

The Lord's Prayer

by Ken Baird

The Lord's Prayer is a model of brevity and spiritual instruction, teaching us to recognize God's greatness, acknowledge our relationship with Him, and pray with reverence and faith.

Duration: 32:14

Scripture: Matthew 7:7

Topics: "Prayer Life", "Faith Building"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and encourages the audience to boldly approach God in prayer. He uses the analogy of children daring each other to show bravery to illustrate how God dares us to pray. The speaker shares a personal story of a young boy who was saved after having a conversation with the Lord in prayer. He highlights the privilege and power of prayer, comparing it to the inability to directly talk to the President without prior arrangement, but being able to talk to God anytime.

Transcript

Subject of prayer. The Lord was praying one time, and the disciples were impressed with his prayer. And so they asked him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Now, one would not think that you would need to be taught to pray. Because praying is simply asking of God. Now, in the scriptures, the term pray is used simply in the matter of making a request from some ordinary person.

I pray thee, do something for me. It's just, it's simply asking a favor. Now, in that sense, I don't think any of us need to be taught to pray.

But we need to be taught to pray publicly. Now, the Lord was praying in the presence of his disciples. John taught his disciples also to pray.

And there is a sense in which we need to be taught to pray. Now, a prayer is a wonderful, wonderful experience. Now, praying to God is a wonderful, wonderful experience.

Think of it. I can talk to God. And I have every assurance that he's listening.

I can ask things of God. And God is honored when I ask things of him. Kings, well, there's an example in the New Testament.

Kings who like to be shown, who like to show rather, how rich they are, will on occasion tell a person to ask them for something. And it's given in the case of Herod, whose daughter, the daughter of Herodias danced before him, you remember, and Herod is a king, said, Ask me whatever you will, and I'll give it to you, to the half of my kingdom. Now, of course, you've got to use that with a kind of a grain of salt.

But what the king Herod was trying to show her was that even if I give you half of my kingdom, I'll have so much left, that it won't make any difference to me, I'll have so much left anyway. I'll give it to you, even up to the half of my kingdom. Very generous, very magnanimous on the part of Herod to say that, but he wasn't the first king that said it.

Now, God, we can ask of him, and he is a king. And he will give us more than we can possibly ask. Just think of it.

I have that privilege of talking to God. Now, I can't even do that to the President of the United States. When President Carter gets back to this country, I could, if I wanted to, I could get on the telephone, and I could dial the White House.

Oh, first I'd have to get the number. I don't know the number of the White House at all. I'd have to dial information first.

And then I would dial the White House, and I'd ask to speak to President Carter. And they'd say, Who is speaking, please? And I'd tell them, and they'd say, Do you have a telephone date with President Carter? And I'd say, No. Well, would you give your message to me? No, I want to talk to the President.

Well, I'm sorry, the President is busy. Yes, but I insist on talking to the President. They would politely but firmly tell me, That is not possible, sir.

You cannot talk to the President. Give us your message, and we will consider it. And if it should come to the attention of the President, we'll tell him.

But give me your message. I could not talk to the President, nor could you, without a prior commitment, a prior arrangement. But we can talk to God, the God of the universe.

Isn't that amazing? I can talk to God, and so can you. If you had him on the line right now, I wondered what you'd say. You know, I don't think we're conscious enough when we go into the presence of God of whom we're really talking to.

This is important. God has given me, and he's given you, the privilege of prayer. Do you use that privilege? Do you talk to God? Are you conscious that you're talking with him? You may do that.

Now, you may ask what you will. It may not be his divine wisdom to give it to you. I thank God that he doesn't answer all my prayers.

Sometime I might develop ill health, or I might develop some other unworthy experiences if God gave me an answer to all my prayers. He is wise. But you and I have the privilege of speaking to God.

Are we on speaking terms? That's the important thing. Are we on speaking terms? I think it was Samuel Clemens, Mark Twain, who was asked one day to pray. And being the humorous that he was, he says, God and I are not on speaking terms.

Another humorous incident occurred when Bill Moyer was the right-hand man of President Johnson. They were having a prayer breakfast in Washington, and Bill was asked to pray, and the President couldn't hear him. And the President said, speak louder.

And Bill said to the President, I wasn't speaking to you, sir. He was speaking to the Lord. Are we on speaking terms? Have we got anything to say to the Lord? I'll tell you, I don't think we are living up to our privileges, do you? Now, if he wanted to give us half of his kingdom, he could do it and have plenty left.

He can give me more than I'll ever ask, as we will read in connection with this lesson. But when he chooses to give to me, all hell can't keep him from doing it. And he likes to honor faith.

God likes us to be specific in our prayers, and he likes us to ask. We read it in our lesson. Ask, and it shall be given you.

Think, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Now, this is staggering.

It's mind-boggling to think that I can ask of God. I can talk with God. Well, nevertheless, the Lord Jesus was praying.

Now, what I've been saying just now is this. Private prayer is not the same as public prayer. Now, we need to be taught in regard to public prayer.

We do not need to be taught in regard to private prayer. That is a private matter between our souls and God. I know, I think of a time when I talked with a boy who wanted to be saved.

He wanted to know that he was saved. And I talked with him about the Scriptures, and I had a little private conference with him. We were having a private conference when I was talking about the Scriptures.

And I told him how that he had sinned, and that was the black mark against him, on him. He was a sinner. I told him that God loved him nevertheless, but he wanted to take him to heaven, but that he couldn't take him there with his sin on him.

And that he had given his son to die on the cross for his sins, and now the debt was paid, and he could be saved. If he would just thank God for it, accept what Christ has done, in short, accept him as his Savior. Well, I did everything I could do.

I told the boy all I could think of. He was about 15 years old. And I just began to feel quite helpless.

And so I told him, I said, Jim, I've told you all that I can possibly tell you about being saved. I'm going to leave you here. Maybe some of you have heard me tell this story before.

I'm going to leave you here, sitting in the car. We were sitting in my car. And I would suggest something.

Now, you don't have to do this, but I'm going to suggest something to you, Jim. I would suggest that you have a little talk with the Lord, and tell the Lord how you feel about the fact that he died for you on the cross. That was all I said.

And so I left him. I left him alone with the Lord. And you know, he prayed.

I came back to the car about five minutes later, and his eyes were filled with tears. And I said, how is it with you, Jim? He says, Mr. Baird, or Uncle Ken, rather, he called me, I'm saved. I says, you are saved? And he says, yes, I am.

I had that little talk with the Lord that you suggested. And I told him that I appreciated the fact that he died for me on the cross. He says, I got peace when I told him that he died for me, and that he was my Savior.

Isn't that a miraculous thing? You don't get any busy signals when you want to talk to the Lord. You can do that, and I can do that, and he delights to have us do it. He wants to honor faith.

You know, I wonder sometimes what we're thinking about. When you realize all of this, you think you ought to be spending all your spare time on your knees, don't you? Really. When you think of what God can do, I think I'm sure I can say this and I can be dogmatic about it.

I'm sure, as far as I'm concerned, the best time that I spend in my service for the Lord is on my knees. That is our privilege, to talk to the Lord. Now, what I've said concerns our personal relationship with him.

Now, to the public relationship of prayer. The Lord Jesus was praying on one occasion, and the disciples were listening. They were impressed by what the Lord was saying, Are you interested particularly in a prayer meeting? I think a prayer meeting is a most wonderful meeting.

I remember when I was just a child, and I was not raised in a religious home, but when I was just a child, I was taken to a prayer meeting, of all places to take a little child, and I thought it was one of the most interesting things that I'd ever been in. To hear people talking to God, and asking them for certain things. And I was excited, being a child, and not wearing out my enthusiasm for such things.

I was impressed to hear people talking to God. Now, in the matter of public prayer, we need some instruction. And the disciples said, Lord, teach us to pray.

Now prayers, public prayers, can be edifying. They can cheer the hearts of other people. They can encourage other people.

Public prayer in the Scripture is extolled. As a matter of fact, in the 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians, we're told to pray, so people can understand us, so they can hear us. We might turn to the 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians, in connection with public prayer.

Beginning verse 14, I think would probably give us a sense. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.

I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupyeth the room of the unlearned say amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well. But the other is not edified.

That happens when a person is praying in tongues at that time. Now, earlier in the chapter, we read, I should have checked this out beforehand to save time, but there's something here that I want and I'm going to stay with it till I get it. He speaks about, maybe you can help me, he speaks about praying distinctly.

Well, it says in verse 7, Even things without light giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sound, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if a trumpet giveth an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle? So likewise ye, when ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air. Now, we must speak so that we are understood. And we must pray in such a way that those who are in our audience can say amen at our giving of thanks.

Now, when you say amen, and it's perfectly scriptural, you are saying, that's the way I feel about it. So be it. It's your stamp of approval on what is being prayed.

Now, you and I are to pray in such a manner that other people can hear us. They were forbidden to pray in unknown tongues, unless there was an interpreter, because nobody could say amen. Nobody is edified.

Well, all right. This leads us to a very definite conclusion when we pray, we should pray loud enough so we can be heard. I know prayer meetings where people pray so softly that you can't hear what they say.

They're wasting time. It's just as bad as if they were speaking in tongues. I can't say amen, because I can't even hear what they're talking about.

Now, we pray and others are edified. Now, I don't mean that we preach in our prayers. We don't preach at others.

We pray to the Lord. Now, if my soul is in contact with the living God, you're going to know about it. If my soul is speaking to God and I'm getting through, it's going to be an experience for you even to hear it.

It's a wonderful experience. And when you are praying and you are getting through to God, I am going to be edified. I'm going to be encouraged perhaps to pray for the same thing that you are praying for.

Now, the next thing in connection with a public prayer is that the prayer is short. I suppose I never read through this so-called Lord's Prayer, but I doubt if it would take more than a minute. But it's short and it's concise.

Let's read the prayer again. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

Give us day by day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Now, this same prayer is recorded in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 6. The words are added there.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Now, the Bible scholars tell us that that last part of the prayer is not in the oldest manuscripts.

Now, it is in some of the manuscripts, but not the oldest. Now, that might lead you to believe that somebody added that and thought the prayer would not be complete unless they used the words For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Now, it is noticeable that Luke omits that. In his record of this prayer. Now, don't let this disturb you.

Don't let these things disturb you in the least in regard to what we have of this Bible. Now, I'm going to say a few words in this connection, in connection with the Holy Scriptures that we do have. We do not have the

original manuscripts.

They're all gone. Somebody says, Can I put any confidence in this book? Let me tell you something. You can put your soul upon this book for eternity.

You can believe what God tells you about the fact that Christ has already paid for your sins. Let me tell you something. I am glad that the original manuscripts are not in existence.

And I'll tell you why. The original manuscripts, there were copies made of them. Many copies made of the original manuscripts.

And those copies were circulated. Circulated among the people of God. Now, those copies were made from the original.

Now, there might have been a copious error once in a while. Now, don't think for a moment that I'm undermining the word of God. I am not.

I'm establishing it. Now, I will say this. With all of those copies made from the original, I know what the original was.

But if somebody, and Satan would be the perpetrator of this, if somebody had access to that original, he'd change it. And now it can't be changed. Because those copies were sent all over Christendom.

And they can be compared now. And you know what the original was. And it could not be changed.

There's something very interesting about this blessed word. And it came out when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by that boy who was chasing his goat in the Holy Land and chased him into a hole. And he found all of these ancient urns.

And they found in these urns the writing of the Holy Scripture. They found a part of the book of Isaiah for one. And the Hebrew scholars got that book out and they unwound it.

It had been there for now some 25 centuries. I suppose. They dated it by the radiocarbon method.

And they found out that it was actually that old. So they very carefully unwound the Dead Sea Scrolls. And they compared them with what we have.

And it was almost jot and pittle what we have over all of those years. Isn't that a nice confirmation? I think God caused those Dead Sea Scrolls to be hidden. Now I don't know why they were hidden.

Perhaps they were hidden when Israel was sent away to the land of Babylon. They were put there for safekeeping in an urn. Now that's the way they did it in those days.

You remember that the deed to the land that Jeremiah bought from his relative was put in an urn. And that's the way they preserved the important documents of that day. But you can be sure that you have God's mind expressed in this Word.

Now you and I can be sure that though this part is left out in Luke and added in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, it need not disturb you in the least. Now I don't have the explanation for this. And I don't know the full significance of it.

But I know it's in Matthew. And I know the Jewish people compiled our scriptures to then pertain to the oracles of God. And I have no trouble with that at all.

But I did take the trouble and the time to tell you this because somebody else may tell you this and try to undermine your faith in the Word of God. It cannot be undermined. The very fact that we have these scriptures, the many, many manuscripts all made from the original, we have living proof of the Word of God that cannot be altered and cannot be tampered with.

I say these things for your comfort because it's in this Word that you will have the assurance that your sin's debt is paid. Aren't you glad that nobody can change that? I'm glad that nobody can change that. I have that assurance.

Do you have that assurance? God has spoken. And if you can't take God's Word for it, who can you believe? Now to the prayer itself. The prayer is a model of brevity.

But it's a model of spiritual instruction. First of all, the prayer is this. When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, you start out recognizing the greatness of God.

But at the same time, you start out recognizing your relationship with Him. Our Father which is in heaven. Now that's important.

I do have a relationship with Him. He is my Father. And I've got a right to pray.

I've got a right to ask Him for the things that I need. Our Father which art in heaven. So the man that prays this prayer and prays the next few words, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, is a reverent person.

If you pray after the manner of this prayer, or if you pray this prayer verbatim, you must be a reverent person. Because the first thing it does is acknowledges the Godhead as the one to whom you pray. It gives God first place.

And we should indeed be concerned with giving Him first place. So the man that prays this prayer is a man of faith. A man of reverence.

He's not only that, he's a man of faith. Thy kingdom come. Now you notice first that the things that concern this prayer is the things that will magnify the name of the Lord.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth. The man that prays this prayer will be an obedient man.

It would be impossible, it would be mockery of the worst kind to pray Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth and then not be willing to do it myself. That would be hypocrisy of the worst kind. Now, when I pray Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth, I'm the first one that can answer the prayer.

I'm the first one that can abide by the conditions of the prayer. I can at least submit my will to Him. So the man that prays this prayer is an obedient person.

And then after we have acknowledged God, after we have concerned ourselves with what is important to Him and what will bring glory to Him as the kingdom certainly will, then we can get around to the subject of our needs. And so we pray, give us day by day our daily bread. Now this prayer, I've never had to pray in

my life as regards my actual physical food.

I've never had to pray this prayer. It's always been there waiting more sometimes than I need. But this forms a precedent.

I have spiritual needs to feed my soul. And when I pray this prayer, I can pray it, give us day by day our daily bread. I can pray for supplements for my soul.

I can pray for the other things that I need. The man that prays this prayer is a dependent man. And then the man that prays this prayer is a forgiving man.

And forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. Well now do we? Do we forgive everybody that's indebted to us? Well don't pray this prayer unless you do. Because that would be hypocrisy.

Forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. The man that prays this prayer must be a forgiving person. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Now the person that prays this is a humble person. He is humble because he is not able to cope with the forces of evil. And he asks for help.

You and I are not able to make it on our own. We've got to have the help of God. We cannot possibly be arrogant or proud.

Because if we are, God may show us just how dependent we are upon His moment-by-moment care. Well, we've not covered the lesson. I think you can sense that.

I leave the rest of this portion of Scripture for you to peruse, to enjoy, and to procreate. But I'll say this. In verse 9 we read, And I say unto you, I ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.

God wants us to pray. He dares us to pray. Do you know how the children do when they want you to show how brave you are? Do you know what the children do? I dare you to do this.

I double dare you to do this. It's just as if God is throwing out the dare. You ask, and it shall be given you.

You seek, and you shall find. You knock, and it shall be opened unto you. What a challenge.

God help us to live up to it. Shall we pray? Our Father, we thank Thee this morning for these words that fell from the blessed lips of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, help us to pray for Thy glory, first of all, for our needs, and then to reverence Thee for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

We give thanks in our Savior's name. Amen.

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