

“Good morning to you the body of Jesus Christ at Evangel Free Church Oroville and to any stranger in our midst, we ask you to please stick around that we might show you hospitality and get to know you.”

I was going to title this sermon “Jesus on Prayer” which it is but he also talks about much more than just a form prayer. As we go through the “Lord’s Prayer of Matthew 6: 5-15” we’ll see who he was talking too, why he was talking to them, what he says and how should we respond. We’ll see that the “Lord’s Prayer” is really a model prayer; meaning it should serve as a pattern or map of our prayer life.

Please open your Bibles to Matthew 6: as I read versus 5 thru 15 and you can follow along with me.

*“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

*<sup>7</sup> “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. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. <sup>9</sup> Pray then like this:*

*“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.<sup>[a]</sup>*

*<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,<sup>[b]</sup>*

*on earth as it is in heaven.*

*<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,<sup>[c]</sup>*

*<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts,*

*as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,*

*but deliver us from evil.<sup>[d]</sup>*

*<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

Question one, who is our Lord Jesus talking to?

The context is found in Matthew 5: 1 “Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.” The occasion is commonly referred to as the “Sermon on the Mount” and it is revolutionary in its content. Jesus sets forth the standards of His New Covent Kingdom. Let’s think about what he taught here; the Beatitudes, Salt and Light, He came to Fulfill the Law, Anger, Lust, Divorce, Oaths, Retaliation, Love Your Enemies, Give to the Needy, Lord’s Prayer, Lay Up Your Treasures in Heaven, Do Not Be Anxious, Judging Others, Ask and It Shall Be Given, The Golden Rule, A Tree and It’s Fruit, I Never Knew You, Build Your House On A Rock. This is the Christian life is it not? What was the response to this radical teaching? We see it at the end of Chapter 7: verse 28 & 29 “*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds, were astonished at his teaching for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as a scribe.*” Those disciples the Father gave him will manifest these qualities in their life. I believe this is some of the teaching Jesus has in mind when in his High Priestly prayer in John 17: 8 “*For I have given them the words that you gave me,*” This answers the question of why he was talking to them. He is spreading the message of the His New Covent Kingdom. I think there are few areas in our spiritual life in which we need more instruction and encouragement than godly prayer. In

this brief passage Jesus tells us how not to pray, and then He gives us some words that teach us how we ought to pray.”

Beginning with verse 5 “**And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites**”:

Such performers are rightly called **hypocrites**, because they are actors, acting the part of pious holy people when they are not. It is not having a standard that makes someone a hypocrite; it is falsely claiming to live by that standard when you in fact do not, or when you have a double standard that makes one a hypocrite. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:24 “*No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despised the other. You cannot serve God and money.*” So I asked myself is this really a problem today. All I have to do is turn on the television and watch the vast majority of TV evangelist praying for prosperity for themselves and their viewers; I don’t see many preaching on the Sermon on the Mount. They are hypocrites and hawkers of Jesus and have their reward now. Just be aware that watching some Christian television is like walking in a mine field it might not kill you but it can sure mane you.

**For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on street corners:**

There were two main places where a Jew in Jesus' day might pray in a hypocritical manner. They might pray at the synagogue at the time of public prayer, or on the street at the appointed times of prayer (9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m.). In Luke 18: 9-14 Jesus “*told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisees and the other a tax collector. The Pharisees, standing by himself prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like the tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all I get. But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.*”

This parable is addressed to the Pharisees who trusted in their own righteousness (vrs. 10 & 11). Such confidence in one’s own inherent righteousness is a damming hope. Paul tells us in Romans 10:3 “*For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.*” So, where does our righteousness come from? Paul tells us in Philippians 3:9 “*and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.*” So what is our hope when we cry out ‘God be merciful to me a sinner’ Jesus answers that question in Matthew 11: 27-30 “*7 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*” It’s so simple to see that Jesus bid me come unto him for He says “Come to me.”

**So the question is have you come to Jesus?**

**That they may be seen by others:** These hypocrites prayed not to be heard by God, but to **be seen by others**. This can be a common fault in public prayer today, when people pray to impress or teach others instead of genuinely pouring out their hearts before God. Such prayers are an insult to God. When we mouth words towards God, while really trying to impress others we then use God merely as a tool to impress others. **They have received their reward:** they should enjoy it fully - because that is all they will receive. There is no reward in heaven for such prayers. **But you, when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees in secret will reward you:** we should meet with God in our **room** (or, "closet"). The idea is of a private place where we can impress no one except God. The specific ancient Greek word "**room**" was used for a storeroom

where treasures were kept. This reminds us that there are treasures waiting for us in our prayer closet. The one who so prays will have peace of heart and mind. We know that the Father, in his infinite love, will give you and I whatever is best both for himself and all concerned. This is where we get to stand on a passage like and pray Gods word; Proverbs 3: 5-7

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
and do not lean on your own understanding.

<sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge him,  
and he will make straight your paths.

<sup>7</sup>Be not wise in your own eyes;  
fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.”

**When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for many words:** The right kind of prayer does not use **empty phrases**, which is any and all prayer which is mostly words and no meaning; all lips and no mind or heart.

One can pray long - but to the wrong god. In I Kings 18:26 the prophets of Baal cried out for half a day "O Baal answer us" and we know the result of that. In Acts 19:34 a mob in Ephesus shouted, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians" for two hours. The true God isn't impressed by the *length* or *eloquence* of our prayers, but the heart. "Prayer requires more of the *heart* than of the *tongue*. The eloquence of prayer consists in the fervency of desire, and the simplicity of faith." (Clarke) Ecclesiastes 5:2: "*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.*"

What is the meaning of this term **empty phrases**--"Babble not" would be a better rendering, both for the form of the word--which in both languages is intended to imitate the sound--and for the sense, which expresses not so much the repetition of the same words as a senseless multiplication of them; as appears from what follows.

**As the Gentiles do: for they think that they will be heard for their many words speaking**—a commentator named Tholuck observes; “In the Church of Rome, not only is it carried to a shameless extent, but, the very prayer which our Lord gave as an antidote to vain repetitions is the most abused to this superstitious end; the number of times it is repeated counting for so much more merit.”

*Now I’m going to go in a slightly different direction than our text but it is the same subject prayer and the words we us in prayer. Bible Answer Man Hank Hanegraaf has just released a new book entitled “Osteenification. “He describes Osteenification as nothing short of the wholesale transformation of American Christianity. The fresh new face of “baptized” humanistic psychology—a new Babel reaching to the heavens, all the while promising “your best life now.” In short, Joel Osteen is the de facto high priest of a new brand of Christianity perfectly suited for a feel-good generation. And his claim to America’s largest church is just a small part of the story. With **one billion** impressions (hits) per month on Facebook and Twitter, he is the hip new personification of God-talk in America. But behind the Osteenian self-affirmation—*I am prosperous,*” *“My God is a ‘super-sizing God’”*—there lies a darker hue. Behind the smile is a robust emphasis on that which is negative. If you are healthy and prosperous, words created your reality. Conversely, if your baby dies or your spouse contracts cancer, you are the prime suspect:*

**Osteen teaches; the moment you speak something out, you give birth to it. This is a spiritual principle, and it works whether what you are saying is good or bad, positive or negative.**

From Genesis to Revelation, Osteen simply uses Scripture to communicate whatever he wants. Not even Mormons or Jehovah’s Witnesses treat the Scripture with such disregard. They at least attempt to grapple with the *biblical languages*. Osteen does not so much as seriously consider the *English* text!

Indeed, that is what the Osteenification of Christianity is. **It is conforming Scripture to cultural norms as opposed to allowing the plain reading of the text to transform. The glory of the cross exchanged for the paltry glory of**

**consumerism.** We are seeing more and more wolves in sheep clothing. Lord come quickly and shorten the days for your elect sake.

Continuing in the text; **Do not be like them, for our Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him:** What a view of God is given here, in sharp contrast with the gods of the heathen! But let it be carefully noted that it is not as *the general Father of mankind* that our Lord says, "Your Father" knows what ye need before ye ask it; for it is not men, as such, that He is addressing in this sermon, but His own disciples--the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, hungry and thirsty souls, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, who allow themselves to have all manner of evil said against them for the Son of man's sake--in short, the new-born children of God, who, making their Father's interests their own, are here assured that their Father, in return, makes their interests His, and needs neither to be told nor to be reminded of their wants. Yet He will have His children pray to Him, and links all His promised supplies to their petitions for them; thus encouraging us to draw near and keep near to Him, to talk and walk with Him, to open our every case to Him, and assure ourselves that thus asking we shall receive--thus seeking we shall find--thus knocking it shall be opened to us. Having said all that we can sum it up "Prayer is not designed to *inform* God, but to give *man* the 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, and to put him in mind that **THERE** is his *Father*, his *country*, and *inheritance*." **Pray then like this:** Jesus gives His disciples a model for prayer, prayer marked by close relationship, reverence, submission, trust and dependence. Since Luke 11:2-4 has much the same material, it is reasonable to believe that this was not the only time Jesus taught His disciples on this subject. This is how (not what) you should pray, don't be ostentatious or thoughtless and realize that your Father in heaven knows your needs before you pray. William Hendriksen in his NTC on Matthew has some great observations; "The so-called "Lord's Prayer" is really the model prayer; meaning it should serve as a pattern for devotions.

#### *It's Brevity*

The prayer consists of two parts: an invocation (Our Father who art in heaven") and six petitions; it's 70 words in all.

#### *The Priority to Which It Points*

In harmony with the fact that, according to both the Old and New Testaments, the glory of God is important above everything else, the first three petitions have reference to the Father's name, His kingdom and His will. Human needs--bread, pardon for sin, and victory over the evil one--takes second place." Finally in this prayer the worshiper carries to the throne of grace the burdens that are not only his own but also his brothers ("our," "us"). All of this is included in six brief requests. This is indeed the perfect pattern for our prayers."

**Our Father in heaven:** To me it is immediately clear that not everyone is privileged to address God as our Father in heaven. I'm going to quote Spurgeon as he captures this idea in his sermon "The Fatherhood of God" "I believe the prayer was never intended for universal use. Jesus Christ taught it not to all men, but to His disciples, and it is a prayer adapted only to those who are posers of grace and are truly converted. In the lips of an ungodly man, it is entirely out of place, does not one say, "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do." (John 8:44; 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:10) Ounce this is understood it becomes clear that this model prayer is for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, for them alone. "Our Father" indicates his nearness; we have been adopted into His family, He has taken us out of our old sin family in which we born, washed us, cleansed us, given us a new name and a new spirit and we have been made "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17) (quote CHS) And all this on His free, sovereign, unmerited, distinguishing grace. This is a prayer focused on *community*; Jesus said "**Our Father**" and not "My Father." "The whole prayer is social. The singular pronoun is absent. Man enters the presence of the Father, and then prays as one of the great family." (Morgan) He is our **Father**, but He is our

**Father in heaven.** When we say "**in heaven**" we remember God's holiness and glory. Therefore, he should be approached in the spirit of devout and humble reverence.

**Hallowed be Your name. your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven:**

The right kind of prayer has a passion for God's glory and agenda. His **name, kingdom** and **will** have the top priority. His **Name**; this is a whole bunch of sermons so I'm going to keep it as simple commentator David Brown put it this way. "God's name means "Himself as revealed and manifested." Everywhere in Scripture God defines and marks off the faith and love and reverence and obedience He will have from men/women by the disclosures which He makes to them of what He is; both to shut out false conceptions of Him, and to make all their devotion take the shape and hue of His own teaching. Too much attention cannot be paid to this." Suggestion, see how many names for God you can find in the word, look up the meaning and when you pray have that in mind. Example Genius I: I" In the beginning *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth. *Elohim* is a plural, and refers to God in the fullness of His power, he is the one who created this 20 billion light year cosmos and fine tuned earth for his crowning creation who he made in his own image. Now mediate on that to still your heart, now take a close look at his son who you call Lord and talk to God.

**Your kingdom come**--The kingdom of God is that moral and spiritual kingdom which the God of grace is setting up in this fallen world, whose subjects consist of as many as have been brought into hearty subjection to His grace, and of which His Son Jesus is the glorious Head. In the inward reality of it, this kingdom existed ever since there were men who "walked with God" ( Gen 5:24 ), and "waited for His salvation" ( Gen 49:18 ); who were "continually with Him, held by His right hand" ( Psa 73:23 ), and who, even in the valley of the shadow of death, feared no evil when He was with them ( Psa 23:4 ). When the Messiah Himself appeared, it was, as a visible kingdom, "at hand." His death laid the deep foundations of it. His ascension on high, "leading captivity captive and receiving gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them," and the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, by which those gifts for men descended upon the rebellious, and the Lord God was beheld, in the persons of thousands upon thousands, "dwelling" among men--was a glorious "coming" of this kingdom. But it is still to come, and this petition, "Thy kingdom come," must not cease--to ascend so long as one subject of it remains to be brought in. But does not this prayer stretch further forward--to "the glory to be revealed," or that stage of the kingdom called "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:11 )? Not directly, perhaps, since the petition that follows this--"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"--would then bring us back to this present state of imperfection. Still, the mind refuses to be so bounded by stages and degrees, and in the act of praying, "Thy kingdom come," it irresistibly stretches the wings of its faith, and longing, and joyous expectation out to the final and glorious consummation of the kingdom of God. (JF&B)

Jesus wanted us to pray with the desire that the **will** of God would **be done on earth as it is in heaven**. In heaven there is no disobedience and no obstacles to God's will; on earth there is disobedience and at least apparent obstacles to His will. The citizens of Jesus' kingdom will want to see His will done as freely **on earth as it is in heaven**. "He that taught us this prayer used it himself in the most unrestricted sense. When the bloody sweat stood on his face and all the fear and trembling of a man in anguish was upon him, he did not dispute the decree of the Father, but bowed his head and cried. 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'" (Spurgeon)

A man can say, "**Your will be done**" in different ways and moods. He may say it with fatalism and resentment. "You will do your will and there is nothing I can do about it anyway. Your will wins, but I don't like it." Or, he may say it with a heart of perfect love and trust: "Do Your will, because I know it is the best. Change me where I don't understand or accept Your will." One might wonder why God wants us to pray that *His* will would be done, as if He were not able to accomplish it Himself. God is more than able to do His will without our prayer or cooperation; yet He invites the participation of our prayers, our heart, and our actions in seeing His **will be done on earth as it is in heaven**.

**Give us this day our daily bread-** When Jesus spoke of **bread**; He meant real bread, as in the sense of daily provisions. Early theologians allegorized this, because they couldn't imagine Jesus speaking about an everyday thing like bread in such a majestic prayer like this. So they thought bread referred to *communion*, the Lord's Supper. Some have thought it referred to Jesus Himself as the bread of life. Others have thought it speaks of the word of God as our daily bread. Calvin rightly said of such interpretations, which fail to see God's interest in everyday things: "This is exceedingly absurd." God *does* care about everyday things, and we should pray about them. "The prayer is for our needs, not our greed's. It is for one day at a time, reflecting the precarious lifestyle of many first-century workers who were paid one day at a time and for whom a few days' illness could spell tragedy." (Carson)

**And forgive us our debts--** The one who is truly forgiven will show forgiveness to others. Jesus will elaborate more on this idea in the following verses. Yet we notice that "Sin is represented here under the notion of a *debt*, and as our sins are *many*, they are called here *debts*. God made man that he might live to his glory, and gave him a law to walk by; and if, when he does anything that tends not to glorify God, he contracts a debt with Divine Justice." (Clarke)

**as we forgive our debtors--** Forgiveness is required for those who have been forgiven. We are not given the luxury of holding on to our bitterness towards other people the same view of sin as before; only now transferred to the region of offenses given and received between man and man. God sees His own image reflected in His forgiving children; but to ask God for what we ourselves refuse to men, is to insult Him. So much stress does our Lord put upon this, that immediately after the close of this prayer, it is the one point in it which He comes back upon ( Mat 6:14, 15 ), for the purpose of solemnly assuring us that the divine procedure in this matter of forgiveness will be exactly what our own is.

**Temptation** literally means a *test*, not always a solicitation to do evil. God has promised to keep us from any testing that is greater than what we can handle (I Corinthians 10:13 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"). This is another opportunity to pray Gods word "Lord make this the attitude of my life." God, while he does not 'tempt' men to do evil (James 1:13 "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"), he does allow his children to pass through periods of testing. But disciples, aware of their weakness, should not desire such testing, and should pray to be spared exposure to such situations in which they are vulnerable." (France) Spurgeon tells us "The man who prays 'Lead us not into temptation,' and then goes into it is a liar before God . . . 'Lead us not into temptation,' is shameful profanity when it comes from the lips of men who resort to places of amusement whose moral tone is bad." I sure wish I could say I was never guilty of this but that would be a lie.

If we truly pray, **lead us not into temptation**, it will be lived out in several ways. It will mean:

- Never boast in your own strength.
- Never desire trials.
- Never go into temptation.
- Never lead others into temptation.

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever:** The right kind of prayer praises God and credits to Him **the kingdom and the power and the glory**. There is some dispute as to if this doxology is in the original manuscript Matthew wrote or was added in later by a scribe. Most modern Biblical scholars believe this line was a later addition. "It is *variously* written in several MSS., and omitted by most of the fathers, both Greek and Latin. As the doxology is at least very ancient, and was in use among the Jews, as well as all the other petitions of this

excellent prayer, it should not, in my opinion, be left out of the text, merely because some MSS. have omitted it, and it has been variously written in others." (Clarke) I agree with his view.

**If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:** John Stott tells us "Once our eyes have been opened to see the enormity of our offence against God, the injuries which others have done to us appear by comparison extremely trifling. If, on the other hand, we have an exaggerated view of the offences of others, it proves that we have minimized our own."

**Neither will your Father forgive your trespasses:** Jesus has much more to say about forgiveness (Matthew 9:2-6, 18:21-35, and Luke 17:3-4). Here, the emphasis is on the *imperative* of forgiveness; on the fact that it is not an option. Here in verse 14 and 15 these sins are called trespasses. Deviations from the path of truth and righteousness, now whether these deviations are of a milder character, as in Gal. 6:1 and perhaps Rom. 5:15, 17, 18, or whether they are a far more serious, as in Eph. 1:7; 2:1, they must be forgiven. Moreover, as far as it is in his power to do so a follower of Jesus should make not only his brother in the Lord but also men in general the objects of his forgiving love, as is clear from the very fact that the word "men" that is human beings, is spelled out in full, and this in both verse 14 and 15. The question might be asked, "But in the process of bringing about forgiveness and reconciliation, does the entire obligation rest upon the person who has been sinned against? Does the offender also have an obligation?" The answer is, "Indeed, he does." He must repent and with the message of this repentance he must gladden the heart of the one whom he has injured (Luke 17:3,4). But this does not remove the latter's obligation to do all in his power to open wide the gate toward reconciliation. If in that case there is no co-operation from the other side, the blame will rest not on the offended person but on the offender who originally inflicted the injury. One thing should be remembered and that is forgiveness is the most God like act we can do and just reflect on how much He has forgiven us"