

Matthew 6:10
The Correct Understanding of Prayer Part 6
Understanding the Salvation Experience

We are in Matthew chapter 6 verses 5 to 15. In Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7, it is one sermon that the Lord is giving to religious Jewish people and the theme of it is The Correct Understanding of the Things of God. The Jews had and have a religious understanding. But the Lord is presenting the spiritual understanding of the things of God to them.

In chapter 6 we have The Exercise of Righteousness, and in verses 2 through 4 we have studied of how to do one's act of mercy on the help of other people.

In verses 5 through 15 we are studying about prayer, how to conduct ourselves in prayer. He started out this section by saying, **Not as the hypocrites (or actors) do who like to pray in public in order to be seen and heard by people in order to receive honor from people.** Jesus said, **Pray to your heavenly Father in secret and He will reward you.**

In verse 8 of Matthew chapter 6 Jesus said, **Therefore do not become likened to them for your Father knows of what things you have need of before you even ask Him.** From there we took off for about three weeks on studying what the Bible teaches about prayer. Its meaning. Prayer is communicating with the Lord. But prayer is also the means by which we express our submission to the Lord and to His will. That is what the Bible teaches about prayer. Prayer is the means by which I express my submission to the Lord and His will.

The method for prayer, we saw, is by the Holy Spirit. What about using Jesus' name as a special formula to make things happen as some groups teach? Praying in Jesus' name is also praying that all things be done for the glory and honor of the name of Jesus; for His purposes and His will to be done. It is not a magic formula that we input into our prayers to make life happen the way we want it to. That is idolatry. That is blasphemy. But it is in widespread use today even amongst Christian circles.

And so the means by which we pray, we saw, is by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In case you have not caught it yet, and this is more evident in the teachings of John in his gospel, but God the Father only receives us through the work of His Son. God the Father only receives that which is done by His Holy Spirit. He does not receive anything we do. So in prayer when the Holy Spirit inspires us, God receives that prayer because it is coming from the inspiration of His Spirit. So God only receives that which He does. Period. We are only the vessels.

Religion is forcing Christianity. Religion is psychologically practicing what is in the Bible. Biblical Christianity is spiritual, it is not psychological. And it is centered around the Spirit of God in and through man. But if God does not do it and if it is not of His Spirit, as Paul said at the end of Romans chapter 14, **If it is not done by the Spirit of God it is sin.** As simple as that. Cut and dry. Black and white. That is the way it is.

So last week we took up in verses 9 through 13, The Concepts of Prayer. As Jesus gave the disciples - this is not a prayer to be repeated, this is not a prayer to be recited by people. Last

week we showed you that the other place in which this prayer is found is in Luke 11:1-4, but it is presented differently, with different wording, same principles different wording. Why? Because in Matthew He is speaking to Jews and in Luke 11:1-4 he is presenting it for the Gentiles. So He did not mean it to be memorized and recited together in repetitious prayer like some churches do. But rather He is teaching the various principles of prayer.

Last week we saw the first of three categories:

1) **Our Father who is in heaven.**

The first principle in prayer is, know who you are talking to. Not just call Him by name and then rattle off a whole prayer list. We saw from Acts 4:23-30 that the disciples after they were threatened, they went back to a prayer meeting that was happening in the house and they told everybody, "We have been threatened not to preach anymore in the name of Christ." So they got together, and they prayed about it. Most of their time was spent talking to God for who God is. Father, The Creator, the One who has created heaven and earth. The One who prophesied to the prophets hundreds of years ahead of time that people were going to come, the world leaders were going to come against the Messiah when He comes. So they are confessing that He is God. They are confessing that He already had planned and knew about how they were going to come against Christ, so their position is, "So You knew that they were going to come against us. And you are in charge of us just like you were and have been with the Messiah." And then their prayer request was "Behold their threatenings." That was it. In order to have a proper perspective in prayer one needs to know who we are talking to and have that in our foremost thoughts and attention first.

2) But then the second category involves three things. By the way, the third category also involves three things. But the second category involves three things it all has to do with God, not with us. We do not get to our things to pray about, until we get to the last category.

A. **Our Father who is in heaven.** The first thing in the second group - which is request to Our Father - **Let Your name be sanctified.** *Hallowed, set apart.* In other words let His name be honored and glorified in and by my life today. Do not let people see me and say, "Oh this guy is supposed to be a Christian, look at the way he is acting. Look at what he is doing." Let God's name be set apart. Let God's name be glorified.

B. Secondly, **Let Your kingdom come.** Looking for God's kingdom. It is kind of interesting, and I was very shocked, very shocked. The other day I saw a message over the Internet by an international Bible teacher who basically was telling a large church of Christians that he was visiting, he says, "I have all the answers to your frustration over the current presidential election that is going on. I can solve all your frustration. This earth is not our home. Do not worry about it." We are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Should we participate? If the Lord's leading you to participate, but it is not ours. This is not our country. This is not our world. It belongs to the world's system. We are praying, "Lord let your kingdom come." We are looking for the coming of the kingdom of God. And in our daily lives we are praying for God's kingdom to come and be evident and alive and to be active in wherever we go. This is not our kingdom.

C. But thirdly, it is something I want to focus on today, I told you last week is a special message today. **Let Your will happen, let Your will be done as in heaven also upon the earth.** In heaven God has decreed His will and design for every person every day. It has been decreed in heaven. So Jesus said, **Let Your will take place upon the earth as it has been designed in heaven.**

Now this is what we studied two weeks ago, for the last two to three weeks. That prayer is the means by which we express our submission to the Lord and His will. That is what prayer is for.

Now we started off in our study in I John 5:14-15. That is the summary of prayer as it is taught for believers in the Bible. I John 5:14-15 where John says, **We can have confidence that God hears our prayers if we pray according to His will. And if we pray according to His will and we have confidence that He will answer then we have the answer to our request.** "Lord, let Your will be done." Okay. Whatever is, is His answer. It might mean the situations will get worse. That is His answer.

As we studied the first hour, the human realm is broken by sin. But when I pray, when I am praying for someone or I am praying for a certain situation by asking for the Lord's will to be done in that situation, I am letting go of the situation and I am lining up in submission to the Lord because then I have to trust that the Lord is taking care of it according to His will. And I cannot get back in there and get involved again. I have turned it over to Him. He is taking care of it. He is working it out according to His design. I am emotionally and psychologically and sometimes physically too involved. I have to let go. Trust the Lord with it. So prayer is a means by which I align myself up with God correctly in the midst of all of my circumstances and situations. Prayer is for me to line up with Him and submit to Him.

Now this morning when I said I had a special message - I have been in ministry for over forty-eight years and in grappling with all of the issues - and, of course, we are living in a day when the salvation message, you never hear about being born again anymore, about being born of the Spirit of God. It is always easy believe-ism. We do not talk about salvation anymore. We do not hear the salvation message much anymore. There is a different gospel being preached. It is psychology. It is the practice of the Bible with a person's mind that they use on themselves. It does not involve the Spirit of God whatsoever. The spiritual gospel message is being lost. And the humanistic, human-centered, self-centered gospel is being preached.

So this morning I wanted to share with you two words, two important words in order to understand the correct gospel versus the false gospel. First of all, I want to explain to you from the Bible what a *sinner* is. Isaiah 53:6 is the greatest summation Scripture in all of the Bible that describes who a sinner is: **All we like sheep have gone astray, we have all turned everyone to our own way and God has laid on Him the iniquities of us all.** All of the filth and the corruption that we associate with evil comes out from us going our own way. But there are some people who can go their own way and become very religious and have a very decent clean human life. But it is still going one's own way. To go my own way means that I am my own God.

In Isaiah chapter 14 it describes Satan. Satan says, "I will be like the Most High. I will be in charge like the Most High." You see, when you are in charge and in control of your own life, you are your own God. So the first word I want you to take notice with this morning, who is a *sinner*? A *sinner* is someone who is in control of his or her own life. Control.

How about *salvation* then? What happens at salvation? Salvation takes place - it is actually an event or an experience, it is not a religious belief. Jesus said in John 3:3 to Nicodemus, the master teacher of Israel, He says, "Unless you are born again (born from above, experience a spiritual birth) you cannot see the kingdom of heaven." A few verses later He says, "Except a person be born again they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." You have to be born again. You have to experience a spiritual birth.

In Titus 3:5 Paul told Titus that it is a regeneration, washing of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. To be regenerated. To experience a spiritual birth. Be born again. It is an event. It is an experience when the Spirit of Christ comes into your spirit. Literally to receive Christ. You do not hear *receive Christ* much anymore. It is usually the word *accept* the Lord. To *accept* the Lord is *mental agreement with*. The Bible never says to accept the Lord. It says to receive the Lord. And that is literally what it means. To receive Him, take His Spirit, receive His Spirit into your spirit. So that the person who has experienced a spiritual birth has the Spirit of Christ dwelling inside of them.

Romans 8:9 Paul says, **If a person does not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them they do not belong to Him.** "Oh, I believe." Well, belief is part of it, but belief does not save you. It is the born again experience that saves a person. It is the coming of the Spirit of Christ into a person's spirit that saves a person. It is not our belief. Belief is part of it.

In fact James says, **You believe in the one and true God, well, you do well. But even the demons are believing that, and they are trembling.** It does not save demons. Satan knows the truth better than we do; it does not save him. Demons confessed the truth of who Jesus was when Jesus faced them, but it did not save them. They can confess to the truth, but they have not surrendered to the truth.

The salvation experience, listen to me now, the salvation experience is the surrender of the control of one's life to Christ. *Surrender*, there is our other word. Control. Surrender. See, by receiving Christ into my spirit I am giving up the control of my life. Because remember to be a sinner means to go my own way, control my own destiny, control what I want out of life. To receive Christ - to be saved spiritually by a spiritual birth - means that the spirit of Christ comes in. And that is what I am doing by receiving Him, I am surrendering.

See some people think - and it is presented this way in a lot of cases - that I as a human being I am incomplete as far as fulfilling my own dreams in life, my own goals in life because I do not have the Spirit of God. That the Spirit of God wants to come on board with me, to live inside of me to help me fulfill my dreams and my goals. So I am still in charge. I am still in control. Except now the Spirit of God is helping me to be my own god. That is the way it is presented. Like the Holy Spirit is like a genie in a bottle - that through prayer I ask God what I want, and how I want to be happy, and how I want to be satisfied. And I am told that if I practice

certain principles out of the Bible, that I will rub that Holy Spirit bottle just right, that the Holy Spirit is going to be let loose, and the Holy Spirit in His power is going to make life turn out for me the way I want it to.

But when you receive Christ - that is what salvation is, we are being delivered, saved, rescued, from the control of our own life and that is why Christ comes inside. He comes inside into the control room, and He takes over.

Paul said in I Corinthians 6:19-20, **Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives inside of you, and you are not your own, for you were bought with a price?** Did you know that when Jesus died on the cross not only did He die for my sins, but He purchased me? He owns me. I am not my own anymore. The Spirit of God has come in to take over. Salvation is actually a surrender. And when Christ comes in to save me He is now in control, He is the Lord of my life. So that now I am in a condition - once I am born of the Spirit of God I am in a condition to be one with Him.

And if you see my hands - fingers spread out and then interlocked and folded together - it just makes one big ball. Jesus told the disciples that when He comes into them, when His Spirit comes into their spirit He says, "I am in you, and you are in Me, and We are one." That is in John 14:20; John 17:11; John 17:21; and John 17:23 where Jesus said, "I am in you, you are in Me, and we are in the Father. We are all one in Spirit." So His Spirit does not come in alongside of my spirit, His Spirit comes into my spirit, to where my spirit and His Spirit are one. Not my human body, but in my spirit, so that We are one. That is what it means to be saved - biblically, spiritually, saved.

That is why all the discussions, when people say, "Well, do you think it is possible to lose your salvation?" People today do not understand what salvation is from the Bible. It has been lost in teaching for the last twenty / thirty years. It has just disappeared. Salvation is whatever you want it to be. Churches are so eager to look for church members, they say, "Do you believe in Jesus?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe what He did for you on the cross?"

"Yes."

"Then you are saved! Come on in."

They do not say, "Are you born again? Have you had a spiritual experience with Christ? Has His Spirit been born in you, in your spirit? Is He dwelling in you so that you and He are one inside of you?" They do not ask that question because we are looking for numbers. We are looking for more people, so we water down the salvation message.

So then after salvation, my flesh, my human flesh still has the sin nature in it. So now I have a problem. I have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in my spirit, but I also have the sin nature

dwelling in my human flesh. And Paul says in Galatians 5:17 that my flesh fights against the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God is in opposition to my flesh. So now I have this battle going on. My flesh says, "I want to be in control." The Spirit of God says, "Well, you want to be, but I am in control because I am here now." So it is a battle for control, but God's Spirit always wins because He resides within.

In Romans 6:14 Paul describes that once you have been born of the Spirit of God sin shall no longer rule over you. The sin nature is still there but it no longer rules over you because Christ has come into your spirit and delivered you from that. He has taken over so that when your sin nature wants to reach out and take control the Spirit of God is there to stop it. But still I am somewhere in between. I have the desires of my flesh and then I have the presence of the Spirit of Christ.

So this boils down to the day in which we live today that there are two kinds of Christianity within the body of Christ. Two kinds. I am not talking about the false Christianity of the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and some of these outer groups that do not believe in the deity of Christ; and they say that they are Christians but that is not Christian. Within the body of Christ, within God's people, the people who are saved, there are two Gospels coming from the same Bible.

One is psychological. One says learn the principles from the Scriptures, and practice them, and take control of your life. Sound familiar?

In case you did not catch it, here is Satan's deception. We have gone all the way from Genesis chapter 3 to our time period now here in 2016 - 2017. God says, "You are a sinner because you go your own way, you are in the control of your own life, you do what you want to do, the way you want to do it." So *repentance* means *make the decision to surrender your life* because you are going your own way and you are not going God's way. Receive His Spirit so His Spirit takes over and you start going God's way. But then someone comes along and says, "Oh! You are a Christian; you are going God's way?! So God's Spirit is in you to help you get control of your own life." Wait a minute, that is just what I got delivered from. But there are Christians today that are falling for it. They want to hear that.

You see, when Jesus told His disciples, "If you are going to be My disciple you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me." *Deny*, reject yourself. How do I reject myself and yet claim under the promises of God all of the human fleshly things this world has to offer me? How you do that? You cannot! It is an Americanized, Western world shaped, false gospel coming from the Bible. And thousands and thousands of people are following it because it appeals to the human nature. How does it appeal to the human nature? Remember our two words? (1) it appeals to you taking control of your own life and (2) you do not have to surrender to Christ. Do not have to. Those are the two words that describe about salvation and why salvation is important.

That is why when we pray, we pray, "Let Your will be done. As You have decreed in heaven let Your will be done upon the face of the earth." You see, I am praying for His will. I am submitting to His will. I am asking for His will to be done. I am not asking for my will to be

done. How can I surrender for Him to work out His will when I am thinking positive and making claims on God in Jesus' name for life to work out the way I want it to? It appeals to the flesh. It appeals to my human nature, especially here in America because that is what our lifestyle is all about. It is freedom in the flesh. We are narcissistic people. We are hedonistic people. We seek pleasure as a release from all the stress because of the fallen condition of the world in which we live and work in.

So to be able to go to church and hear how you can take control of your own life, and live above it, and make it work out in your favor, rather than work against you. Life does not have to be a broken world for you. That is a false gospel. It is rejecting Christ. And we are in a day and age - and do not think that I do not have connections enough to know what is going on out there, I get calls saying, "Our church teaches exactly what you were just talking about."

One fellow tells me that he takes some of these messages, he invites people over to his house from his church, and he plays it for them. And after several years he has asked me, "Will you come over and speak to our church?" I said, "No, huh-uh. It will ruin your church. Your church will fall apart." Your church is based on human beings who want control, and they conduct church like it is a regular American business, except that it is religious. It has its own product. It has its own programs. And it is trying to get customers to come in with their money. I mean it is just religious, it has a Christian theme to it. It has Scripture posted on there, but it is nothing more than a religious business. So I become an elder, and I become a deacon, and I become a pastor. And I can only stay pastor as long as I am producing profits for the business. Once we start losing numbers, then they start looking for a new CEO.

So I hope you can see that. You can see it if a person has their own business and they are in control, but if you take a Christian theme, a religious system, and put it over that you have the exact same thing. Man in control in the name of Christ. Earning money. Working for success, human success. The same thing I did in the world, I am now doing it in the church, there is no difference, other than the deception of the Christian theme.

So this is why I say there are two kinds of Christianity. One Christianity teaches that you are saved if you psychologically believe what the Bible says. If you agree with it, then you are saved. No, you are not saved. You must be born of the Spirit of Christ. You must receive Christ and by receiving Him you are surrendering the control of your life to His Lordship for His Spirit to work out His will in your life. Or as one of the messages I gave over at Grace Baptist a few years ago, some of you were there. The simplicity of the Christian life is you are either a motorboat or a sailboat. A person that lives by faith just casts the sail and lets the Spirit of God take him or her wherever He leads. Then there is the Christian who is in control, in the name of Jesus, of course, but in control, and they have a motorboat. They start the motor; they do not hoist the sail! They steer the boat wherever they think is best, in the name of Jesus. There is no surrender. There is no giving up, denying oneself.

And right now Christianity in America as we know it today, and you might say, "Well, I have lots of Christian friends and they do not seem like they are bothered by anything at all." It is because they are part of the system. As long as people find a church that meets the minimum social desires and requirements of the human flesh there is no problem. I have had people tell

me, "Well, I really enjoy going to church because I hear an encouraging comforting message for me to start my week."

"Oh, like what?"

"Like God is with me and He wants to be successful in my life today and all that I do this week."

"Oh, really? How does that work for you?"

"Well, as long as I believe it, psychologically, it works. When I do not practice it, it does not."

I want to read to you in closing. Someone posted on the internet, and I do not mind giving the title of the ministry itself - Proverbs 31 Ministry, it is called. Proverbs 31 is the virtuous woman. And Proverbs 31 Ministry is a ministry for women teaching them how to be virtuous. The posting today was:

"A rock song can inspire us, the nightly news can inform us, but it is only by applying the truth of God to our lives that we can be transformed."

By us *applying God's truth to our lives* only then can we *be transformed*? Where is Jesus in there?

"Romans 12:2 reminds us to be transformed."

Yeah, that is a passive voice not an active voice. Passive voice means God is doing the transforming, not me applying anything.

"It's the shift in thinking."

Oh, I have to shift my thinking.

"Only when we seek to apply His revelations to our situations will we experience transformation."

Only when *we* apply His revelations *to our situation*, only then can we experience transformation. Where is Jesus in all that? This is just me. This is psychology. It is not spirituality, at all, zero.

These are the types of things that are taught today. If you want deliverance from your situation, psychologically practice some of the promises of the Bible. Claim them for yourself. Where is Jesus in all that? He is not there. That is what positive thinking is. Pure psychology, not spirituality. It is pretend reality is not what it is, imagine it to be something different, and you can escape the difficulty of the situation. How is that trusting Christ? How is Jesus doing that in me and through me? He is not. I am doing it in me and for myself. The Bible is not a handbook for us to practice. Remember the two things the Bible tells us:

- 1) the Bible continually tells us our inability, and
- 2) the Bible continues to tell us of God's ability.

That is it. His message to us is, "You cannot do it. That is why I have come to live inside of you. For you to hoist the sail and by faith trust Me as My Spirit works out My will in your life." It is not something you do. It is something Christ does.

We will finish out the study on prayer next week. Let's close.