

The Sermon on the Mount (3)

by Nigel Lee

Nigel Lee's sermon explores the transformative teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, emphasizing character, authority, and the importance of private devotion.

Duration: 45:14

Scripture: Matthew 5:21

Topics: "Jesus Teaching", "Discipleship", "Private Devotion"

Description

Nigel Lee emphasizes the transformative character of discipleship as taught in the Sermon on the Mount, focusing on the need for believers to reflect God's character in their lives. He highlights the importance of private devotion over public display, urging disciples to cultivate a genuine relationship with God through prayer, giving, and personal integrity. Lee outlines five key areas where believers often struggle, including anger, lust, integrity, revenge, and relationships with enemies, encouraging personal reflection and growth. He stresses that true discipleship involves a heart change that leads to a life that draws others to Christ. The sermon concludes with a call to deepen one's relationship with God in the secret place, where true spiritual growth occurs.

Transcript

The third of our four considerations of these three great chapters. You remember that we have been seeing in chapter five the Lord speaking of the kind of character that should mark the disciple. This is a sermon for disciples, not for special disciples, nor just for the crowd, but for all committed Christian disciples.

The Lord has come preaching the gospel of the kingdom, the authority and the control of the king. He's then demonstrated at the end of chapter four his authority, his control in three areas, the three areas of our being. He healed the man who was demon possessed, the spiritual area.

He healed the man who was epileptic, the mental area. He healed the man who was paralyzed, the physical area. The Lord has called some disciples into his kingdom under his authority, and said if you follow me I will make you into fishes of men.

And then he demonstrated his divine control and authority. They are now listening to him as he has begun the process of so changing their character that they will inevitably draw men and women to him. Most of us I suppose have known times in our life when we have been drawn to certain Christians.

We respect them, we feel that they have met with God and surrendered to him in areas of life and experience that we would like to learn from. And we came in the last session that we had on Friday morning up to verse 20. I was talking about our basic relationship with God, but I didn't tackle the five areas that then follow where we so easily lose control.

And I'm not going to deal with them in detail this morning. I'm simply going to suggest for your own bible study, for you to follow up and that you look into this, because today I want to go on with chapter six. But let me simply refresh your mind.

Five areas where the Lord wants to have his control and authority established in the innermost life of the believer so that they will fish for men. The area first of all of anger between verse 21 and 26. The area of lust, of immorality in the heart from verse 27 to 32.

The area of integrity of speech. What a battle this is for us, recognized in the fact that the new testament as well as the old testament talks so often about the use of the tongue. Between 33 and 37 Christ is talking about integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness in what you say.

And then from both 38 to 42 he's talking about the matter of revenge. Our hearts rise up to take revenge so often. We do it in subtle ways.

We put down people, we spurn people, we reject people, we try to take revenge on them. And then from 43 to the end of the chapter, verse 48, the question of our relationship with our enemies. And this I'm simply going to throw out to you.

In each of these paragraphs the Lord gives just one instruction. One simple instruction. If you're wanting to be serious about dealing with your temper, there is one thing the Lord wants you to do.

If you're really serious about dealing with the problem of lust in the heart, or your long tongue, there is one thing to do. You'll find that simple single instruction buried in each paragraph. Track it down for yourself.

Now this may not be something that, I mean you may be studying something else these days, in your own private study of the word of God even during the conference. But note it down. Salt it away for January, February.

I like to sometimes pray for people to have blessing in months to come. Store up something in the larder. I also like to sometimes say things that they can dig out and look through in months to come that will help you.

One single instruction in each paragraph. It goes absolutely to the heart of each of those problems. The Lord is dealing with our characters, wanting us to reflect his character, to be perfect, even as our Heavenly Father is perfect.

In other words the family likeness is to come out in each of you. Different cultures and backgrounds, different skills and intelligences. God hasn't made us all equal.

God hasn't made man equal. This is the futile effort of the politicians. That the social reorganizers to make men equal.

God doesn't make men equal, he puts them in a family. That's the difference. We are in a family and within a family we are not equal.

But we have a kinship and a bond together. And we are to grow up in a family likeness. That is the work of chapter five.

Now let's move on to chapter six. I hope you find this mixture of suggestion and preaching useful. I saw ideas for you to track down yourself and there are bits of it that I try to preach more fully.

But let's turn now to chapter six. The focus up to now has been on the heart. God dealing with the heart, bringing the heart, the root of things under control.

Now in chapter six the Lord is going to talk much more about what we do. And he's going to highlight three test areas. Three areas that actually reveal where our heart is.

The question of our attitude to our money, to our prayer, particularly the question of time given to prayer, and our attitude to our bodies. Let's read. I'm reading from the 1881 revised version.

Don't worry about that. Take heed that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them. Very interesting.

Because just some verses earlier, chapter five verse sixteen, the Lord had said, let your light so shine before men that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven. Now he's saying, take care that you do not your righteousness before men in order to be seen of them. You may think about the reason for the difference.

Else you have no reward with your Father which is in heaven. When therefore you do arms, sound not a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward.

When thou doest arms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine arms may be in secret. And thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee. And when you pray, ye shall not be of the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.

Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward. For thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. And thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

And in praying, use not vain repetitions as the Gentiles do, for they think that they shall be heard, for they are much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things you have need of, before you ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye, 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 this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.

If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover when you fast, be not as the hypocrites of the sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret. And thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust, inflation doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye.

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness.

No man can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And you, which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature? And why are you anxious concerning raiment? Consider the fields, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin.

Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Be not therefore anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Three areas.

The area of money, prayer, and your body. And all three concern the test of secrecy. What do you do in private? I sometimes feel when coming to prayer meetings like this, worship times, how easy it is to get caught up in something that is very little different from one of the cults that you read about.

Where they get roused up early in the morning, compelled into certain rooms with little tinklings of gongs, and there they pray, and the poor people have had very little sleep, and they get very little privacy, and very little independence of thought, but they get swept up into group activity. The danger of that lies in this, that you are not yourself developing your own life with God. In other words, when you come to worship, and to sing, and to be led, as Pete does in the morning, our worship must arise out of our own walk with God.

Christ constantly puts the emphasis on the root, on the secret place in life. When he diagnoses problems of spiritual growth in that parable of the sower, he says very simply, and his diagnoses are usually so simple, he says your problem is either below the surface or above. Either it's a question of the root down below the ground where no one can see, your root is not deep enough, it doesn't even exist, you're not getting enough up into your own spiritual bloodstream by feeding on God, having private exercise of heart

with him, or your problems are above the surface, there are too many other things crowding into your life.

And in this chapter, the Lord is talking again about our secret heart attitudes and motives, what we do that no one else knows about. Have a private life with God in OM. Don't get swept up into merely having group activity, group worship, for your own survival, for your own growth, in order that the purpose of your year, two years, three years, however long it is, twenty years, with OM, actually come to fruition.

The Lord is talking about what goes on in the secret place. See there are two dangers that are being highlighted here, two dangers to our spiritual life, the Jewish danger and the pagan danger. The Jew, his problem was like this, he was tremendously interested in public display, people thinking well of him and he would stand on the street corners, where the trumpet of the money was clattered into the pot.

He would pray publicly, he would fast publicly, he wanted people to know what he was up to. The Jewish problem of hypocrisy says Christ. The pagan problem that comes out in these chapters is one of mechanical formalism in our relationship to God.

We simply do things over and over again because well that's the way it is, we haven't got any real reason why we go to the prayer meetings because well, I mean it's Tuesday night, we have to go to the prayer meetings or Wednesday or whatever. The whole thing is just sort of trembling along like a flywheel. We finish up with a slot machine God.

The pagan problem. And the Lord is going to teach us how to have a real relationship with him that is private, below the surface, where no one can see. I want to suggest, again I'm not going to show this in detail, but I don't mean to ignore it, but that's just the general principle with which he starts.

And then from verse 2 to 4 he's talking about money. From 5 to 15 he's talking about prayer. From 16 to 18 he's talking about your body.

From verse 19 to 21 he's talking again about money. From 22 to 24 he is talking about motives in our use of time. In our use of time in prayer perhaps particularly.

From 25 then down to the conclusion, 25 to 32 he's talking again about the body. Do you see the way the parallels line up? I'm not insisting on this, I'm simply suggesting it as a useful thing that you can meditate on during January and February. Money then.

Verses 2 to 4 and 19 to 21. The Lord begins with the assumption that you will give. That you will give.

I'm sitting on my bed in my room this morning, I'm rooming with Mike Evans and we were talking about the problem of giving in O.M. because you don't have very much. It's rather a problem isn't it? How do you give if you don't have? Well I can only say that the situation gets easier the longer you stay. It's amazing how people who stay longer in O.M. seem to have more in their pockets to give.

Certainly we need to have if we're going to raise children in the movement to teach them to give. But you give anyway of your time and you give of your energy and your possessions and so on. The assumption is that we will want to give sacrificially.

But the question the Lord is going to put to us comes in verses 19 to 21. Do you really believe in heaven or not? Really now. Do you really believe that heaven is more important, more real, more substantial than earth? Because one day you're going to arrive there with all eternity before you and you may have

invested something there or not.

And what the Lord is saying is look I'm opening a bank account for you in heaven. When you get there you will have all eternity to spend it. You'll arrive at registration in heaven and you'll get your name tag and you'll fill out your card and we do accept you and then instead of getting given a bed tag you'll get given a checkbook.

How much will you have in the account to spend? How much will you have invested in heaven? Do you really believe that by giving to the Lord, he is an accurate bookkeeper, he takes careful note of what you have put in here and there has been no moth, no inflation, no rust, no thieves. You will receive not a scrap less than you have put in. You see, what's going to happen when you die? The Lord is saying look you either leave your treasure behind or you go to it.

You can't have it both ways. When the time comes to go, will you go with happiness and joy looking forward to going or will you go with regret because of all that you're leaving behind? One of our best known evangelists in Britain, perhaps to many of you, David Watson, has been suffering during this past year from cancer and he made a radio program in which he was talking about the imminence of death affecting his values, actually causing him to value heaven and glory and the future, eternity with Christ more than this earth. He talked about the way this involves a total revolution in his thinking.

So we actually look forward to being with Christ and leaving this earth and its many, many enjoyable pleasures behind. Your heart will be where your treasure is. Are you really a supernaturalist? Do you really believe that the future is more important, more solid than this earth? Or are you actually going to become gradually, as many have done, more of a materialist the older you get? It was said of John Wesley that when he was at college he used to receive £30 a year.

This was the money that he lived on. And so John used to live off £28 and give two away. Years went by, his ministry expanded, more and more people got to hear of him, money began to pour in and John Wesley continued to live off £28 a year and give more and more away.

He didn't actually need any more to live on, these were in the pre-inflation days, because he was prepared to give more and more and more and keep himself living at a cutback level. The whole question of your attitude to money needs to be sorted out, I believe, in these days. Because some of you in the wisdom of God are going to become quite wealthy.

Some of you are going to have major responsibilities in the years to come when you leave OM, for property and so on. Now let God deal with your hearts and establish right values and teach you somehow to learn to give now in these days. Think of the Israelites in prison in Egypt as an illustration.

When I say prison they were in some vast sort of slave camp. And eventually after 400 years the time came when God was going to move them out. They were poor, they had had very little.

They'd been working in the brick kilns for generations, they'd known nothing else. One day God moved through the land he had been over the previous week systematically dismantling the Egyptian economy and he was going to bring the whole thing to a crisis, destroy their army in the Red Sea, bring the people out. And the people came out overnight wealthy.

They got loaded down with gold and silver and jewels, if you like, back pay for the previous 400 years that they hadn't drawn. Out they came, suddenly wealthy. Why did God allow that to happen? Why did God

allow them to become well off? It was part and parcel of their redemption.

As they came out of slavery they got wealthy. God had a purpose in mind. God wasn't simply giving them gold and silver and jewels and precious stones simply because that's the way he is.

Not simply that. But so that as you read through the book of Exodus you can see that God's saying, I want to come and live with you. You're camping in the wilderness.

I want to come and camp with you. And so God got his own tent and he wanted to come and camp in the midst of them. But they were to give, they were to learn to give out of the abundance of things that had come to them so that they could make a tent, a dwelling place fit for God to live right in the midst of them down there amongst his people.

And so by the time you get towards the end of the book of Exodus the people are being invited to give the gold and give the silver and give the precious stones to make the tabernacles so that God can have a dwelling place fit for him in their midst. You see, God had allowed them to become wealthy so that they can learn to express their sense of values and give to him. Give so that he might dwell more richly amongst them.

God allows people wealth so that they may learn to give. So that they may express their real sense of values. There's the example for instance of the women in Israel who all had brass mirrors, polished brass mirrors.

Now a mirror is an exceedingly important thing to a woman. A woman will become disorientated if she doesn't have a mirror. This is one of the problems of living in prison, you know, if they don't provide a mirror.

Women will put mirrors by the front door and they'll sort of have a little, you know, make sure that they look right before they go out. They have mirrors in their bedroom, mirrors in the bathroom, sometimes even they have mirrors in the kitchen. They need mirrors to look at themselves, to make sure that things look just right.

The serving women around the tent of the Lord all gave their mirrors away, gave their polished brass mirrors away so that a piece of furniture could be made in the tabernacle. The brass laver it was called, it was a great big sort of washing bowl. What were these women doing? It was a tremendous sacrifice to give away their mirror.

But they were giving it so that this piece of furniture could be made because it was expressive of the way in which God wants to cleanse us, cleanse our characters. They were putting their priority on inner beauty, if you like, rather than merely external beauty. Their sense of values was changing.

As God was working amongst them, they were beginning to see that some things are more important than others. These Israelites were willing to give away their gold and their silver because they said, look, it is more important for us to have God living amongst us, all the riches and the privilege and the blessing of that than that we walk around with gold bangles around our ankles. God will allow you to become wealthy so that you might give, so that your sense of value, so that your character might grow and deepen and change.

This is why they became wealthy. God wants us to learn to give so that we can express the fact that heaven is more real, that God actually sees the way we are. God can take care of our apparent poverty.

God answers prayer in fantastic ways. We need to throw ourselves upon him. I was just trying to write a prayer letter last night on my way back from my sister's wedding.

I was thinking of a great answer to prayer that the children had. I think I told some of you about it already. They came to me and they said, Daddy, we want a piano.

I said, piano? You know how much a piano costs? They said, well, you can buy it. A piano could cost you £100 or £200 or more. Well, they said, sticking their chin out, we're going to pray about it.

When you get holy children like that, it makes you tremble. So they start to pray and we work out how to pray. Lord, we would like a piano but we don't want a very expensive piano.

We want a cheap piano and we want it from not very far away because we don't want to arrange transport for this piano. So my two daughters particularly were praying, Lord, for a cheap piano from not very far away. Earlier on this summer, we were offered a piano, beautiful piano, free, by the man who lives next door.

They're learning how to pray. God wants us to learn how to pray through practical things like this. And then let's move on.

From 5 to 15, the Lord is talking about putting God first in our prayer lines. And the assumption again is that you will pray when you pray, not if. Disciples of Christ pray.

It was the Lord's priority. His day would begin with prayer. You see him getting up in Mark 1 verse 35, a great while before day, in order to pray.

During special times of decision or crisis, he would give extra time to prayer. As he was picking out from amongst his followers those foundational men in the kingdom, he spent a whole night in prayer. He would give special prayer to individuals.

In Luke 22, verses 31 and 32, he's talking about a special time of prayer for Peter. Satan has desired to have you and sift you like wheat, run you through his fingers, see what you're made of. But Peter, I have prayed for you.

For you by name, Peter, I have prayed. The whole heartbeat of world evangelism, Christ's praying. John 17, praying for himself, praying for his disciples, praying for those that will become disciples through the ministry of the twelve.

Looking on into the future, and including us in his prayer. World evangelism in John 17, in prayer. And he continues to pray for us.

On high, our great high priest, interceding on our behalf in Hebrews 7, verse 25. The Lord assumes that you will pray. But he says, when you pray, avoid seeking public approval with your voice, or your body, or anything that you do externally.

This is a tremendously subtle thing, and you know your own heart, I don't. You and God, and possibly only God, knows your own heart. And how easy it is for us to attract attention to ourselves in prayer.

To try and pretend that we are somehow more spiritual than the people around us, by what we do, or the way we sound. And the Lord says, you will have a reward. You will have a tremendous reward.

You will go out at the end of the prayer meeting, and your great reward will be that people will think, what a marvellous person you are in the prayer meeting. Because you were noisy, or excited, or on your knees, or very holy in your language, or quoting an enormous amount of scripture, or whatever it is. Watch out for that.

Your prayer life is not to be merely public, as I was saying at the beginning. It must begin in private. Go into your secret place, your inner chamber.

Literally, the word that is used in the original, is the word that means your larder. Or a little lean-to shed that would be at the end of a first century Palestinian house. Now in there, they would store the same sort of things that you might keep in a garden shed.

They would hang up fish to dry. They would hang up onions. They would store sacks of grain or corn.

They would pile wood up. There would be lots of spiders and cobwebs. Go in there, and shut the door, and pray to your father who is in secret.

The great spiritual movements, the revivals, missionary endeavours and ventures down through the centuries, so many of them have begun in secret prayer. People going into the secret place. Now you say to me, look, I live in a dormitory, I'm on the 8th floor.

I haven't even got room to do any exercises out there. I'm surrounded by people, and I've got no room to move. How can I ever get into a secret place? I'm too close to people.

If I stretch my arms at night, I clock people in the ear either side of me. And it's probably going to be the same the rest of my time in O.N. They put me in some cabin in the doulou, and we've got 43 people in space for five, and now on earth, we probably have to take turns using the beds. How can I ever get any secrecy? The only way to get any secrecy on board ship is to jump overboard.

Or I'm planning to go to India, and I've heard about India because in India everybody stares at you. They look at you, they watch you morning, noon and night. Whatever you're doing, you get stared at, especially by rice eaters.

I think rice eating produces more staring, I don't know. I have a theory about that. Impossible to get privacy.

Well, you'll have to work on it. It's my own manner of getting privacy in my home. If I'm in my home, my kids are going to run in and climb all over me.

It's simply to go out and walk. Get away and have a regular prayer walk. Some of you, I know, have been using the woods.

I got up this morning, first thing I did was look out of the window, and I saw shadowy figures moving around among the woods. My heart was encouraged, actually. I didn't feel the place was being surrounded by evil and wicked men.

It was some of you having your prayer walks. And I've got certain routes around my house where I go to pray. A short prayer walk and a long prayer walk.

And I can go and get excited and call on God and wave my arms about if I want to. I have scared a few. One or two old ladies think I'm the resident local lunatic.

I walked around the corner and I do confess that twice I have walked into lampposts. Find a place where you may be alone with God. When I come out of my room here at the conference in the morning, there is nearly always a girl sitting on a window ledge just below me.

She's got a little space, it's about that wide. She's leaning up against the window. If she falls asleep, we'll have a Utica situation on our hands.

She's got her secret place. Find a place where you can get alone with God, where your relationship with Him can deepen. The purpose is that you might deepen your relationship with God.

Look through the Lord's Prayer as we call it. It's a series of relationships. Relationships with God.

Our Father, the relationship between the Father and the child. It's a unique Christian privilege, isn't it? That we can come and God be our Father and we can come just right to Him. Do you know Neil Porter used to be a Master on the Logos and then his daughter Cherith was born.

Because of disease, probably in the early months of pregnancy, Cherith has some very severe facial disfigurements. He's blind in one eye and deaf in one ear and has had a lot of surgery. Now Neil gets up at about five in the morning and comes downstairs and Cherith, his daughter, gets up with him.

She goes and gets his Bible off the shelf and she lays it down on the armchair where he always kneels to have his quiet time in the morning. Then she waits for Daddy. Daddy comes and gets down on his knees by the chair and Cherith then climbs up on his back and hooks one arm round his neck and puts a thumb in there and clings on like a little monkey and whispers things to Daddy in his ear as Daddy's talking to God.

She is his daughter. She feels totally confident with her Father and we have a Father. It is a privilege unique to us Christians.

We may come into the Father's presence and although he be God, the great creator of the universe, we may come to him as children, in intimacy and security. Father, our Father. And then there's the relationship between the worshipper and God.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. I don't know whether any of you have ever stayed in a hotel and called up for room service. Sometimes it strikes me that overhearing other people praying, they're treating God like a sort of room service man, a bellboy.

Ring up to summon his instant assistance to bring this and to bring that and to bring something else that we want. I was once paid for to stay in possibly the most exclusive hotel in India and I was living there for ten days at someone else's expense. It was one of those dream-like times in O.M. This fellow in whose room I was staying was going out to work in the morning and after he'd gone about twenty minutes or so, various members of O.M. Bombay used to turn up at the door in order to have hot baths and to lie around in luxury.

And I would telephone room service, you see, and we would order pineapple juices and club sandwiches and all kinds of marvellous delicacies that they hadn't seen in O.M. Bombay for the last few years. People treat God like that. We are to come before God with worship in our hearts, to give him praise.

If you turn back to Deuteronomy chapter twenty-six, it speaks there of worship. Deuteronomy twenty-six. It shall be when you are come into the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee for an inheritance and possess it and dwellest therein, when you come to where God is bringing you, you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the ground which thou shalt bring in from thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there.

And you shall come to the priest that shall be in those days and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord thy God that I am come unto the land which the Lord swear unto our fathers to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God, and so on and so on. Read the rest of the paragraph.

When you come to worship, says the Lord, you must gather up that from amongst the richness which God has given you. Gather up in a basket and come and lay before God. Prepare your heart for worship.

Gather up specific memories and blessings and present them before God. It isn't enough simply to come into a worship meeting, sit down and wait for the musician to sort of spark you off and then you'll sing lazily to God. When you come to worship God, come with a due sense of specific blessing that you want to thank him for.

Specific revelation for your own heart through the word, through messages that have come that you want to praise him for. In other words, be organized, be thoughtful in coming to worship God. So the second relationship is between a worshipper and his God.

And the third is between a subject and the king. Thy kingdom come. It's the plea for the king of the ages to come and settle this world's ills.

So we come before God as a subject, pleading with the king. The relationship, fourthly, between a master and the servant. The servant says, Thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth.

We don't always know what God's will is, do we? Paul prayed, you remember, three times that a particular thorn would be taken away from him. He found eventually that it was not God's will. God's purpose was to give him grace to live with it.

We can't always be the judge of what is best for us. A kid might want to have an air pistol. Can't even be trusted to handle a water pistol.

And yet wants a much more lethal gun to play with. And it will ask the father and the father will say, no, not yet. Sometimes God says to us, no, not yet.

And we must be content with his will. The relationship then between a beggar and the one who provides, verse 11. God is the provider of all our legitimate needs, including our emotional needs.

He's the one that meets us and answers those needs. Even the hairs of your head are numbered, and he knows. The relationship, sixthly, between the sinner and the one who forgives, verse 12.

Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven those that trespass against us. It's a continuing need, isn't it, as a Christian? To seek the mercy and the forgiveness of God. In John, chapter 13, the Lord is going around cleansing the feet of the disciples, and he says a very significant word.

I think it's verse 8 of the chapter. He says, look, unless you let me cleanse you, you have no part with me. Not in me, not your salvation at stake, but unless you come before me regularly and accept cleansing for those areas that get dirty, you will find that you have no part with me in the kind of work that is to be done.

And then finally, the relationship between a pilgrim and a guide. Lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. I can hear people crowding around outside.

The noise level is mounting. The Arab world are waiting to get in here. So I'm going to bring things to a close.

May the Lord teach us. To have a root that is deep and growing deeper in himself, where we exercise faith, where our relationship to him is getting closer, where we learn to see clearly. Let us pray.

Lord, we just wonder, what was the effect in the mind of the disciples as they heard this message first time? They must have been bowled over by its simplicity, and its depth, and of how far you were preparing to go in their lives to change them. And Lord, it has something of the same effect on us. We would say, who is sufficient for these things? And yet our sufficiency is of God.

O Father, we pray that you, by your Spirit, would make the application in heart after heart, in order that we might grow deeper with one who is our Father, who is our God, the one whose kingdom is coming in, the one who does provide, who does rule and does guide. Lord, we thank you that there are unimagined depths in your nature to be explored in the coming year, as we move ahead in the secret place. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29314.mp3>

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