

# Praying in the Kingdom

Kingdom Living #9 - Pastor Jonathan Combs - May 25, 2025 - Matthew 6:7-15

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're continuing our sermon series today entitled, KINGDOM LIVING. It's an expositional study of Christ's Sermon On the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. Many have described it as the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived. Today we are picking up the section of Scripture that we went around last week because we wanted to spend ample time on this very important and well-known passage. In today's Scripture we will see one of our Lord's practical teachings on prayer.

**Need:** Prayer is a topic that most of us have had to wrestle with in some capacity. As someone who has discipled people and been myself discipled by others, I know that prayer is one of the hardest fought disciplines in the Believer's life. First of all, I believe there is a reason for this ... if God's people are intimately fellowshiping with their Heavenly Father then they are a powerful force for good and for the Gospel in this life. Every evil adversary would oppose this so it's no surprise that prayer is a hard fought discipline.

Are you fighting a battle in your prayer life? Is it hard to make time to pray ... hard to know how to pray ... difficult to be in the quiet with your thoughts ... is it hard to talk to God? What are you battling in your prayer life? Everyone of us wages war with evil when we pray so don't be surprised by the fight for your prayer life. But friend, be assured that our God who speaks to you in secret has overcome the world. If there are 100 obstacles between you and the throne room of God then press on because being in the presence of the King is worth it.

**Trans:** Jesus, with the crowds on the mountainside, began to remove some of those obstacles in prayer and guide them towards a intimate and purposeful fellowship with their Father. He guides through His Word today ...

**BODY:** In Matthew chapter 6 as Jesus continued the Sermon on the Mount, He taught the crowd how to pray as citizens in God's Kingdom. We can understand how to pray as citizens of God's Kingdom. How do we pray as citizens of God's Kingdom? The text gives three ways to pray as Kingdom citizens.

**Read text:** Matthew 6:7-15 (ESV) 7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 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. 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.

## HOW TO PRAY AS CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM:

### 1. Pray with thoughtfulness.

**EXP:** (v.7-8) Jesus begins the section with a negative command, "Do not be like them." The world prays with lots of empty words that do not move God. Instead He seeks heartfelt, thoughtful, meaningful prayers.

**"Pray" (7)** (προσεύχομαι, *proseuchomai*) - to pray to God, supplicate, worship, pray earnestly, make prayer.

Prayer in the world of the 1st Century Jew was a bit different than we are used to. Memorized prayers were the norm. They were expected to pray the Shema (Deut 6:4) each morning and evening. Prayers before each meal were required, and were different depending on the type of food to be eaten. Rabbis determined that if the food was larger than an olive, prayers were required. Particular prayers were required for occasions such as approaching the site of a miracle, seeing a shooting star, experiencing an earthquake, thunder or lightning. One prayer was for receiving good news, another for bad. Two prayers were for entering a town, and two for leaving. Jews were expected to pray the Tefillah (18 Benedictions) three times a day, at prescribed times. This is the world Jesus was dealing with in his mostly Jewish audience. Today, we struggle to pray for meals, or in front of others, or have a daily quiet time with the Lord.

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**"Heap up empty phrases"** (7) (βαππαλογέω, *battalogēō*) - from combination of *Battus* and *logos*. Some suppose the word to be derived from Battus, a king of Cyrene, who is said to have stuttered (Herodotus 4, 155); others from Battus, an author of tedious and wordy poems. To stammer, to repeat the same things over and over, to use many idle words, to babble.

**"Gentiles"** (7) (ἐθνικός, *ethnikos*) - nations, Gentiles, pagans, heathen.

**"Many words"** (7) (πολυλογία, *polulogia*) - loquacity, prolixity, much speaking. Literally many words or an abundance of words. The goal in prayer is not wordiness, but heartfelt clarity.

1 Kings 18:26 (ESV) And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal **from morning until noon**, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made.

**"Do not be like them"** (8) (ὁμοιόω, *homoioō*) - to be made like, to liken, compare. This is a continuation of last week's theme - not to do things for the approval of others..

**"Your Father knows"** (8) (εἶδω, *eidō*) - to know, i.e. get knowledge of, understand, perceive. This is a reminder of the very nature of who God is ... He is all-knowing, omniscient. He sees us in secret and He knows our prayers despite our own struggles to pray with clarity.

Romans 8:26-27 (ESV) <sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

**"Need"** (8) (χρεία, *chreia*) - demand, requirement or destitution, business, lack, necessary(-ity), need(-ful), use, want.

**"Before you ask Him"** (8) (αἰτέω, *aiteō*) - to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require.

**ARG:** Jesus may be touching on a passage from Ecclesiastes where our hearts can be irreverent before God and our prayers can lack the thoughtfulness that our Creator deserves:

Ecclesiastes 5:2-3 (ESV) Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

**So why do we pray? Let us also remember that prayer is our need and not His:**

"But if God knows what things we have need of, before we ask him, where lies the advantage of prayer? Believers do not pray, with the view of informing God about things unknown to him, or of exciting him to do his duty, or of urging him as though he were reluctant. On the contrary, they pray, in order that they may arouse themselves to seek him, that they may exercise their faith in meditating on his promises, that they may relieve themselves from their anxieties by pouring them into his bosom." - John Calvin

"Prayer is not designed to inform God, but to give man a sight of his misery; to humble his heart, to excite his desire, to inflame his faith, to animate his hope, to raise his soul from earth to heaven." - Adam Clarke

**ILL:** Children don't come to their fathers saying, "Oh dear glorious father, might I beseech thee to grant me a delicious vessel of frozen chocolate treats?" No they say, "Dad, can I get some ice cream?"

**APP:** Do you struggle to pray? It's one of the most common refrains we hear. "I don't know what to say." Or, "I can't pray like those people." God wants to engage with you; He wants to talk with one of His kids. The first step in becoming better at prayer is just to do it.

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## 2. Pray with purpose.

**EXP:** (v.9-13) Jesus then tells the crowd how to pray, "Pray then like this." God is not hiding from you, He has instructed you on how to communicate with Him. So pray like this ...

**"Father in heaven" (9)** (οὐρανός, *ouranos*) - the seat of order of things eternal and consummately perfect where God dwells. Let's begin prayer knowing who we are speaking to and where He is positionally compared to us. Let's begin with the focus on the One who sits on the throne of all things who by His grace hears us.

1 Kings 8:27 (ESV) "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

**"Hallowed be Your name" (9)** (ἀγιάζω, *hagiazō*) - to make holy, i.e. (ceremonially) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate:—hallow, be holy, sanctify. Holy is Your Name! Yahweh, Jehovah, Adonai!

**There is a balance in prayer between reverence and intimacy for we are sons of a holy God.** There is a tension between the familiarity of the Father as "Abba" ('daddy', in some circles) and the holiness in the name as practiced by the ancient Hebrews, who thought the name of God so holy that they would neither write the complete name nor speak it. The Father is both - he is both the King of the Universe, Creator of All, and the Almighty God sitting on the throne AND the personal Father who is loving, approachable and attentive. Let us remember who He is when we pray - we can boldly come into His presence as one of His kids, but He is still God Almighty.

**"Kingdom come" (10)** (ἔρχομαι, *erchomai*) - to come into being, arise, come forth, show itself, find place or influence; be established, become known, to come (fall) into or unto.

**"Will be done" (10)** (θέλημα, *thelēma*) - of the purpose of God to bless mankind through Christ; will, choice, inclination, desire, pleasure.

**"Earth as in heaven" (10)** - that God who reigns on the throne of heaven would bring that to earth and fully reign here.

**"Give us" (11)** (δίδωμι, *didōmi*) - of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage; to bestow a gift

**"Daily bread" (11)** (ἐπιούσιος ἄρτος, *epiousios artos*) - the bread of our necessity, the bread that suffices for each day; food of any kind

**"Lead us not" (13)** (εἰσφέρω, *eispherō*) - to carry inward (literally or figuratively); bring (in), lead into.

**"Temptation" (13)** (πειρασμός, *peirasmos*) - trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy; an enticement to sin, temptation, whether arising from the inward desires or from outward circumstances; adversity, affliction, trouble: sent by God and serving to test or prove one's character, faith, holiness.

James 1:13 (ESV) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

**"Deliver us" (13)** (ρύομαι, *ryomai*) - to draw to one's self, to rescue, to deliver

**"Evil" (13)** (πονηρός, *ponēros*) - full of labors, annoyances, hardships; of a bad nature or condition, diseased, wicked

**ARG:** Purposefully pray as children of God:

Romans 8:15 (ESV) For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption to sonship, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

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## Purposefully pray for the Kingdom come (the advancement of the Gospel):

Mark 1:14-15 (ESV) Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom** of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

## Purposefully pray for God's protection and deliverance from temptation:

1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV) No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

**ILL:** Can I ask y'all some questions that you might find very concerning about this prayer thing? If I don't pray for God's Kingdom to come will it not come? Will His will not be done? Will I starve? Will He lead me into temptation if I don't ask Him not to? Will He not deliver? Isn't God's Kingdom gonna come no matter what I pray and His will be done no matter what I think about it? Daniel 7:27 says, "His kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Indeed His Kingdom will come so what is the purpose of my praying. It is for my heart, for the alignment of my heart with God's, for the reorientation of my thoughts with His thoughts.

**APP:** What is the purpose underneath your prayers? Self or God? Look, Jesus makes room for praying for daily bread but that is certainly not the purpose of the prayer. The purpose is alignment with the Father. "You are holy, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, You give the bread You think I need, You forgive and make me a forgiver like You, You lead me, You deliver me." Prayer is about You oh Lord!

## 3. Pray with forgiveness.

**EXP:** (v.12; 14-15) Jesus ends this prayer section by expounding on the forgiveness piece of the prayer. He elevates forgiveness as an essential characteristic of the Father and of those adopted into His family.

**"Forgive us" (12; 6x)** (ἀφίημι, *aphiemi*) - 1) to send away; of a husband divorcing his wife, to let go, let alone, let be; to disregard; to let go, give up a debt, forgive, to remit; to give up, keep no longer 2) to permit, allow, not to hinder, to give up a thing to a person 3) to leave, go away from one

1 John 1:8-9 (ESV) "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

**"Our debts" (12)** (ὀφείλημα, *opheilēma*) - that which is owed; that which is justly or legally due

**"Have forgiven our debtors" (12)** - same words used before with our prayer to God but now our prayer is for the ability to forgive others. Jesus pairs these together; our received forgiveness makes us forgivers.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say "forgive and forget", so what does Christian forgiveness look like? According to the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, it's a series of promises:

- a promise not to dwell on the incident mentally
- a promise not to bring up the sin again and use it against the other person
- a promise not to talk to others about the sin
- a promise not to let the incident hinder your relationship with the sinner

**"Trespasses" (14)** (παράπτωμα, *paraptōma*) - to fall beside or near something; a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness

**"Heavenly Father" (14)** - there is something going on with the connection of Father being in heaven (9) or heavenly.

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**"Neither will Your Father forgive" (15)** (οὐδέ, *oude*) - but not, neither, nor, not even. Verse 15 is less about breaking relationship (losing salvation) and more about breaking fellowship with the Father.

"The Lord's Prayer is the family prayer, in which God's adopted children address their Father, and though their daily failures do not overthrow their justification, things will not be right between them and their Father till they have said, "Sorry" and asked him to overlook the ways they have let him down." (J.I. Packer, *Praying*, 79)

Although your children may offend you, they will always be your children. Your fellowship may be affected by their wrongdoings but your relationship will always be family.

**ARG:** **We are to be bountiful in forgiveness, having a deep well of forgiveness from Christ for others:**

Matthew 18:21-2 (ESV) "Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" "Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

Mark 11:25 (ESV) And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

**We forgive every time because we have been forgiven from everything:**

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

**ILL:** I have noticed something interesting when I have planted little gardens in my backyard. When I plant a tomato seed eventually I get tomatoes ... a zucchini seed eventually I get zucchini ... it's amazing! Never once has a broccoli grown on my tomato vine. Why is it then, that we are shocked by Jesus here, by His expectation that those who are forgiven would forgive. Christ planted the seed of forgiveness, why is bitterness popping out, why is anger, revenge, hostility the fruit? Did you forget to water it?

**APP:** A lack of forgiveness does not condemn us to hell, but it does hinder our fellowship with our Father. One of His key attributes is forgiveness. In Christ, His attributes are planted, cultivated and produce their fruit in our lives. When we withhold forgiveness, we reject the fruit of His forgiveness which He freely gave to us. We offend Him in this! We are acting out that although He has forgiven us for a lifetime of lies, murder, addiction, adultery, lust, and all sin we still can not forgive others. We reject the fruit of the forgiveness He has given us.

Friend, don't reject the fruit of God's eternal forgiveness in your life. Cultivate it and produce a harvest. Let your life be a beacon of forgiveness because you know of what He first forgave.

**CONCLUSION:** Jesus desires to have a consistent, intimate, purposeful relationship with us. He has also given us guidance as to how to cultivate this relationship with Him. Dear friends, our Father is not distant, nor is He hiding from us when we pray, but is instead deeply engaged when we pray:

- With thoughtfulness
- With purpose
- And with forgiveness.

Let's pray to our Father now!