom that are expanded upon throughout the rest of Scripture. In this prayer Jesus is really telling us, "Keep these six requests central. **Make these the primary themes of your prayer life.**"*

- C. Jesus pointed out six requests that we should pray. The first three focus on God's glory (His name, kingdom, and will). The second three focus on man's needs (physical, relational, and spiritual).

He pointed out six requests that every one of us should pray regularly. The apostolic prayers of Paul and the apostles elaborate on these themes and develop them. Of these six requests, the first three focus on God's glory. Then the last three focus on man's requests or our personal human needs. Together the six of them bring a combination that is essential to walk in all that is in God's heart. Let's start.

II. OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

- A. Jesus' teaching on prayer starts with a strong focus on who God is to us—our Father in heaven. Foundational to a strong prayer life is a right view of God as our heavenly Father. A. W. Tozer declared that a low view of God has been the biggest problem in the Church in every generation. As we pray, we must intentionally take time to recall who He is according to His Word.

⁹Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. (Mt. 6:9)

*He says, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." This is the Mount Everest of the kingdom of God: our Father who art in heaven. Jesus' prayer starts with a focus on the Father. He brings two dynamic truths together. We will develop this in a moment: the tenderness of God as a Father and the awesome power of His transcendence. He is the One who is in the heavenly realm **and** the One who rules the realm of the heavens. That phrase "in heaven" is pointing to His supernatural, other-than qualities of transcendence. It points us to His Majesty and His terrifying glory, filling us with awe. He is in a completely different realm than the earth. He is in heaven. That is what that verse means. It is not just His throne is there. He is the King of the realm of the superior and the supernatural and the utterly greater-than realm. Not only is He King of that realm, He is at the same time our tender Father.*

Foundational to a strong prayer life is a view of God in His majesty, yet as a Father. It is the both-together, not either/or. A. W. Tozer, who wrote on the deeper life in God, the knowledge of God, and the character of God, wrote, "The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us. A whole new philosophy of the Christian life has resulted from this one basic error in our religious thinking." In other words, a low view of God is perhaps the biggest problem in the church today. Believers have reduced God to one who meets our needs almost like a buddy, who is our friend with whom we have a common, peer-type relationship. True, He is a friend, but He is much more than a friend. He is the King of the heavenly realm. He is the One in the utterly superior, greater-than realm.

- B. In the time of Jesus, the Jewish people saw God as a transcendent creator and King. They trembled before His great power. Jesus taught them that God their creator was also their Father. "In heaven" points to the Father's powerful transcendence. Jesus combined these two ideas about God—He is both powerful and personal. He associated God's fatherly love with His heavenly power, His transcendence with His tenderness, and His exalted place in glory with bowing down so low.

In the time when Jesus taught this, the Jews, the nation of Israel, saw God as the transcendent Creator, the heavenly, transcendent One. Transcendent means to be infinitely superior. They saw Him as King. The Jews at that time trembled or at least in theory theologically this was their posture: they trembled before His great power. Jesus made, as it were, a very startling statement, "The awesome terrifying God of Moses is your Father. The very core of His being, He is a Father." He does not just function like a Father. It is not just a role. It is not just a job description. At the core of His being, He actually thinks and feels like a Father.

This was a new idea to Israel. Although there are a few references in the Old Testament to this, Israel never emphasized it as a nation. Jesus was combining two ideas here. Our Father who art in heaven, the powerful and the personal. He combines the fatherly love and the heavenly power, the transcendence and the tenderness, the highly exalted one bowed so low to come near, to draw us near to Himself. The infinitely high One bowed low in order to bring us near to Him in fellowship. This is not a new doctrine that God is a Father because it is in the Old Testament, but it was a new emphasis in Israel and a new emphasis in history.

- C. God is a Father who longs for a relationship of deep partnership with us in which He trains (disciplines), provides for, protects, and directs us with tenderness. God is deeply personal, yet terrifying in His majesty. We are to draw near to His tender heart with confidence, love, and humility. He expresses the fullness of the glory of what fatherhood means. Some neglect this revelation and depersonalize God, presenting Him as majestic, but distant, cool, and even harsh.
- D. We are awed by our Father in heaven, who longs for relationship with people like us. We will know the truth about Him as our Father much more as we see glimpses of His transcendence.

He is the God who longs for relationship. He does not just long for the deep partnership of a Father. He trains us. He disciplines us. He protects us. He provides for us. He directs us. These are all the functions of the ideal Father. The idea is that we can draw near to Him with confidence, with adoring, awestruck humility, but with confidence. We come with humility, "He is the Most High." We come with confidence, "He is our Father." We come with adoring love, "Our Abba, Papa," but awestruck majesty, "The Most High God to whom the angels bow and cover their face."

- E. C. S. Lewis wrote of God as being "beyond personality."

I like what C. S. Lewis said, "God is beyond personality. He is more than just a personality." He has a dynamic, ideal personality, the ultimate personality. He is power and presence, totally other-than, superior, intimate majesty, and dynamic personality. Some neglect this revelation of God, the fact of His Fatherhood. They depersonalize Him. Undoubtedly they end up, in an unintentional way, with a cold, distant approach, awestruck but cold and distant. Other folks do just opposite. They become familiar, close, and confident, but they do not have the sense of majesty as to who He is.

- F. **Our:** He is not only *my* Father, He is *our* Father. Our prayers requests are tempered with the reality of who we are to God *as one family*. They also become inclusive as we are to pray for the whole family of believers and not for ourselves only.

*He is not only my Father, He is not only your Father, He is **OUR** Father. That is a very important word. Our prayers are tempered by the reality that we are dear as individuals, **and** we are part of a family. The family is bigger than our ministry. Obviously we know that. God is, as a Father, directing His people into thinking of the welfare of His family, not just our personal ease and comfort in the temporary sense. When we pray for the breakthrough of God, for revival, we pray for the people of God. That is something I have been big on for years. I do not think—maybe I have once and forgot—but I do not think I have ever prayed for revival for IHOPKC, just IHOPKC. I always pray for revival, ninety-nine percent of the time—there must be an exception in there somewhere—for "Your people in this city and region." It is always the people of God, the church in 1000 congregations. "Abba, You are our Father. Visit us in revival."*

*Though I want to see revival in my little sphere, it is not enough that our sphere becomes lively while the family of God is not lively in the things of God. It is not a great victory if things are lively in our sphere and lethargic and dead everywhere else. That will never happen. That is purely a hypothetical situation. I am talking about the motive of the heart. Some folks are fixated on their sphere. If they have an increased energy of the Lord, "us four, no more," even if that is a couple thousand people, the Lord would say, "I am a Father. What about the others?" We do not want to be silent until God is visiting His people in the whole city or the region that He has placed us. Then we have the same prayer for the nations of the earth. It is bigger than our sphere. That is why I always steer people to the bigger picture, **OUR** Father, not just **MY** Father.*

- G. Revelation 4 is one of the great passages on the Father's beauty and throne. I see four categories, each having three themes. These twelve details have many implications.
1. The beauty of **God's person**: how God looks, feels, and acts (4:3)
 2. The beauty of **God's people**: the Church enthroned, robed, and crowned (4:4)
 3. The beauty of **God's power**: manifested in the lightning, thunder, and voices (4:5a)
 4. The beauty of **God's presence**: His fire on lamps, seraphim, and the sea (4:5b-7; 15:2)

²A throne set in heaven...³He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne...like an emerald. ⁴Around the throne were twenty-four thrones...I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns...⁵From the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne...⁶Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal...around the throne, were four living creatures...⁸they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty..." (Rev. 4:2-8)

One of the great passages on the Father's heavenly glory is Revelation 4. In this chapter I see four categories—I do not know if that is the right word—of the beauty and the majesty of God that are revealed around the throne. Each one of those four categories has three specific themes. When I read through this passage, I am looking and asking the Spirit, "Show me the majesty in these twelve areas."

Verse 3 reveals the beauty of God's person. Verse 4 shows the beauty of God's people. Verse 5 demonstrates the beauty of His power. Verse 5-7 give a picture of the beauty of His presence. In Revelation 4:2, we see that a throne is set in heaven. This is where "our Father" is. Jesus understood it is the "Our Father who art in heaven" who sits on this throne. That is what He meant. This is the Father from the heavenly view. The different colors are giving expression of His beauty, His majesty, and His glory. It is like a jasper stone and a sardius stone, an emerald rainbow of mercy around His throne. There is so much on each one of these. That is not my point here to break that down right now.

Verse 4, there are elders who are robed, crowned, and enthroned. They are sitting on thrones. They have crowns. They have royal robes on. These are not just robes. They are royal robes. Here is the idea. The God of majesty in verse 3 wants partnership with His people. His glory is manifest in them and through them. He has people around His throne. I believe these are people. Some commentators believe these are angels.

Verse 5, from the throne there is lightening, thunder, and voices. Later on in Revelation instead of voices it says noises. I put the word music. Beloved, those noises are awesome. It is not just noise. It is the most terrifying, wonderful, beautiful music coming out of the throne. Then there is the presence of fire all around the throne.

- H. Jesus set the context of intimacy with God within His sovereignty and majesty. Some only see Him as a tender Father without seeing His heavenly glory. Others see His heavenly glory without seeing His nature as a Father with deep love. Some only see Him as a Father who is personal and tender, without trembling before His transcendence. They portray God as a familiar and fun-loving buddy. These views are based on bad, shallow theology and very little personal experience of God.

Jesus set the context "Our Father who art in heaven" as intimacy with God within His sovereign majesty. Or, He set the context of God's sovereign power within the context of family love and partnership. When we talk intimacy, it is in context to majesty. When we talk majesty and sovereignty, it is in context to family love, intimacy, and relationship. We do not want to separate the two. The reason I say that is that I have found that it is easy for a group to go one way or the other. They will go the tenderness of the Father and overlook the majesty. Or they will be so locked into the majesty that they miss the tenderness of the Father.

III. PRAYING FOR GOD'S GLORY (MT. 6:9-10): THREE REQUESTS

- A. **Petition #1 Praying for God's name to be hallowed:** This petition is that God's majestic name be hallowed or acknowledged as holy (transcendent and pure) on earth just as it is honored in heaven. God's name refers to His person, character, and authority.

⁹***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. (Mt. 6:9)***

Let's begin with the first three requests. Praying for the glory of God is petition number one. We pray that the Father's name would be hallowed or treated as holy and manifested as holy on the earth because God's name is treated as holy in heaven. The prayer is that it would be manifested in its holiness and treated as holy on the earth. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name." Here is the petition, that God's majestic name would be acknowledged as holy. Not just declared and described as holy. Surely that, but more than that. That His name would be adored and treasured and declared as holy, meditated on as holy. It is also that people will respond to His name in abandonment of obedience and love and in that respectful way to the Father. His name refers to His person, His character, and His authority.

- B. We ask God to break in with power to cause more people to acknowledge the truth about Him.

In this prayer we are asking God to break in with power, to cause more people to acknowledge and see His holiness. "Lord, hallowed be Your name. Break in with manifested glory so that multitudes inside the church and outside the church would be awestruck by who You are." The whole stimulus of our culture has a strong magnetic-like pull to pull us away from the truth of His awesome majesty. The whole stimulus of the culture around us, the people, the sights and the sound, all the conversations, naturally pull us away from that. Jesus' prayer is, "Let's pray that God's Name and holiness would be central." That we would cry out that the holiness, the awesomeness of God as a Father would be seen, received, and honored in and proclaimed by the church.

- C. Many take God's name in vain. Some use God's names in a joking way or in expressions of contempt and anger.

Some people take God's name in vain. We are aware of that. They use God's name in a joking way. They love God, but even they make jokes. We do not want to touch the being of God in any kind of casual or joking way. Not the being of God. Not the name of God. Others take His name in vain by expressions of anger and contempt. I do not necessarily mean angry at God, but in their anger at people, they are using the name of God with contempt when they are cursing a person.

1. We pray that the Father receive the highest place in our life, heart, and worship.

We pray that God the Father has the highest place in our life and in our heart. That is what this prayer is.

2. We revere God's name by not asking for anything against His will or that would defame His glorious name. The very thought of His name stirs awe and holy fear in all who understand.

We revere or hallow His name, number two, by not consciously asking for anything against His will. When we are aware something is not in His will, we don't ask for it or we stop asking for it. We may not know for a while. Sometimes I have prayed for things, and later it became clear to me that it is not His will. I want to let go of it then. That is part of "Hallowed be Your name."

3. God-centered Christianity prays *hallowed be Your name*, or “Help us to honor Your name.” We pray, “Lord, work in me and others, so that we acknowledge Your greatness.”

D. ***Petition #2 Praying for the kingdom to come***: This petition asks for an increase of the kingdom, which is the place where God’s Word is obeyed, His will is done, and His power expressed. The kingdom is manifested when the sick are healed and demons are cast out (Mt. 11:5; 12:28).

¹⁰***Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Mt. 6:10)***

1. The kingdom of God is manifested in part in this age and in fullness when Jesus returns to earth. The kingdom is “already, but not yet”—it is already here, but not yet fully here (Mt. 3:1-2; 4:17, 23; 6:10, 33; 10:7; 12:28; 13:11; 16:18-19; 19:12; Mk. 4:11, 26; 9:1; Lk. 16:16; 17:20-21; 18:16, 29-30; Acts 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 30-31; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20).
2. This is not a prayer for the Father’s universal, heavenly sovereignty to be exercised, for it is always in force, even if men do not accept it. This is a prayer for God’s saving power to be greatly increased or openly manifested on earth so that even unbelievers can see it.
3. We pray for the manifestation of the kingdom to increase openly on the earth. The Lord gives more if we ask for more—the act of asking develops relationship, and this is what He wants.
4. Seek to know what God is doing in your generation, and then throw yourself fully into it.
5. It includes being kingdom-minded in our lifestyle and in our attitudes towards others. Therefore we are to work together with other believers, instead of being focused with a territorial attitude on our own sphere of authority and influence.

In petition number two we are still praying for God’s glory. We ask that, “Your kingdom would come.” This is asking for an increase of the kingdom being manifested on the earth. The kingdom of God is the place.

Some folks are confused. They ask, “What is the difference between the church and the kingdom?” The church is the family of God, the community of God in relationship with one another. It is who we are together as a family in community. That is the church.

The kingdom is anywhere in society, or anywhere in the universe—we are thinking of the earth right now—where God’s Word is obeyed, His will is done, and His power is expressed. Meaning, when the person who works at the bank does the will of God in their economic transactions and their policies, the kingdom is being expressed right there. That is not the church. The church is the family of God in relationship. It is a church member expressing the kingdom. When there is a God-honoring movie coming out, that is the kingdom of God being expressed. The will of God is being expressed in the realm of media. When, in a neighborhood association, there is honesty and justice, in the association there are believers speaking up and unbelievers speaking up, that is the kingdom being expressed. There are all kinds of contributions. Wherever the will of God or justice and righteousness are being expressed on God’s terms, the kingdom is being expressed. That neighborhood association is not the church, but it is an expression of the kingdom. Whether it is in athletics, in music, or whether the children’s soccer league, whatever the will of God is done, the kingdom is expressed.

We meet together as the family in gatherings like this, in home groups or friendship groups as we call them, or twos and threes in fellowship. That is the church gathering in various ways. The church is the vehicle that

expresses the kingdom. We can express the kingdom all through society wherever we proclaim or do the will of God. Wherever there is healing or demons cast out, this is an expression of the kingdom.

- E. **Petition #3 Praying for God's will to be done:** This request includes our personal obedience in the context of His kingdom purposes. His will consists of His commands and our ministry assignment.

¹⁰***Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Mt. 6:10)***

Petition number three is praying for God's will to be done. "Your will be done on earth like it is in heaven." Ultimately this is going to be fully answered. It is partially answered in this age. It is substantially answered in the Millennial Kingdom, when Jesus comes and sits on His throne, and the will of the Father is done in a substantial way. It is partial now. It will be substantial then. At the end of the Millennial Kingdom, the Father's throne comes to the earth. Then the kingdom is ultimate. The will of God will be done in the ultimate sense. There will be no mixture at all. In the Millennial Kingdom there will still be sin in the nations. It is minimal compared to now, but it will still exist.

Praying that the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven is one of the great prayer requests because this is where history is headed, to the will of God being fully manifested on the earth. We are not waiting until the Lord returns, and we are not waiting until the Father's throne comes on the earth. We can see the will of God done now, partially, but it is still important. It is significant.

When we pray the will of God be done, this includes our personal obedience. Some folks in their ministry are focused on the will of God being done. What that means to them is missions, and missions is important. They think of evangelism. That is certainly a key point in this verse. The will of God being done includes the unbelievers coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus in our city or us going to the nations to see to that. They get really focused on ministry that helps other people encounter God and do the will of God. It's a very important part of this verse, but this verse starts in our own hearts. We begin with the will of God being done in our own lives.

To pray for the great harvest in our city, in the nation, or the nations while consciously disobeying God in our own life is not correct. I am not talking about weakness where I am stumbling but warring against it. I stumble but I still war against that disobedience; that is one thing because the intention is obedience. There is a spirit of obedience in the very resisting and distaining of the stumbling. There is the honest confession that sin is sin. "That is not my portion. Yes, I am stumbling, but I am warring." There is a spirit of obedience with that mindset.

We pray that "Your will be done on earth." It has a spirit of obedience. Then it expresses itself also in a passion for ministry to get other people to encounter, enjoy, and obey. I have a blind spot if I am focused with passion on getting others to encounter and obey and enjoy God, and yet I am not consciously obeying and enjoying God in areas of my life and I am okay with that. Like that one area, I am just going to let that go. I will coast for a couple years in this area, and I will get done with it one of these days.

Jesus is saying here, "Pray this third petition over your life. Pray the will of God be done." As you do that, again, there is passion for ministry for others. There is passion that the lost would encounter the Lord, enjoy the Lord, obey the Lord, and walk in His goodness. The will of God being done on earth like it is in heaven.

IV. PRAYING FOR OUR PERSONAL NEEDS (MT. 6:11-13): THREE REQUESTS

- A. The next three requests are for our needs—*physical* (daily bread), *relational* (forgiveness), and *spiritual* (deliverance from evil). Jesus commanded us to bring our personal requests to God in prayer. These prayers express our dependence on God in every area of our life. Some conclude that prayer for such things are “selfish,” so they neglect to make personal petitions.

Let's move now to the next three requests of this great apostolic prayer. The first three are about the glory of God. The second three requests are personal needs. We do not need to choose between the two. Some folks are locked into God's glory and somehow think God's glory is diminished if we get blessed and our needs get met. "Do not worry, it is not about me, God. It's all about You."

He would say, "Well, I am a Father. If it is Me, it has to include you because I am a Father. I am not just a being in heaven. I am a Father. You are on my heart."

I don't know too many Christians like that. Most Christians are really locked into their personal needs and are not so focused on the glory of God. I am not making a big negative point about that, although we want the glory of God first and our personal needs second, but it is not one without the other. It is the both/and. There are not many who are so focused on the glory that they minimize their own needs because they think somehow it detracts from God if our needs are met or our sphere is increased. We just do not want it to be the number one thing of our life. It is an outcome of our faith. Our sphere is going to be blessed and increased for billions and billions of years because it is in the heart of our Father. He does it in part in this age. We do not need to pick between the two.

Every now and then you will meet a really zealous believer. I love that zeal. When I meet someone a little overbalanced on that, I think, "I would rather you be overbalanced on that than the other ten things that people are overbalanced on in the other direction. I would rather you be in the spirit of what Jesus taught, though. That is even better." If you have to pick an error, overdo the glory of God. What I mean by overdo it is only by minimizing what the God of glory has set in His heart to do in your midst. That is what I mean by overdoing it. You cannot overdo it in the one sense for sure.

Some people conclude that prayer for personal things are just selfish, so they neglect to make petitions or personal requests for their own needs. When our quest for humility goes beyond the Word of God, it is a religious spirit. It is not true humility when one prays, "Oh God, You are so glorious. I am so nothing. I don't deserve anything at all."

One preacher said, "That guy is so humble that he needed to pray for pride." I've never met a person like that. What I think he meant is that they had a humility that went beyond the will of God. It looked amazing, but it is a religious spirit.

I want to agree with God. Jesus is telling us, "Pray about your own needs now."

Some might think, "Jesus, if You get Your eyes on the glory of God, You wouldn't give that teaching." Again, there are not so many who think like that today, but through history we have had those camps emerge. It is sincere, that over-humility, but it distracts from the relationship with God. That actually minimizes the glory of God. His glory is not just His power and His awesomeness. His glory is that He is so abundant in love and uses His power to express that love. That is what is so glorious about Him. God is not glorious because He flexes His muscles and can overpower everybody. That is not the ultimate of His glory. The ultimate of His glory is that He has such power, but He uses it for love. That is what is glorious. Wow! Who else would do that besides our Father?

- B. **Petition #4 Praying for our daily provision:** This request is for our *daily* provision, protection, and direction (spiritual and physical). *Bread* refers here to our daily natural needs.

¹¹***Give us this day our daily bread. (Mt. 6:11)***

1. We do not pray to inform God of our needs (Mt. 6:7-8), but to enhance our relationship with Him and to express gratitude (Ps. 50:15).
2. Asking God for our needs does not free us from the responsibility to work (2 Thes. 3:10). He meets our needs in part by giving us the ability and the opportunity to earn a living.

Let's look at the fourth petition. There are a total of six petitions, six requests. We are beginning the personal needs. "Give us this day our daily bread." What I would like to pray is, "Give me my monthly bread." Technically I prefer annual bread. I would like God to meet my needs for a year from today. Put the money in the bank, "Lord, I am different than all the others. It will be good for me. I am not like the others. Give me a couple years' worth, and I will be fine."

Bread is not just provision. It is provision, but more. Give me my yearly direction. Let me know what is going to be happening two and three years from now. I mean in detail. I do not mean the general sense that I am going to be walking with God and growing in love. I want details.

"I will give you tomorrow's direction tomorrow."

"Oh come on, Lord, give me a year or two."

"No, no. It will keep you connected to Me."

"I am different from those other guys. I will stay connected." I am saying that sarcastically. I am sure you are following me. I am just like everybody else.

We do not pray for daily bread to inform God that we need it. Jesus said many times, "Your heavenly Father already knows what you need." Matthew 6:8, "He knows what you need before you ask it." You do not ask it to reveal the need. You ask it to enhance the dialogue, to strengthen the encounter, to engage in the conversation. That is what God is after. When the Lord does meet our needs, there is this God-ordained cooperation between human process and supernatural provision. Let me say that again. There is a God-ordained cooperation between human process and supernatural provision. He wants us to do our part, but there is also supernatural provision where He releases the wisdom, where He releases the strength, where He releases the people who help. He releases the money. He releases the direction. That is the supernatural provision.

There is a human process that is a part of it. Meaning, one guy says, "I am not going to be about the work of the kingdom. I am not going to be responsible with my money. I am not going to work hard. I am just going to ask God to give it to me." They quote the verse and give some money away. They say, "God, if I give enough money away, You will give me ten-fold back." They are lazy and negligent in doing their kingdom assignment. They think money will just drop out of heaven. They think, "Lord, give us our daily bread."

He says, "No, there is a human dimension to it as well. You need to be about your assignment." Whatever season you are in. For many of you, your main assignment right now is going to school. That is your assignment; you should be diligent about your assignment. You are in the will of God.

Others in this room, your assignment is being a full-time missionary. That is a real assignment, a real job. Others of you, your assignment is in the market place, in one sphere of society, being deeply involved. If we are involved with diligence in a responsible way in our assignment, we are in a position to ask for daily bread. It is

not about lazy people claiming faith as a substitute for their human dimension of the process. That is self-evident to ninety-nine percent of you, but there is always that one guy who needs to hear that.

- C. **Petition #5 Praying for forgiveness:** This petition concerns our relationship with God and people. The proof that we have been freely forgiven is that we gladly forgive others. The man who knows he has been forgiven is compelled to forgive others.

¹²***And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (Mt. 6:12)***

*The fifth petition is praying for forgiveness. There are two points to clarify here. One, you do not earn forgiveness by praying for it. There is no element of earning it. Like as if you pray for forgiveness a lot, after a certain point and time God will eventually give in and forgive. No. Our forgiveness is a free gift of God. Two, we do not earn forgiveness by forgiving people. It says, "Forgive our debts or trespasses as we forgive others." This verse has been misinterpreted by some to mean that our forgiveness from God is earned because we forgive. Because we forgive, therefore He forgives. No. It is completely the other way around. If you have been truly forgiven and you know it, you have generosity in forgiving those who sin against you. A sign of a person that is not genuinely aware of their having been forgiven is someone who will not forgive someone else. When a believer will not forgive someone else, they are in a crisis of faith. The crisis of faith is not that if you do not forgive them you will end up in hell. He warned you. He warned you. No. The crisis of faith **is the reason** they are not forgiving another person, because they are not aware of the magnitude of the freeness and the generosity they were given as an absolute free gift. They are in a crisis. That is one dimension that is here.*

Another dimension of what Jesus is saying here is that it is not a prayer for salvation. It is not about a believer asking to be saved in the sense of born again. He is talking about being cleansed from the dullness of our sins. Like sinning yesterday, sinning today and saying, "Lord, cleanse my spirit. Cleanse my emotions from that defilement." In my gratitude I am energized to be generous to others. It is just indication of a spiritual crisis when I can participate in defiling sin, have my emotions defiled by sinful words and sinful deeds. I have had that many times. I know that experience, the horrible feeling of having my emotions defiled by something I said. My salvation is not up for grabs. I am solidly saved, but my spirit or my emotions are dulled and I do not like that feeling at all. The crisis is doing that and then not asking the Lord to cleanse me. This is a prayer for cleansing. This is a believer asking for that daily cleansing so they have that renewing of the Holy Spirit, that fresh confidence, that fresh communion with the Lord.

Then—having had that renewal of that sense of cleansing, that free cleansing from things I said or did today or yesterday, the day before, the week before, the month before—then having the generosity to be generous with somebody else who is sinning against me because I am so aware of how kind He was to cleanse me of what I did. The two go together. The idea that it is not okay to live defiled. I want to be cleansed. Then I want to give expression to my gratitude by forgiving somebody against me.

Many believers are content to stay dull, to live defiled, and then they do not forgive the people who are against them. They have the both/and. They touch immorality, they slander, they judge, not in that biblical way. There is a biblical way to evaluate. That is the word judgment. They do wrong things with their money. Their spirit, their emotions are defiled. Then they get angry and do not forgive other people. They have both dimensions: defiled heart and refusal to forgive. Whoa! That is a crisis. There are so many believers who live that way. In an area or two in their life they are content to live defiled. It does not trouble them that they are really upset about somebody else due to how they were treated. The Lord says, "Don't you have a sense of gratitude that I have cleansed you? Can't you give them the generosity I have given you? Even a part of it?"

Jesus is actually making two points here. Keep short accounts with God. It is your inheritance to have a cleansed heart. I am talking about emotions. To feel the cleanliness of that fresh communication with the Lord and then to feel the generosity of giving it to people who do not deserve it because I did not deserve it. It is a crisis when I will not give it to you. It is not only an indication that I am not enjoying it, but that I am not aware of it in my own life.

- D. Jesus did not say, “Forgive us our debts *because* we forgave our debtors.” We must compare Scripture with Scripture to see the truth more clearly. Believers are freely justified by faith, so we ask for forgiveness to restore our fellowship with God (1 Jn. 1:9), not to be saved from hell.

⁹*If we confess our sins, He is faithful...to cleanse us from unrighteousness. (1 Jn. 1:9)*

¹⁰*He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean. (Jn. 13:10)*

Jesus did not say forgive our debts **because** we forgave our debtors. Compare scripture with scripture. He is talking about 1 John 1:9, that we confess our sins as believers. We do not confess our sins so we can go to heaven. We have already done that. Our citizenship is in heaven. We have the gift of righteousness. We are freely forgiven. My salvation is not in jeopardy when I get stuck in an area of defilement. You do not want to stay in that area for years and let it grow to other areas. You want to attack it right away, but the issue of 1 John 1:9 is to confess our sins and He is faithful to cleanse us; he means to cleanse from that spirit of defilement on our mind and emotions that gets into our conversation with God and that causes shame and uncleanness to dominate our thinking and our words.

I think John 13 gives such a good picture of it. At the Last Supper Jesus said, “I want to wash your feet.”

Peter replied, “No, Lord, You cannot wash my feet. I am more humble than even You are, Jesus.”

“Peter, Jesus wants to wash your feet. You better take those sandals off right now. Just say thank You. Do not say, ‘Oh no, not me.’ Just say thank You.”

Then Jesus said, “Peter, he who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, for he is completely clean, and you are clean.” He was saying, “In the grace of God, in your relationship of redemption to Me, you are clean” even though He was going to the cross right after that, but in the economy of God it was clear what was happening. He said, “Peter, you are clean. But there is an area that is defiled. Your feet are dirty.” We can have our position before God and our life secure in the kingdom, and still have an area that is dirty. That is what I believe Jesus is talking about here. Forgive us our trespasses. Cleanse our heart. Renew our mind and heart with the Holy Spirit. Give us that fresh sense of cleansing and that sense of gratitude that causes us to be energized to forgive others.

- E. **Petition #6 Praying for deliverance from evil:** The sixth petition has caused much discussion. Since God never tempts anyone with evil (Jas. 1:13), why would we ask God to lead us not into temptation? We pray that God leads us to escape from tempting situations.

¹³*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Mt. 6:13, NIV, RSV)*

The final petition, the sixth one, there is a bit of discussion on this one. I have a little bit more on the notes than what we will cover. “Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” God never leads us into temptation. The petition seems strange: lead us not into temptation. Like, “Lord, You are leading me to be tempted. Would You change directions and lead me out of temptation?” Jesus is not suggesting that God leads us into temptation. What the prayer means in the one sentence is really saying the same thing two different

ways. It is not two different requests. It is one request stated from two different angles. We are praying that God would lead us to escape from tempting situations.

- F. Many agree that Jesus was using a figure of speech to express the same thing in two different ways—leading away from temptation and being delivered from, or escaping, evil. This is clear when we read both parts of the one request—to *lead us not into temptation* **and** to *deliver us from evil*. The second half of the request defines positively what the first half expresses negatively.

*Many agree that Jesus here is using a figure of speech. He is saying the same thing in two different ways. Lead us not into temptation **and** deliver us from evil. The same thing said in two different ways. This is clear when we read both parts of the one request. The second half of the request, deliver us from evil, defines positively what the first half expresses negatively, lead us not into temptation. Let's develop this idea just another moment or two.*

- G. Jesus urged the apostles to pray that they enter *not into temptation* (Mt. 26:41; Lk. 22:40). To enter temptation speaks of something far more intense than the general temptations we all face. It is a specific storm attacking us, a time when three components come together—when *demonic activity* is heightened, our *lusts are aroused*, and *circumstances are optimum* for sin.

⁴¹***Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Mt. 26:41)***

³¹***Satan has asked for you [Peter], that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me... (Lk. 22:31-32)***

In Matthew 26, a few hours after the Last Supper in John 13 when Jesus washed their feet, Jesus said to them, "Pray that you will not enter into temptation." That is a strange word. Pray that you would not enter into temptation. I do not mean strange. That is not the right word. It is like, "Hmm, what do You mean exactly by that?" That is a prayer that I am assuming many believers do not pray very much. Jesus was urgent. He was zealous about this prayer request. This is His sixth prayer request. He is really saying it again in Matthew 26:41.

To enter into temptation is far more than the general temptation in culture. It is not just walking down the road and feeling tempted to covetousness as when we see all that other people have, and thinking, "I want that." The lust of the eyes. It is not just the temptation to lust for immorality or possessions or lust for position. It is more than a general temptation, being delivered from that.

There are key moments, strategic moments in a believer's life, that do not happen that often. I call it "a storm of temptation" that hits you. It is not just the general emotions of lust that are in the culture from money, immorality, pleasure, pride, or position. It is what Jesus referred to in Luke 22 when He said, "Peter, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat." That is what He means by temptation. It is a storm. It is unique. While not once in a lifetime, it is not something that happens every day either. There is an opportune time Satan is looking for to sift you like wheat.

That opportune time is when demonic activity is heightened in that moment. That moment might be a couple-hour period. Lusts are aroused, and the circumstance is optimal. You are in the right situation, and lust or fear is aroused. For Peter it was fear. The demons are operating at a higher level of attack than normal. Demons do not attack you at ten on a scale of one-to-ten every time, or you would be so aware of it. Part of the power of Satan's temptation is the subtlety. On a scale of one-to-ten he is tempting you little, little, little, and you get comfortable that you are above temptation. Boom. He hits you when you are depressed, fatigued, in the right

situation, the right person comes by, the exact situation, you are depressed, you are angry at somebody, nothing is working right, and boom! He has you because you got confident, "I am not really in a big temptation or storm."

The devil says, "That is right. I am not tempting you." His strategy and tactics are that he draws back, draws back, hits a little harder, draws back, gets us confident in our flesh that we are above temptation and particular things, then he hits us in the hour we are depressed, the crisis happens, the situation is right, and the demons are coming in full steam against us, so to speak.

Jesus said, "You will be sifted as wheat." That is a storm of temptation. You entered into a temptation that is far more than a general one.

- H. There are "opportune" times when demonically-energized temptations hit us like a storm. Praying before "the storm" of temptation hits expresses humility that depends on God's strength and acknowledges our weakness. These "pre-temptation prayers" for help are a pre-emptive strike against Satan's attack against us. We can reduce the temptation by praying this way.

¹³***The devil ended every temptation...he departed from Him until an opportune time. (Lk. 4:13)***

³⁴***Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.*** ³⁵***For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.*** ³⁶***Watch and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Lk. 21:34-36)***

In Luke 4:13, the devil left Jesus until an opportune time. There are the opportune moments in your life. The devil waits like a lion stalking prey. He waits. He cases the situation. He waits. He wants to get you alone, get you into a little self pity, throw in a little condemnation, add a little heightened fear to it, a little crisis situation, get you really fatigued. Then you will walk into the situation without even knowing what is going on. Boom! He has you. That is what Jesus is talking about when He told Peter and the apostles to engage in this sixth petition.

In other words, pray before the storm hits. That expresses humility. I will come before the Lord and say, "Lord, lead me not into temptation." In other words, "Let Your leadership be in my life to where I am aware of what is happening. You are guiding my path. I am crying out for help when I am not feeling the intensity of the battle." I do not do that enough. When you do that, any of us, that is humility. I call it a pre-temptation prayer strike. It is a preemptive strike before the devil hits us. We are praying ahead of time. We can reduce the temptation of that opportune moment, the devil's opportune moment against us, by engaging in this sixth request. When I look at these six requests, the sixth one is the most ignored and most neglected one. Maybe it is not understood.

In Luke 21, Jesus is commenting on this concerning the great snare that is going to come upon the earth. He said, "Pray before the snare is on you. Do not wait until you are in the trap to pray. Pray before it. Connect. Ask God. Dialogue with God ahead of time. Then when the snare comes, you are already positioned and connected in a way of alertness."

- I. David prayed for deliverance from sinful situations even before they occurred (Ps. 19:12-13).

¹²***Cleanse me from secret [unperceived] faults.*** ¹³***Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless... (Ps. 19:12-13)***

I will end with this. In Psalm 19, David prayed this prayer, in essence, in Old Testament language. In verse 12 he prayed, "Cleanse me from secret faults." I believe David does not mean secret as in, "Cleanse me from stuff

I know that nobody else knows.” I don't think that is what he is praying about. “You know that stuff I am doing in secret, help keep me from that.” That is not what I think he is saying.

I think he is saying, “Faults that I am not even aware I am going to step into, cleanse me. Help me. Step in now.” In verse 13, he goes on to develop it, “Keep Your servant from presumptuous sins. Keep me from that situation. I cannot imagine what that will look like. I am aware of my weakness and Your generosity.” I am putting us in David's prayer. We are praying that sixth petition because in our weakness we have taken our fallenness seriously.

A lot of believers know they are sinful, but they do not take their fallenness in a serious way. They just walk into situations. They have not been talking to the Lord. They have not been praying that sixth petition. A storm takes them out at an opportune moment. They are all confused and befuddled at how it happened. David prayed in Psalm 19, and I encourage you to put this on your list, “Do not let these sins have dominion over me. Do not let these unperceived sins come to a storm and overtake me and take me out.” Amen and amen.