

Father

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the importance of prayer and our relationship with God as our Father, who provides for and protects us.

Duration: 22:57

Scripture: Matthew 5:14

Topics: "Lord's Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power and greatness of God as the creator of the universe. He encourages the audience to bring their problems and needs to God, who is their loving father. The speaker also discusses the importance of finding a balance between spending time with people and spending time alone with God. He references the story of Jesus teaching his disciples to pray and highlights the role of God as a provider and protector in our lives. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the importance of being a light in the world and not withdrawing from society.

Transcript

When Jesus Christ was on earth and his disciples were with him, they must have tried to figure out what was the secret of the authority that he had when he spoke, the miracles that he did, the wisdom, the self-control, no matter who was pressuring him, the personal peace that resided and kept him. And it's interesting that although he was such a great teacher and preacher and miracle worker, the only thing we find them asking him, I can think of two things now, I'm not saying that this is totally inclusive, but they asked him in one place, Lord, increase our faith, but they asked him, Lord, teach us not to preach, teach us not to do miracles, not teach us to teach, but Lord, teach us to pray. And they had to see something in his life that that was the key, that he lived with this perfect pendulum swing.

He would be alone with the Father in prayer, early in the morning or whenever else he slipped away, and then the pendulum would swing till he was so busy with people around him that he had no time to eat. People crowding around him where his own family said, he's lost his mind, he doesn't even have a normal schedule. Then the pendulum would go back and he would be all alone with his father, and then he would go back and be surrounded by people.

Now in our lives, we need that just like our Lord needed it. Just think, he needed to pray. What we're about to do tonight, just think, you think you need to pray? I know I need to pray.

I want to pray tonight. I prayed some this afternoon during the day and up with people in my office, but I want to pray. But if you get out of balance on that, here's the danger.

In the 4th or 3rd century already, by 5th century, the monastic movement began in what was called Christendom or a little after that. And monasticism was, I got to avoid this evil world that contaminates me, and I got to get alone with God. So they would go out in the wilderness, in the desert.

There were monks who were monks of the desert. There were people who built poles 50, 60 feet high and lived on a pole for years, away from anyone. There were people who took vows of silence and wouldn't talk to another monk or anyone else for 10 years.

Don't you know some people you wish would take that vow? I know that's what some of you were thinking. Like, take that vow, please. Just be quiet.

So they would get that, and that thought was thought to be holy, and that thought was to be pleasing to God, to lock yourself away and just spend time in meditation and prayer and not talking to anyone. And of course it wasn't at all. When I was in Chicago recently and buying something in a store, a very interesting woman was waiting on me who worked as a prosecutor in the Justice Department there in Chicago.

But on the side, she worked in this woman's store and asked her, that's a weird thing to have a second job. You're a prosecutor, you lock people up, and then you come and you do this part-time. She said, yeah, because I get the discount, and I have 30 of the suits that they sell in this store.

So she was very wise. So she told me about some group. She found out I was a minister, and she said, I know this group, and they meet occasionally throughout the world, and they take vows of silence, and they're just with God.

And I didn't want to get into a discussion with her, but of course that's not the example that we have at all in the Bible. God doesn't want us to escape the world. He wants us to be the light of the world.

How can you be the light of the world and influence people if you're living away in the desert? So that makes you weird and unproductive and is not what pleases God. But if you swing to the other side, and you're just with people and talking and trying to help people with no getting strength from God in prayer, now you become shallow, you get to be type A, and you're running around busy with a lot of stuff, and you get very little done, because the blessing of God is not on you like it would be if you had the other side of the pendulum. How many get what I'm talking about, say amen? So that's for all of our lives, not just the pastors here in the front row or the deacons, that's for all of us.

We need that pendulum of time with people, ministering, finding out who we're to help, and then back alone with God. So they asked him, Lord, teach us to pray. And then he gave them something that is a misnomer among Christians, it's called the Lord's Prayer.

But of course, the Lord's Prayer is not the Lord's Prayer, it's the disciple's prayer. Because although the Lord taught it, it's a prayer he couldn't pray himself and mean it, because part of the prayer was, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. And he had no trespasses to ask for pardon for.

How many say amen? So, this was really the disciple's prayer. And we all know it, it begins with, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, and so on.

I just want to talk to you before we come and pray as an encouragement that God has given me today and many, many times over the years. Let's just concentrate on this, Our Father, which art in heaven. Say that with me.

Our Father, which art in heaven. Jesus said when you pray, pray in this way. Say it.

Our Father, which art in heaven. Not if you pray, but when you pray. And although there's great value in waiting on God and praying and going to a lot of requests, notice how short and compact that prayer is.

Maybe we'll get to other parts of it in the future, but I just want to focus on Our Father, which art in heaven. Well, the first thing that strikes you of that is that he didn't tell them to pray, My Father, which art in heaven. He said when you pray, say, Our Father, which means that we as Christians are linked together.

And he wanted to enforce on our minds that this journey of the Christian faith cannot be lived alone. He anticipated that we would have meetings like this. Would to God that more churches would be having meetings just devoted to prayer, right? Calling, waiting on God, praying for sick people, praying for requests around the country and world.

So it's Our Father. We're in this together. Just Jim Cimbala doesn't need God.

I need God. You need God. And we have an Our Father.

It's first person plural. I is first person singular. We, as a subject, is first person plural.

I went somewhere. We went somewhere. Our Father is the opposite of mine.

It's mine. No, it's ours. It's Our Father.

So already we're encouraged to pray together and call out to God together, Our Father, which art in heaven. Our Father, and that's the key word. You know, Pastor Bogstaff and his wife, late Pastor Bogstaff and his wife, who's with us here even this evening, they have always had the habit when they pray, and it's been marked by me, that when they pray, they don't say God.

They say Father. It's not wrong to say God. But when Jesus taught us to pray, he said don't call him God or creator.

Don't call him master of the universe. Don't call him the omnipotent one with all power. That's all proper.

Don't call him the all-wise God who knows everything. Don't call him Jehovah, Jireh, and those names. That can be mingled in.

But he said when you pray, pray Our Father. The person we're going to talk to again in a little while now is Our Father. He's not some faraway God who just has a lot of power.

He's Our Father. How many are happy he's Our Father? Because as a father, as a father pitieth his children, the Old Testament taught, so God has mercy on those who fear him and look to him. So the thing that encourages us tonight is that we're not asking a God, a powerful one, or the all-holy one.

He's all those things. And we should worship him that way. But when you come to pray, Jesus said, go talk to your father.

Go lock yourself away alone for individual prayer in your closet, and your father who sees you in secret will reward you openly. Who will reward you? Your father. If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give good gifts or in another gospel account give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him? We have a father.

Now, my dear friend, my sister who I admire and love so much, Sylvia Glover, when her testimony was taken years ago in something done by the 700 Club team, she was talking about being raised without a father really figure in her life or a closeness to a father. And she said an interesting thing that I had never heard anyone say, but I remember it to this day. She said, so a father is supposed to provide identity and protection and supply.

When you're little, you can't protect yourself. When you're little, you can't get everything you need. You're little.

Your father's supposed to do that. Now, you get your identity from your father. My last name is Cymbala because I was born to Nicholas John Cymbala.

I get my name from my father. All of us got our names from our fathers, most of us. So what Jesus is teaching us here is when you go to pray tonight, remember you have relationship in a family.

That's your father you're talking to. You're not some person wandering around in the universe, some space dust that's flying around. You are different than anybody else in New York City.

Those of you who have put your faith in Jesus because you're the only ones who can say, our father, which art in heaven. In fact, the way that you know you're a Christian, Paul teaches us, is the spirit of the living God inside of you testifies to your human spirit and bears witness that you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit touching our human spirit. And from it, we say, which is to say, in a tender way.

That's how you know that you're a believer, Paul says. There's the inward witness of the spirit. I have now put my faith in Christ.

The spirit lives inside of me. He bears witness, my human spirit. And what's the first thing he makes me conscious of? Abba, Father.

Through Jesus, his father has become our father, my father. The same father Jesus has is my father. My father is dead and gone.

You might have had a good one or a bad one. I had a good one who struggled with alcohol for over 22 years, but he loved and did the best he could. But I got a heavenly father.

Oh, he's so wonderful. Come on, can we give a hand to our heavenly father? That's my identity. I don't get my identity from being an American.

I don't get my identity from being from the Caribbean. That's not my identity. Don't be a Trinidadian.

Be a child of God. Be able to boast. If anyone boasts, let them boast in the Lord.

Boast that you can say, our father which art in heaven. Where you came from is not so important that you can say our father. That's your relationship.

Now notice that also means that when we go to pray, our father is rooting for us. You do not have to convince your father to do something that he's against. That's impossible.

I was reading the needs of my children when they were growing up before they even came to me. I could sense sometimes what they needed. When Chrissy or Sue or James came to me as a little kid, and still even now if they're in trouble or need something, they know I'm not going to be like, what have you done for me lately? Or have you been such a perfect daughter? Know how many know when you go to a father filled with love, and if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give you everything you need? How many are happy our father is for us today? He wants to help us.

He wants to help you. He wants to solve the problem. He wants to supply the need.

I'm saying this to build your faith. Look at me. Listen to me.

He wants to do that. He's your father. He's not a faraway God.

He's your father. He's my father. That's my father.

That's my father. Now, he provides protection. If there's anybody here today, you need protection.

That's what my friend Sylvia said. She said a father provides protection. She didn't have that.

If you have any fear in you, would you let it go? Your father is going to protect you. What kind of father would let somebody beat up on their kid? Of course not. Of course not.

Your father's going to protect you. Your father's going to sustain you. I saw Brian do something yesterday, my son-in-law.

I thought of it today as I was pondering that he's my father. We were walking down Fulton Street, his family and Carol and I, and my precious little Levi, his son, was there. He grabbed Levi, and he just tossed him up on his shoulders.

Levi's feet came down, and he's just walking with Levi the way fathers sometimes do. They put their kid on their shoulders. I thought of all the times today when I couldn't take another step.

I couldn't. I couldn't take another step. I was so tired.

I was so beat down. You know what my father did? He saw I couldn't make it, so he put me on his shoulders. He said, you don't even have to walk.

I won't even hold your hand. Holding your hand is not enough. I can't even hold your hand.

I got to put you on my shoulders, and I'm going to carry you through this. How many have ever been carried through something by our father? He puts us on his shoulders. Too many times over the years, going through things that no one will ever know, but God and me, I've stood up in the pulpit and just prayed to God before I walked up, God, don't let me collapse in front of the people.

They're going to call a truck from the G building and have me carted away if I collapse on them, and I'm telling you, he put me on his shoulders. He helped me preach a sermon that could bless someone, or he helped me, and I actually could get out of my body, as it were, and I could look at myself preaching and

seeing that he was holding me. We have a father who knows everything that we need.

You don't have to go here and say, oh, God, I'm not good enough. That's your father. That's your father, and he'll provide for you because a father gives provision, Sylvia said.

He'll provide. What father wouldn't provide if their kid is short? Not just identity and love and support, but protection and supply. What do you need today? Spiritually, those are the most important things.

Where are you being intact? Where do you need more strength? Where do you need more faith? Where do you need more endurance? Come to your father and tell your father what you need. Last word. So it's our father, which art in heaven.

This is no human father we're talking to. This is a father who transcends everything. This is a father who is beyond the beyond.

What you and I call hard, it's just like he just moves one little pinky. The earth is his footstool. The nations, the islands of the sea are like pieces of dust or sand.

They're nothing. He's so amazing. Do you have a big problem today? It might be big to you, but it's tiny to God.

The amazing thing about God is our tiny problems are tiny to him and our big problems are tiny to him because everything's tiny to him because he's our father. He's our God and he's our father which art in heaven. That speaks of his transcendence and his power.

One day a lot of years ago, I was facing one of those situations. Do you ever have one where your problem seems like Mount Everest? There's no end to it. You look up and there's no top.

Your resources or yourself, you seem so small. I was praying somewhere that day and I was saying, God, help. Give me faith.

Give me faith, God. Give me faith, God. Please don't let this thing overwhelm me.

It was back in the early days. It might have been, as I was remembering earlier today, it might have been we needed \$2,000 or \$4,000. But back then, \$2,000 or \$4,000, I think it was financial.

That would be like today needing \$300,000. So I was just, you know, when the storms get rough, you got to come into the harbor. I was just talking to my father and just help me.

And it was strange how he helped me because I got done praying and then within the same hour, I picked up a book or a magazine or a newspaper and they just had made a discovery. They had made a discovery of a new star. This is more than 30 years ago.

And they discovered this star. Now, you know, let's say this is our sun. That's a star.

Did you know that? Or did you fail earth science when you were in school? The sun is a star. It's a small star. And all those other stars that we see are like our sun.

And our sun is 93 million miles away from earth. This stuff, earth. Between there and the sun is 93 million miles.

And that's amazing how God has organized that because when he made the universe and he chose earth to be where we would be, if this star, this sun, was just closer, not by that much, given 93 million miles, we would burn up. We'd be too crisp. If you took it and moved it away to here, we would die from the cold.

So the sun is in the perfect distance, 93 million miles. So as I'm reading, they found a new star. They said it's a big star.

They said, you readers will not understand how big it is. They found a star that God made. They discovered it way back then that's so big it couldn't fit between the sun and our earth.

Hello? Hello? Its diameter is wider than 93 million miles. That's ridiculous. And as I read it, I can't comprehend that.

How could something be so big it couldn't fit between us and the sun? God made that star in a second. As I read about it and thought about it, I thought, what? God was encouraging me. If I could make a star too big to fit between you and the sun, what problem do you have that I can't take care of? Come on, can we say amen to that? So whatever it is you have, whether you want to come and stand and bring your big problem, oh, it'll look so tiny now.

How many already have it much smaller already in your mind, right? Just think, with no materials, because the earth material is not eternal. So out of nothing, he spoke that star into existence. And they're discovering all kinds of things now with these new telescopes and Hubblecraft and all that other stuff.

What an awesome God we have. But as powerful as he is, listen, he's your father. So bring him your big problem.

Already it's getting little, right? And just say, Father, please take care of this for me. I need this. I got some things I need to pray about today.

I need direction. We need supply. We need a bunch of things.

Oh, how happy to know he's my father. Come on, how many are happy he's your father, our father? Close your eyes with me. If you have something that you want to come and stand here for, kneel here for.

I got deacons and deaconesses and pastors who will be sensitive and they'll stand with you or lay hands on you. But you're not going to rush in just two minutes. It's nice and early.

You're going to come to the throne of grace. Remember, your father is waiting at the throne of grace. Just get out of your seat and walk right to the front here and say, Pastor, I got something I want to bring to God.

I need something from my father. As people come.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26381.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/father/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net