

Matthew 6:13 The Correct Understanding of Prayer Part 9

We are finishing up on prayer in Matthew 6:5-15. Our focus is on The Concepts of Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. The Concepts of Prayer, there are seven of them.

And a reminder to you, as we have for the last couple of weeks shared with you that the same concepts of prayer were taught by Jesus in Luke 11:1-4, but taught differently. Same concepts, different wording. Luke's Gospel was written to the Gentiles. Matthew's Gospel was written to the Jews. There are Hebraisms in Matthew 6 in the Lord's teachings that are not found in Luke because it was written to the Gentiles.

Now this tells us that Jesus did not present this prayer or teach this prayer as something to be memorized and recited religiously, because there are different wordings in each section. And secondly, because in our section Matthew 6:7, the Lord specifically gave commands not to pray vain repetitions, repeating prayers, memorized prayers over and over again. It does not do any good spiritually. Because He says in Matthew 6:8 that God already knows what we need before we ask. So He says, the Lord is saying, "If you think that God is going to respond to your request because of certain kinds of prayers that you have memorized in order to pray a certain way and that God is going to respond to your formula, you are mistaken." He already knows what you need. He already has the provision on the way.

God does not provide because of the way we pray. But there is a relationship going on and the Lord wants us to understand the concepts of prayer. Prayer is communicating with Him. It is talking with Him, not religiously repeating certain things up in the air hoping that it reaches God.

There are three categories in these concepts of prayer.

1) The first category is found in verse 9 and it is the realization of who you are talking to. Knowing who you are talking to. **Our Father who is in heaven.** Not just *Our Father who is the head of our religious system*, but *God who is in heaven* means He is in charge of the whole universe. We are talking to the God of creation.

We saw in Acts 4:29 the disciples when they prayed. After they were threatened not to preach anymore in the name of Christ, they spend most of their prayer reciting to the Lord who the Lord is. "You are the One that is in charge. You are the One that has been in charge and has predicted through prophecy all persecution and hardship that was supposed to come upon Your people ahead of time, so You know all this. It is not a problem." And when they got to their prayer, they said, "Behold their threatenings." That is all they said. Our prayer requests are asked in perspective - if we have the right perspective - of who we are talking to, the One who is in charge of all things, that knows everything we are going to talk about before we even pray. And He already has an answer.

2) The Second category is made up of three concepts, requests for the things of God.

The first request was **Let Your name be sanctified**. *Sanctified* means *set apart, honored*. So the concept is that I go out in His name and live my life all day and all night long in His name as a Christian, a follower of Christ. Let His name be set apart and honored in my life. I represent Him. Let Your name be set apart and honored.

Secondly, **Let Your kingdom come**. Something to remember as we all vote on Tuesday for the president is that this is not our kingdom. Our citizenship is in heaven. We have a responsibility. Everybody should vote according to what the Lord lays on their heart to participate. But we are praying for the Lord's kingdom to come, that is our hope, not on how things turn out here in the earthly realm.

Thirdly, **Let Your will be done**. Let Your will happen. As You have designed in heaven let it also be done upon the earth. That is the whole crux of prayer right there. As we shared with you from I John 5:14-15 that even John - 58 years after Jesus' public ministry John says, "You can have confidence that God will hear your prayer if you ask everything to be done according to His will." And you might say, "Well how do I know what His will is so I can ask for it?" You do not need to know. The whole purpose of prayer is to express my submission to Him and His will. And I do that by asking for His will to be done in every situation that He has laid on my heart to pray for.

What I am doing is I am submitting the whole situation to Him. I am putting it in His hands and I am lining myself up with Him. So that John goes on to say in I John 5:15 that if you have confidence that God is answering your prayer then you know that you have, present tense, you have the answer to your request right now. It is happening right now. Our problem is sometimes we cannot accept what His answer is. "Lord, I asked for Your will to be done and things are just getting worse." That is His answer. Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better. But it is trusting Him, it is submitting to Him, and submitting the situation to Him. Rather than me being in control of my situation and praying to God for Him to work it out the way I want to, prayer is an expression of submission to Him. Turning it over to Him and asking Him to work it out according to His way.

3) The third category and the three things that finally had to do with us.

Verse 11, first of all, **Give to us today our coming necessary bread**. So my necessities for food, I am to pray for it today. I am to learn to trust the Lord each and every day, separately, one day at a time, for His provision. And notice how we translated it: *for our coming necessary bread*. It is for the food that is necessary. Whatever I need for the day. And secondly, it is the coming necessary bread, which means it is already on its way.

Secondly, that we took last week, verse 12. **And forgive us our debts as also we ourselves forgave our debtors**. There is a lot of doctrine jam-packed into this verse. A *sin* is called a *debt*. Whenever we sin, we are in debt to God. It is a debt that has to be paid. That is why we emphasize the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He paid the payment for the debt. A person cannot escape the debt they have to pay any other way other than through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. **And forgive us our debts as also we ourselves forgave our debtors**.

The word *as* means *in the same way* that we ourselves - forgave is past tense. As we forgave our debtors, those who have sinned against us.

Now last week we attempted to unravel this, as to what it what it really has to do with. Remember - and this is the key to understanding this particular concept - is that the Lord is speaking to disciples. People who will be filled with the Holy Spirit, who will be saved, and they are going to be praying to the Lord as saved people. This is not the prayer to get saved by. This is the disciples' prayer, someone who belongs to the Lord. And so when we are saying, **Forgive us our debts as, in the same way also, we ourselves (past tense) forgave our debtors,** we are telling Him that we are asking for our daily forgiveness for our sins, but it is connected to how we forgave others. It sounds like works but we have to understand this concept. Again, this is the disciples' prayer.

There are two aspects about forgiveness of sin. When a person receives Jesus Christ into their life, when they are born of the Spirit of God and Christ is now living within, that person is forgiven because of what Christ has done for them on the cross, and the cleansing process is the coming of the Spirit of Christ. That person's spirit is now made holy and pure. Why? Because Christ dwells there. He fills our spirit. We are told in Ephesians 1:14 that the Holy Spirit seals our spirit. He fills us from within, He seals us from without, our spirits are holy, pure, cleansed because of the death of Christ on the cross. So it is a one-time thing.

In Ephesians 4:32, this is a key verse in understanding this principle. Ephesians 4:32, **We are to become kind and tenderhearted towards one another, forgiving each other as Christ forgave us.** See, there is a different aspect now. I am forgiven for my sins forever. But each day, or as the Holy Spirit convicts me of my daily sins, I confess my sins according to, as John said in I John 1:9, **We confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** This is an ongoing process, where once I am totally cleansed and forgiven for my sins, but I keep on sinning. So I have to come under the conviction of God's Spirit to confess my sins before God. And it is interesting that it is that second phase that is represented here in the text, that I am to forgive you as Christ forgave me. He already forgave me and so I go out and you sin against me, but I do not forgive you. God says, "Wait a minute, when you come to Me with your confessions of your sins, if you are not going to forgive those who sin against you, I am not going to forgive you your sins. They are just going to keep piling up. You are saved but on a daily basis your sins cannot be forgiven because you will not forgive others."

Look in verse 14 of our text which is a commentary for this, **For if you should forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you should not forgive men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** And so God says, "I will forgive you if you have the right perspective and you see yourself as a sinner." You cannot hold other people to their sins against you. You will have to forgive them if you have to have the proper view of who you are before God. So as we come before God and confess our sins as we are convicted of our acts of sin, our daily sin, God looks at us and will forgive us in accordance with how we have forgiven others. The proper perspective of sin.

But for the next few moments the last prayer request, verse 13. And I want you to notice the literal translation because most English texts have it according to the traditional understanding of this prayer: "And lead us not into temptation." But notice what it says literally, **And You should not lead us into temptation.** So it is not a request. It is in the subjunctive mood in the Greek text, which means that we are expressing to God a confession, first of all, before the request. **And You should not lead us into temptation.** So we are not asking Him because He does not lead us into temptation. The traditional texts that say, "And lead us not into temptation," well, He does not. There is no sense asking Him to not lead us into temptation because He will not do that and there is a reason for it, as I will share with you here in a moment. The literal translation is, **And you should not lead us into temptation, but** - and here is the petition, here is the request. This is not in the subjunctive mood it is in the imperative mood; it is like a command - **but deliver us from the evil one.** So the first part is a confession. We are confessing that God does not lead us into temptation, but rather our prayer request is for what He does do, **Deliver us from the evil one.**

Now why do we say God cannot tempt us and therefore that translation "Lead us not into temptation" is incorrect? It does not represent the literal translation and it does not represent the teaching of this verse. There is a reason for it. In James 1:12-17, here is what James says, **Blessed is the man who is enduring** (remaining under) **temptation: for after he has been tempted, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to the ones who are loving him.** So if you endure temptation without giving in, to you will be the crown of life. **Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted from God,"** the reason, **because God cannot be tempted with evil.** God does not have the capacity to be tempted by evil. Secondly, **Neither does God Himself tempt anyone.** He does not tempt people to sin and He himself does not have the capacity to surrender to temptation. He cannot be tempted. He is without the ability to be tempted is what the Greek text says.

That is why I had said to you back in Matthew 4, you remember it is called The Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness? It was not the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness because He was unable to be tempted. It was the testing of Jesus in the wilderness. It was not Satan trying to tempt Him to sin. It was Satan challenging Him with His authority being the Son of God. And when Jesus went through that testing, He defeated Satan. But Jesus Himself had no capacity to be tempted. He could not give in to sin. That is why the Bible says He is sinless, though He had a human body like you and me, He had no sin nature.

Which is why - and we are approaching that time that it is important to understand why the birth of Christ was special. He was born from a human woman, through a human woman. But He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, not from a man. He had the divine nature, not human sin nature. He had flesh and blood, but He had no sin, which made Him eligible for dying for us on the cross. But He was unable to be tempted. God cannot be tempted and he himself does not tempt anybody.

So let us understand James 1:14, **But every person is being tempted, while he is being drawn away by his own lust and is enticed** (or *allured*). It is a fishing term, gone for the bait. When you go for the bait and you follow your lustful or human desires, that is when temptation starts its process. Verse 15, **Then after lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when**

it is finished, brings forth death. So he says, "You are tempted because of your own lust and because of your own desires that you follow after, and those desires produce sin and sin produces death." So it is your own lust. It is not God. It is the allurements of the things of this earthly life that awaken our desires and cause us to chase after these various things. So he says in James 1:16, **Do not be misled or deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, from whom is no variableness, or shadow of turning.** He never changes. He is always the same. He gives good and perfect gifts. He does not tempt us to sin, but He gives us a way out.

It is interesting because it says in our text, **And You should not lead us into temptation.** So that is a confession. It is a confession I have to make because I cannot blame God for me giving in to temptation. **But, deliver us from the evil one.** Now this is very important, here is why. When I fight against temptation and sin, I fight against it in response according to my own human effort. I try to resist temptation and sin. And I find sometimes I am successful, most the time I am not. So I am in the struggle fighting with sin and, "Lord, I got this. I will try. I will try to do better." What it is saying here is that it is an expression to the Lord that we are relying on Him to deliver us from the evil one, not our own strength. When I ask the Lord and I tell Him, "Lord, You are not the One who leads me into temptation." That is a confession of my own weakness. "I am only led away by my own lust and desire and because of that Lord I have to depend upon you to deliver me from Satan because I cannot do it." I stop struggling in my own human effort and I start trusting the Lord and submitting to Him to deliver me from Satan.

How many times have we heard ourselves, or heard other people over the years, talk about this fight we have with Satan? I cannot fight Satan. My trust is the Lord to deliver me from the evil one.

And then look at the last part of verse 13. And if you are following in the study guides, it is in brackets because it is not in some of the older manuscripts. But it is the finishing touches on the concepts of prayer that match the first concept: **Our Father who is in heaven**, realize who you are talking to. And then he finishes off this prayer by, **Because Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, into the ages (or forever). Amen.** Why am I asking Him to deliver me from the evil one? Why am I submitting Him for all of these prayer requests? It is because His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, not me. I am talking to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. I am talking to the One who has all the power, I have none. He has all the glory, I have none. And this will be the way it is forever. This is the Person that I am talking to. This is the Person I am praying to. This is the Person I am submitting to. This is the Person that I am asking to deliver me from all of the attacks of the evil one. These are the concepts of prayer.

Now I do not know if you have made this a part of your prayer life. It is great freedom, great relief, great release, if you go through the seven concepts as God's Spirit leads you to pray. Spend time with the Lord, not repeating the words of the prayer so much as it is realizing these concepts and putting them in your own words as God gives you the ability to pray. We are limited in our praying what we pray for. We are praying submission, we are praying, "Let Your will be done." We are praying and confessing that He is the One we were trusting to deliver us from the evil one. We are praying for Him to work out His ministry and His work for His kingdom

here on the earth. And by the time you get through praying you feel this great relief, this great release, but you also feel a peace and a burden off of you, because there really is not anything else to pray for. You say, "Well, I got lots I got to pray about." When you get through with this, you are done. You will feel like you are done. I have given Him everything. I put everything into His hands. I am trusting Him for everything.

So in Luke chapter 11 when the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Teach us to pray like John taught his disciples to pray." And Jesus taught His disciples and said, "You are My disciples and here are the concepts of prayer. Here are the things you are to realize. These are the things you are supposed to talk to Me about. These are the things you are supposed to communicate with Me about." Everything is taken care of in these seven concepts, as we entrust our life and our pathway in life and everything that we have and everything that we are to Christ as His disciple.

Let's close with prayer.