

Matthew 6:9-15 | “A Disciple’s Prayer”
Preached on June 4, 2023 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 6, verses 9-15. *[pause]*

We are in a series on discipleship found in the book of Matthew.

Last Sunday, we covered Matthew 5:17-6:18, but since we are talking about discipleship, I couldn’t just skip over the Lord’s prayer, for prayer is essential for discipleship.

So that’s why today we are zooming in on the Lord’s prayer, for it shows us the model prayer of a disciple. *[pause]*

What’s interesting is that we call this, “The Lord’s Prayer.”

I understand the reason: we do it because Jesus is the one who said it to us in the Bible.

But really, if you think about it, this prayer should actually be called, “A Disciple’s Prayer,” for it is an example of prayer that Jesus told *us* to pray to God.

And so that’s why I’ve entitled the sermon this morning, “A Disciple’s Prayer.”

Let’s READ IT. *[READ]*

What is your view of prayer? *[pause]*

For some people, prayer is seen as *a last resort*.

They have tried everything else, and now they will pray because, you know, nothing else worked. *[pause]*

This is seen in how some people never regularly pray, but get them in a foxhole in the middle of a war, or faced with an extreme situation, and they are on their knees talking to God. *[pause]*

Other people pray only as *a good luck charm* or to *gain favor with God*.

They don’t see prayer as communication with God, but see it as a way to get good with God. *[pause]*

They make sure that they pray right before bed and right when they wake up, so that they are covered, they are good to go with God.

It makes them feel spiritual and that their day will go better, even though their prayer may have been methodical and not from the heart. *[pause]*

Others use prayer as a means to *get stuff*.

To them, God becomes like a genie in a bottle.

Prayer is like the rubbing of the bottle, and *poof*, now they can ask for whatever they want, and God will give it. *[pauseeee]*

All of those views of prayer that I gave are mistaken views.

They don't accurately understand *who* God is that they are praying to, and also, they don't accurately understand *what* they are supposed to be praying for.

Yet, here in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus shows us the answer to those two questions: who we pray to, and what we should be praying for. *[pause]*

So first...

I. Who we pray to.

How you address people when you talk to them can show either intimacy or distance. *[pause]*

I sure hope that you don't address your spouse the same way that you address a stranger.

You wouldn't say to your spouse, "Sir," or "Ma'am," like you would a stranger, would you?

And you wouldn't use the terms of endearment that you use for your spouse when you talk to some random person. *[pause]*

Likewise, we call our mother or father, "mom" or "dad".

But you wouldn't call some other older man or woman "mom" or "dad", would you? *[pause]*

The reason is because we address people differently based on either our closeness or our distance. *[pause]*

In a similar way, how we address people when we talk to them can show either respect or disrespect. *[pause]*

How would you feel if someone tried to get your attention and simply said, "Hey you."?

Or think about how it's typically disrespectful for a child to call their parents by their first name. *[pause]*

And you wouldn't walk up to a judge presiding over a court case and say, "Hey buddy, how ya doing?"

But people usually say, "Your honor." *[pause]*

How we address someone shows intimacy or distance, and it shows respect or disrespect.

So also, how we address God matters!

If we address Him rightly, then we are demonstrating that we understand rightly *who* it is that we are talking to. *[pause]*

Well how does Jesus tell us to address God?

He says, “Our Father in heaven,” and each part is indispensable. *[pause]*

He is first, “Our *Father*”.

Think of the relationship between a good father and their child.

There is closeness and tenderness.

The father hugs and holds the child tenderly in His protective arms.

The child knows that he or she is not only permitted, but the father *wants* the child to come to him. *[pause]*

The child knows that in his or her father, they have someone who is loving, approachable, gentle, and caring.

So in our relationship with God, we have a close and tender Father, who not just permits us to come to Him, but WANTS us to come to Him! *[pause]*

My children know that they can come into my office at any time.

If they were old enough to have phones, they could call me at any time and have a father who wants to hear from them.

That’s how God is, but perfectly.

He is approachable and personal.

He’s not distant from His children, or just merely some “force”, but He’s someone that you can have a relationship with.

We can relate to Him, and experience the closeness that comes from a close relationship.

Like the father-child relationship, so our relationship with our Heavenly Father is one of closeness, tenderness, and care. *[pauseeee]*

Is this your view of God?

Sadly, once on social media I saw the opposite of this in someone’s comment who was a Catholic.

They were trying to defend why they pray to Mary, and they said this...

“We ask for [Mary’s] intercession prayer...why not utilize the great figures that have gone before us to help our prayer reach Jesus, surely their merits in Heaven have aid to help our prayers reach Jesus.” *[pause]*

That’s so sad!

You can tell that that person feels distance between them and God, so much so, that they feel that they must “utilize” Mary to aid their prayers up to God. *[pause]*

No, no, Jesus says that we can go directly to God and say, “Our Father in heaven”! *[pause]*

He’s not distant, He’s not aloof, you don’t have to plead for His attention, or pull on His robe.

You don’t have to hope that He hears you, or come opening the door slowly, scared that He will yell at you for coming in.

He is our Father! *[pauseeee]*

He is a good, good Father, who we can be close to, approach, and be tenderly cared for.

His loving arms are open wide, yet some of us are not running into His fatherly arms.

He is welcoming, listening, and kind hearted, but you will go to Him as a child to a father? *[pauseeeee]*

Do you pray to God as your Father?

Though it may not seem like it, approaching God as Father makes a world of a difference in prayer.

Because if you think of God as a tyrant, then you will go before him cowering and afraid to ask for much. *[pause]*

If you think of Him as distant, you will go to Him as though there was distance between you, and not feeling the care and love of a Father.

But if you think of Him as a Father, you will boldly approach Him, knowing that you are loved and heard. *[pauseeee]*

Yet here’s the thing, He’s not merely our Father - He is our Father *in heaven*.

This actually balances out the fatherly idea.

It’s reminding us that, yes, He is personal, approachable, tender, and caring, but He’s not to be treated as low, plain, or ordinary. *[pause]*

He is not our “buddy” or “bro”.

He is not on the same level as us, as though He were just one of us with merely a different position.

No, He resides in Heaven in magnificent splendor, He is above all, and is to be treated with reverential respect that is due Him. *[pauseeee]*

And so we must hold these two ideas in balance, seeing the wonderful beauty of both...

He is personal, yet superior.

He is approachable, yet glorious - intimate, yet sovereign.

Tender, yet high up and to be honored. *[pause]*

We don't treat Him as our "buddy" for He is in heaven, yet we also don't come to Him feeling distant and unable to approach, for He is our Father.

We run to His arms, yet we bow the knee at the same time. *[pauseeee]*

Knowing who God is and approaching Him rightly is the foundation for right prayer. *[pause]*

Knowing that He is my Father, I approach Him, knowing that He loves me and cares for me.

Knowing that He is in Heaven, I approach Him, knowing that He is powerful to answer my requests according to His will.

That's who we pray to!

So go to God more!

Address Him rightly, of course, but go to Him! *[pauseeee]*

Jesus' model prayer also shows us...

II. What we should pray for.

Usually our priorities are seen in what we talk about and what we don't talk about. *[pause]*

If all someone talks about is sports, sports, sports - then certainly you know that sports are a big deal to them.

If someone refuses to talk about their job, they most likely don't like their job, and it's not high up on their priority list of loves. *[pause]*

Or think of a presidential speech.

What the president talks about and also what they avoid talking about shows their priorities. *[pause]*

So likewise, the content of our prayers can reveal our priorities.

And the revelation of our priorities in prayer isn't always the most pretty sight. *[pause]*

Sadly, often our prayers are me-centered, temporary-focused prayers. *[pause]*

Just consider what we pray about the most.

Isn't it mostly about our physical ailments, current discomforts, and material wants?

Of course, there's nothing wrong with praying for such things, God cares about such things, but the issue is when those things are all (or most of) what we pray for. *[pause]*

Yet here in Jesus' example of prayer, what the prayer talks about and doesn't talk about speaks volumes.

He is showing us both the proper attitude and content of our prayers. *[pauseeee]*

Notably, before the Lord's prayer gets to any personal requests, it begins with three God-oriented requests. *[pauseeee]*

How often do we start our prayers with, "I need this. I want that."?

But this prayer starts with, "Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done." *[pause]*

Those three requests taken together show someone who is all about God's glory and purposes.

It shows someone with a high view of God, someone who desires God to be all, and for His purposes and name to go forth.

Is that your mentality in your prayer life? *[pauseeee]*

Usually, the first three requests of the Lord's prayer are absent from our prayers altogether!

Many times, we don't pray for any requests that even have a hint or whiff of what these three requests are asking for!

So the top things that we are to pray for aren't even prayed for by us! *[pause]*

Something's wrong with our mindsets!

Instead of being God-centric, our prayers are me-centric.

We may not say it, but our prayers are for our name to go forth, our kingdom to grow, and our will to be done in life as it is in our minds. *[pauseeee]*

So what exactly do these three God-oriented petitions mean?

First, “hallowed be your name”. *[pause]*

‘Hallowed’ is a term that means to sanctify or set apart as holy.

And God’s name refers to God Himself, but more specifically, His reputation and renown.
[pause]

So if you put those things together, ‘hallowed be your name’ is a desire for God to be known and regarded as holy in the world.

It’s a prayer that longs for God’s name to be honored and revered.

A prayer that God’s glory and greatness would be known and lifted up...

That more and more people would understand and treat God’s name in the place that it should be, as top place in the world. *[pauseeee]*

Yet how often are we more concerned with our name being known, defended, and regarded as great compared to God’s?

But to do this and to pray this way, we must not put our name above God’s. *[pauseeeee]*

You see, when a disciple prays this request for God’s name to be hallowed, they are in essence worshiping and showing adoration for God.

They desire for God to be seen and treated the way He deserves!

They desire for God’s name to be set apart from all other names. *[pauseeeee]*

The next request is, “Your kingdom come.”

This is a desire for God’s kingdom to be fully implemented. *[pause]*

God is reigning in the hearts of His people right now, but someday, Christ will come again and set up His kingdom in its fullness.

So this is a prayer that God would reign over the whole universe, with everyone acknowledging His reign.

It’s this prayer that says, “May all bow to You and Your reign, Lord!” *[pause]*

This could include wanting His kingdom to advance with more and more people bowing the knee to Him.

But mostly, it’s a request that God’s kingdom come in its fullest, so that the kingdoms of this world are squashed.

So that all things are made right, and God’s reign is recognized by every creature. *[pauseeee]*

May this be our continual plea, “Rule and reign, Lord! May the world recognize your glory and authority!”

“May more and more people repent of their rebellion, and become Your’s.”

“May your glorious kingdom come, for its coming brings peace, joy, and life for those who belong to it.” *[pauseeee]*

Once again, to pray this way, we must not be about our own kingdom, but God’s. *[pause]*

So often, we want the control, the influence, dominion, sovereignty, and supremacy in all the areas of our lives.

And how often do we implicitly say, “Lord, build *my* kingdom here,” or, “Build our church’s kingdom.”

No, no, it should be about God’s kingdom.

We are to be mere servants and subjects of God’s kingdom, passionate about it growing, expanding, being submitted to, and coming.

So let’s humbly be about God’s sovereign reign, and not putting ourselves up in the seat of king. *[pauseeee]*

The third God-oriented request is, “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” *[pause]*

God’s will is perfectly done in heaven.

His angels submit to and obey every word, but that’s not the case right now on earth. *[pause]*

On earth, what He commands is disobeyed and rebelled against by many.

So this request desires for God’s will to be obeyed on earth, just like it is in heaven. *[pause]*

It’s this longing for God’s Word to not be spurned, but for more and more people to say like Jesus, “not my will, but yours, be done.”¹ *[pause]*

To think this way, we must regard what God wants as best.

We can’t think that what He wants is bad or not best in any way, shape, or form.

But we must consider what He wants as always good and always best. *[pause]*

Yet how often do we doubt His Word and His ways?

How often do we follow our will, thinking that it’s wiser and better? *[pause]*

¹ Luke 22:42.

Are you more upset when your will isn't done, or when God's will isn't obeyed? *[pauseeee]*

Three God-oriented requests are all about God's name, reign, and will.

It's about His glory and purposes, but are you about His glory and purposes?

Does the content of your prayer reflect that? *[pause]*

May my prayers be more about Him than me.

More about His glory than mine, His name than my name, His honor than my honor, His agenda over mine, and His purposes more than my will. *[pauseeee]*

So after 3 God-oriented requests, the Lord's prayer then goes onto 3 personal, need-based requests. *[pause]*

Looking at verses 11-13, we see petitions for both daily, physical provision and spiritual provision.

These are really our most basic, deepest, and most important needs. *[pauseeee]*

You first have physical provision as it says, "Give us this day our daily bread." *[pause]*

For us, sometimes we have bread with our meals and sometimes we don't, but for them, daily bread was a part of their normal sustenance.

It's a picture of their day-to-day needs. *[pause]*

So really, this is a prayer request showing continual dependence!

It recognizes that we *need* God to give us our daily bread.

So if we are asking for our daily bread, we are going to have to pray for it daily! *[pauseeee]*

In our modern day, we are used to full fridges and freezers, and we may go to God to provide for our needs only when things get really bad financially.

But God is calling us to go to Him everyday, asking for provision for *that* day. *[pause]*

We don't ask for annual bread, or even semi-annual bread, but daily bread - enough for today.

We are to pray for just what we need, trusting God with today. *[pause]*

This reflects what God did with Israel in the wilderness, for they were only supposed to gather enough bread from heaven for 1 day, other than around the Sabbath time.² *[pause]*

He was teaching them to trust Him with today - to live with a daily dependence on His provision.

² See Exodus 16:4-5.

For what happens when we feel like we have enough for months and months?

We start to depend on ourselves, and we don't trust Him. *[pause]*

So often we trust ourselves for the next few months or few years, and we look to Him to provide for years down the road.

But do you trust God with *today*? *[pause]*

Even if you have food in the pantry, food on the counter, and food in the fridge - do you thank Him for that provision?

Do you still go to Him and ask Him for your daily needs, or have you been trusting in your own ability to provide? *[pauseeee]*

Not only is there a request for physical provision, but also for spiritual provision. *[pause]*

In this model prayer, there is a request for the forgiveness of past sins, and the protection from future sin. *[pauseeee]*

How often are our prayers about forgiveness and escaping sin?

We may pray for physical provision and daily needs, but what about spiritual provision? *[pause]*

Does that reveal something about our hearts, mindsets, and priorities?

Do we not hate sin enough?

Do we not desire closer fellowship with God enough?

Are we concerned more with our comfort and wants over a thriving relationship with God? *[pause]*

The materialism of today has influenced us more than we think.

The hollow, external, routine view of faith has influenced us more than we realize. *[pause]*

Just evaluate your own self - what is your life about?

What are you pursuing the most? *[pause]*

Often it's the world's version of success and happiness.

Yet as Christ followers, our identity as children of God should be the most important thing about us.

Following Him, serving Him, and finding joy in Him should be our overarching, number 1 thing about our lives, and what we pursue. *[pause]*

When it is, then caring about being forgiven, and not sinning is some of the most important needs of your life. *[pauseeee]*

First, let's look at forgiveness, as Jesus says to pray, "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." *[pause]*

Isn't it outstanding how we can go before God and ask for forgiveness, and He will forgive us?

If you think about that, it's a bold thing to approach the God who we have sinned against.

Yet because of Christ's forgiving work on the Cross, we can go before God and ask for our sins to be forgiven. *[pause]*

We are forgiven once and for all on the Cross of Jesus, we are washed!

Yet after we are saved, we still sin, and we need the daily cleansing of forgiveness, like our feet needing to be washed.³ *[pause]*

So the forgiveness here that Jesus is talking about isn't judicial forgiveness regarding our standing and relationship with God, but what some call, family forgiveness. *[pause]*

As believers, we can never lose our relationship with the Lord, but our fellowship with Him can be disrupted, if we don't go to Him, confessing our sin. *[pause]*

Think of a family relationship.

Anything your child does will never make them no longer your beloved child, but their sin against you can disrupt your fellowship.

That's somewhat how it is with our Heavenly Father, so we keep going to Him, desiring to always have close communion with Him. *[pauseeeee]*

But requesting forgiveness is not the only important part of this request, for it says, "forgive us our debts, *as we also have forgiven our debtors.*" *[pause]*

Jesus even expands on this further in verses 14-15, which say...

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." *[pause]*

This is not saying that we earn forgiveness, but really, it's teaching us that God forgives the repentant.

³ See John 13:10.

As John Stott wrote, “God forgives only the penitent and...one of the chief evidences of true penitence is a forgiving spirit.”⁴ *[pause]*

If you are unwilling to forgive another person, have you been truly impacted by the forgiveness of God in Christ? *[pause]*

Just think about this...

Imagine someone who is unwilling to forgive another person, yet goes to God for forgiveness.

What are they saying? “I want to be forgiven by you, Lord, yet I don’t want to forgive others.”

That’s not only hypocrisy, but it shows that your heart isn’t in the right spot, for you are sinning by holding a grudge. *[pause]*

We can’t hold bitterness in our hands, yet at the same time open up our hands and expect God’s forgiveness. *[pause]*

He cares about how we treat others so much so that our fellowship with Him is affected based on how we treat others.

That means that our unwillingness to forgive someone not only disrupts our relationship with that person, but it disrupts our fellowship with God.

He wants us to love Him *and* other people,⁵ so forgive others as He has forgiven you.⁶ *[pauseeee]*

Not only does a disciple desire forgiveness from past sin, but deliverance from future sin.

It says, “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” *[pause]*

To pray this request, you must not only know the powerful temptation of sin, but you must recognize your inherent weakness.

So it’s a request showing dependence once again upon the Lord, who helps us to not give into sin. *[pauseeee]*

Do you ever pray for protection and deliverance from future sin and temptation?

Or do you think, “I’ll just resist it when I get there.” *[pauseeee]*

This is prayed by someone who passionately doesn’t want to be overcome by temptation, so that they give into sin’s lures.

⁴ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture, The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 149.

⁵ A reference to Matthew 22:37-39.

⁶ A reference to Colossians 3:13.

Instead of seeing how far they can go without sinning, the person who genuinely prays this is interested in wanting to be as far away as possible from sin and temptation. *[pause]*

They know that they need God to “deliver” them from evil, for they can’t battle it alone. *[pause]*

The Lord is the great deliverer from sin, and He does it eternally in Christ, but He also does it daily as we depend on Him in prayer!

So go to Him in prayer to deliver you from evil, He is willing to listen, and able to deliver!
[pauseeee]

I know that was a very quick run through of the model prayer of a disciple, but I hope that you were able to see its main theme, and it was this...

A disciple of Jesus should pray God-oriented and God-dependent prayers.

That’s where our attitude and mindset should be as disciples...

We give Him glory, and desire for Him to be honored and obeyed.

He is the reason for our being, and should be the passion of our hearts.

And so we depend on Him for everything, recognizing that our needs are in His hands.

So may our prayers reflect the Lord’s prayer that was given to us as an example and model to follow. *[pause]*

To end the sermon this morning, I thought it would be fitting to just close in prayer, shaping my closing prayer after the Lord’s prayer.

So let’s pray... *[pause]*

Our Father in heaven, You are approachable and welcoming, yet You are high up and holy. Who are we that we could come to You as children to a Father?

Yet You, the One who emanates splendor and who is encircled by myriads of angels, bids us to come because of Jesus Christ’s work on our behalf.

We ask that Your name and glory would be recognized as great and glorious. That You would get the praise and honor because You deserve it all and more.

I ask that Your kingdom would come, that You would reign over this earth in such a way that Your kingdom is spread through the repentance of sinners, and the submission of Your followers.

Yet, even more so, we desire that someday your kingdom will come in full force with the arrival of King Jesus, so that every knee would bow and confess that Christ is Lord.

I pray that Your will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. I pray that we would obey You more fully, more genuinely, and more passionately.

And ultimately that all rebellion would be squashed and what You want would be followed rightly.

I ask You this morning that You would provide for our daily needs as individuals, families, and as a church.

Lord, help us to depend on you for *today*, and not to trust ourselves for today. Please provide for every basic need that we have, and may You get the glory for it each day.

Forgive us, Lord, for our sins against you, whether intentional or unintentional.

We confess our sins to you today, knowing that we need to be readily forgiving others, as we reflect upon your forgiving grace towards us in Christ Jesus.

And Father - help us, aid us, deliver us in our battles against sin and temptation. We are weak, but You are strong. Temptation is strong, but You are stronger.

We don't want to sin against You, so help us to obey and resist sin's seducements and Satan's schemes.

We pray all this, gladly and joyfully acknowledging that Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.