

# (Matthew) ch.6:1-6:15

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a secret motive for our actions, especially in our Christian service, and not seeking reward or honor from men.*

**Duration:** 55:12

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:1-2, Matthew 18:15, Matthew 18:21, Matthew 18:34-35, Matthew 26:44

**Topics:** "Righteous Motives", "Seeking Glory"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having the right motives when serving God. He warns against seeking recognition and praise from others, whether it be through giving testimony, giving money, or engaging in Christian activities like singing. The speaker refers to Matthew 6:1, where Jesus cautions against practicing righteousness to be noticed by men, as it can result in losing our reward from God. The sermon encourages believers to constantly examine their motives and repent when they realize they have been seeking honor from others, instead of seeking to glorify God.

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## Transcript

Let's turn today to Matthew chapter 6 and verse 1. Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them, otherwise you have no reward with your father who is in heaven. Here as we were considering in our last study, the Lord speaks very strong words that all our reward can be lost if what we have done has been done with the wrong motive. And this is a verse that teaches us very clearly that in the day when Christ comes to give his rewards to his servants, motive will be the all important question, not what we did, but why we did it.

And therefore Jesus said, when you give alms or do an act of charity, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your arms may be in secret and your father who sees in secret will repay you.

There is a great lust in our flesh to receive honor from men for the good things that we do. The race of Adam is born with such a desire. And all of us are like that.

How then shall we be free? The Bible says, if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. And that means that when I get light and understanding in a particular situation, that what I had done was for some honor from men. I need to be radical, to judge myself secretly before God, repent, ask his mercy and his

forgiveness, so that I can be free from that desire the next time I do that.

It's possible for us to preach, or to engage in some other type of Christian activity, or sing, particularly in the area of singing. So much can be done for the honor of men. It's possible to get up and sing a song in a meeting, and the motivation behind that need not be that God should be glorified, that Christ should be exalted, but rather that my voice should be so clear and that the melody should be clear, so that people can hear it and think what a good singer I am.

There we see it can be a Christian song, but the motivation in all of that is glory and honor for oneself. Nobody actually sounds a trumpet when he's giving alms. Even the Pharisees, I'm sure, didn't do that.

And Jesus was using an exaggerated way of expression to highlight something. In a sense, it was blowing a trumpet. Though it was not a physical trumpet, it was allowing men to be aware of the fact that I have done something for the Lord.

It can be in giving a testimony. It's very good and necessary to give a testimony concerning what God has done for us. But very often, testimony degenerates to the level of what I have done for God, and how faithful I have been.

And that comes in so subtly. And if we are not on the watch all the time, if we are not alert, it's very easy for these things to slip in, in our work for the Lord. When we give money, particularly if we have given a large amount, what a lust there is in our flesh to let other people know.

And sometimes it can be subtly brought in into our conversation, just to let other people know, just to get a little bit of honor, a little reputation before other believers that I am wholehearted. This was why Ananias and Sapphira were judged. They were members of the purest and most powerful church that this world has ever seen, in Jerusalem at that time.

And they came in desiring a reputation as wholehearted disciples of Christ, when they were not. There was nothing wrong in their holding back the part of the money they had received for the sale of their property. In fact, they didn't have to give anything.

God doesn't want people's money. But when they pretended, they were telling a lie. They were practicing their righteousness to get honor from men.

They were following the Pharisees. And they got honor. But they were judged by God so severely.

Today, God doesn't judge so severely, immediately. But the principle remains that when we have received honor from men for our actions, notice what the Lord says in verse 2, such people have received their reward in full. In other words, there is no need for them to get a reward from the Lord in the final day.

Because they have received their reward already. This wrong attitude that Jesus speaks about here, seeking the honor of men. But, Jesus said in contrast, when you give alms, that also applies to when you give an offering to the Lord for his work, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Now, our right hand and our left hand have no intelligence in themselves, we know that. So, how is it possible for the left hand not to know what the right hand is doing? This must be referring to the body of Christ. That in the body of Christ, that member which is closest to us, the left hand and the right hand are the ones which work most closely together in the body.

So many things are done together by the left hand and the right hand. That member which is closest to us in the body of Christ should not know what we have done for the Lord. It must be in secret.

It must not be for the honor of men. It must be in secret. If you give money to a brother in need, as far as is humanly possible, do it anonymously, so that that brother is not attached to you.

Never mind if he thought it was from somebody else. That will make your reward even greater in the day when Jesus comes. If you did something, and not only you didn't get the honor for doing it, but the honor was given to somebody else, how do you feel when you have done something at great sacrifice for the church, and you have kept it secret, and everybody thinks that somebody else did it, and gives him the honor? If you can quietly retire there into the background and praise the Lord, then you have truly cleansed yourself from seeking the honor of men.

And great will be your reward when the Lord comes, because it says, if your arms are in secret, your deeds of charity are in secret, your father, verse 4, who sees in secret, will repay you. This is a fundamental requirement to be a servant of Jesus Christ. For Paul says in Galatians 1.10, For am I now seeking the approval of men, or of God? That's a very important question that all of us need to answer.

Are you seeking the approval of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I was still trying to please men, I would not be a born servant of Christ. Galatians 1.10 A fundamental requirement to be a servant of Christ in the new covenant is this, that I do not seek to please men. It's not by going and studying in a Bible school and getting a degree that you become a servant of Christ.

It's by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And even if you are anointed by the Holy Spirit, you can still be disqualified in being a servant of Christ by this one disqualification, that you seek to please men in what you do. A person who sings to impress people is not really a servant of Christ.

A person who preaches to impress people is not a servant of Christ. Prayer letters and reports of our work that are sent out with the motivation that other people should be impressed by what we are doing, perhaps support us financially, that's worse. But even if we are not seeking for financial support, if it's merely to impress others that we are doing something for the Lord, it cancels out all our reward in the day of judgment.

And we are not servants of Christ. If only we would take this more seriously. There are very few Christians who take this so seriously as to live only before God's face in this area.

And that's why Jesus said that in the last day, many who are first will be last and many who are last will be first. How is that? Many who are first in this world are those who have impressed other believers by what they have done. But in the final day, when their motives are tested, you may find that they are last.

All of their life's work is burnt up because all of it was done for the glory and honor of men. And some others, whom we consider last because they kept their life's work so secret, will come right up to the front because God saw all that they did and gave and sacrificed in secret. Consider the life of Jesus himself as the greatest example of all.

How is it that there is no record in the scriptures of what he did and sacrificed and suffered in the first 30 years of his life? He must have gone through many things, but he never spoke about them. His life was so completely hidden. He had a hidden life before God.

And if he did righteousness, and I am sure he did, in those 30 years, he never spoke about it. There is no record of it. There is an example, dear friend, for us to follow.

To live as Jesus lived in those 30 years with no record before men as to what we have suffered, what we have sacrificed, what we have given. But only to do it all before God's face. If we have suffered, let's get sympathy from God, not from men.

If we have done something for the Lord, let's get our honor from God, not from men. Follow Jesus here. And then you will find that in the final day, in the day of judgment, you will have no regret whatsoever.

Let's turn today to Matthew chapter 6 and verse 5. And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. Man loves to receive honor for being religious.

And we all love to have a reputation among others, particularly if we are believers. We love to have a reputation among other believers that we are wholehearted, that we are zealous, that we are very generous, that we are free from the love of money, that we are very prayerful, that we spend long times in prayer, that we have contact with God and that God answers our prayers and that we get supernatural answers to our prayers, etc. There is a fantastic lust in the flesh to receive honor from men.

So many autobiographies are written to receive honor from men. So many people permit their biographies to be written to receive honor from men. So many prayer letters and prayer reports are sent out to receive honor from men.

And concerning all that is done with the motivation of receiving honor from men, concerning all of that Christian activity which would perhaps represent most of the Christian activity that goes on, Jesus says in one statement, they have received their reward in full. There will be no reward in eternity for those who have done any of these things for the glory that comes to them from men. Think of such a wonderful, sacred, holy activity like prayer.

Think to be able to do that, to receive honor from men. Is it only the Pharisees who did that? What about the present-day descendants of the Pharisees? If we are honest, we will have to confess how much we have prayed in public to get honor from men, that others might be impressed with the spiritual content and quality of our prayer. Examine yourself when you pray in public and see if this desire does not lurk deep down that others might be impressed with the words that you have prayed and the fervor with which you have prayed.

And at the end of the prayer, that you don't see whether others have been sufficiently impressed. And if in the middle of your prayer, if you happen to be in such an assembly where others provide exclamations like Amen and Hallelujah, how it seems to excite your heart and thrill you that others are responding. And when others don't respond like that, how it seems to depress you and how you increase the fervency of your prayer in order that others might say an Amen and a Hallelujah.

These are the indications of how deep-rooted is the desire within us to get honor from men for our prayer. And the Lord says, you have received your reward in full. In other words, your prayer is not even heard in heaven.

Your prayer, such a prayer, is not gone beyond the roof of the meeting hall in which you prayed. It has not ascended to heaven. And there we can see how few prayers really ascend to heaven, particularly prayers

made in public.

There are more prayers made in private that ascend to God than prayers made in public because so much of public prayer is done for the honor of men. Think of all-night prayer meetings that people attend and very often, so much of that going through hours of prayer together is just for human honor. Jesus said, when you pray, go into your inner room.

And when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. If your interest is not that other people should think that you are a great man of prayer or that other people should think that your prayers are so fervent and zealous and wholehearted, but you are much more interested in accomplishing things in the unseen spiritual realm for the glory of God, whether people know that you are the one who caused that accomplishment or not, then you will be much more interested in praying in secret. It says about Jesus that after he fed the five thousand, we read off in Matthew 14, and verse 23, he sent the multitudes away and then he went up to the mountain by himself to pray.

And there is a spiritual principle there. It's right to pray together in public. Jesus prayed in the presence of his disciples.

In fact, it's once when he was praying along with his disciples in Luke chapter 11 that the disciples heard him pray and said, Lord, teach us to pray. While he was praying in a certain place, Luke 11, when he had finished, one of his disciples said, teach us to pray. Jesus prayed in public.

But inwardly, in his mind, he had shut the door. He had gotten to a little room. He had gotten to a little room in his mind, sent the multitudes away as we read in Matthew 14, 23, and prayed to the Father in secret.

That is the principle. Even when we are praying with a multitude in the meeting hall we are in, inwardly, when we pray, we raise our voice and speak to God, and everybody can hear it, but in our inner thought life, in our mind, we should have sent the multitudes away and come before God's face. And there we are to pray to Him.

Just like in the Old Testament tabernacle, as we've considered before in one of our earlier studies. You come into the outer court, there are people there. And you can do things there to impress the people.

And you come through the outer court into the holy place, and there you find there are the leaders, the priests, and you can do things there to impress the priests, the leaders. And then you come into the most holy place, which is possible only through the rent veil and the new covenant. And who dwells there? Holy God.

We can say that these are three stages that we go through after we are converted. We first get out of our unconverted stage, where we are impressing men, and we come through to the outer court, where we are seeking to impress only believers. Then we get through that to another stage in our Christian life, where we are free from trying to impress believers, and we are only interested in impressing our spiritual leaders.

But finally we come through to the place where God wants us to come to, through the rent veil into the most holy place, where only God dwells. I have sent the multitudes away, I have sent the leaders away in my mind. Now I am living only before God's face.

What I do, I want Him to see. When I pray, I want Him to see. When I sing, I am singing for His glory.

When I preach, I am doing it for His glory. Whatever I do, for His glory. Then, your father who sees in secret will repay you.

Your prayers will be answered. As someone has said, what we need nowadays is not more prayer, but more answered prayers. And there is a world of difference between the two.

A lot of prayers can be no more effective for the kingdom of God and for the glory of God than prayers prayed by some heathen man or some barbarian out in the jungle. But that prayer which God receives and answers is that prayer which comes in secret from a clean heart prayed in His presence. Another thing the Lord says about prayer in verse 7 is when you are praying, He says, don't use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do.

For they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Think of that. We can keep on repeating a prayer many times and think that God will hear us because we have prayed for a long time.

This is a deception. There are many who think that God will hear them if they pray for three hours. But that He won't hear them if they pray for just one minute.

What did Jesus teach concerning prayer? It's not the length of time, but He said if you have faith, all things are possible to you. And if you have persistence. It is not length of time, but faith and persistence that Jesus emphasized as the requirements in prayer.

A clean heart, faith and persistence and where the motive is the glory of God. Not many words. It says it's the heathen who think that God will hear them if they pray for a long time and so they keep on repeating.

That doesn't mean that we must never ask for the same thing a second time or a third time because we read in the Garden of Gethsemane, if you turn to Matthew chapter 26, that Jesus went back and prayed three times, you read there in verse 39 onwards for the same thing. Verse 42, He went a second time and prayed. He went a third time saying the same thing once more, Matthew 26, 44.

So Jesus has given us an example that it's right to pray for the same thing again and again till we get an answer from God. That's right. But it should not be meaningless repetition.

Meaningless repetition. It's very significant that He said these words before what is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer in verses 9 to 13. It's possible for us to repeat this prayer, Our Father who art in heaven and so on, meaninglessly.

To repeat it and to get a satisfaction out of it and Jesus said don't do that. There should be no meaningless repetition in prayer. There should be no praying before the face of men.

These are the two things particularly that Jesus mentioned in relation to prayer before He began to teach His disciples how to pray. In other words, it's not the words primarily. It's not what we pray for but the motive with which we pray and whether we are seeking the glory of God and if that's the case we don't have to repeat meaninglessly.

Though we may have to pray again and again, if we pray in faith, God will hear and He will answer. Let's turn today to Matthew chapter 6 and verse 7. And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore, do

not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Before Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He first taught them how not to pray. He said they were not to pray for the honor of men. Number one and most important requirement was that their motive must be right in praying in verses 5 and 6. It must be in secret.

Even public prayer in the church must be in a sense with the multitude sent away in our mind and praying before God's face alone for His honor and not for our own. That is the first and foremost requirement in prayer. How not to pray, not for the honor of men.

Secondly, not with meaningless repetition. Verse 7 Repetition is all right, but meaningless repetition is worthless. Not with many words.

Jesus prayed all night but He didn't think that His Father would hear Him because of the many words. We mustn't think that God hears us because we pray for a long time. That's a heathen concept.

God hears us because our motive is sincere, we have a burden, we have faith, we have persistence. Not because we pray for a long time. Those who measure their prayer life by the clock are heathen in their concept.

Not Christian. A person who inwardly congratulates himself because he spent one hour or two hours or three hours in prayer, his whole concept is heathen. Not Christian.

Jesus never measured His prayer life and His fellowship with the Father by the clock. It was a delight. When we pray by the clock, it shows that our relationship with God is not right.

The Bible speaks of our relationship with Christ to be like that of a bride with a bridegroom. Can you imagine an engaged couple, deeply in love with each other, measuring the time they spend together by the clock? Far from it. There's something wrong if a couple are measuring the time they spend together by their clock.

No, it's by the depth of their relationship. And so must it be in prayer. There's something fundamentally wrong with our relationship with Christ if we measure the time we spend with Him by the clock and secretly congratulate ourselves or inform others about it.

We're not to be like them. Not with meaningless repetition or many words. Why? Because your Heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

There is no need to inform God about our need because He already knows it. Then we can ask, why should we pray? Well, if it is only to inform God about a particular situation, there's no need to pray at all because He knows about that situation. In fact, He knew about that situation long before you were born because He knows the whole future.

So we see that prayer is not to inform God about a situation because He knew about the possibility of that situation and about that situation coming up years and millions of years before it actually took place. So there's nothing we can inform God about. Neither can we move God through action by getting Him to love someone because He loves people more than we love them.

He has a greater concern for people than any of us can ever have. What then does prayer accomplish? Primarily, prayer is fellowship with the Father and the Lord gives us the opportunity to cooperate with Him

in the accomplishment of His purposes. So we need to bear in mind these introductory remarks concerning prayer.

It is not to be for the honor of men. It must not be with meaningless repetition and a long time spent thinking God will hear us because of that and it must not be with the thought that God has to be informed or stirred up to have a concern. No, do not be like them.

Your Heavenly Father knows. But God wants to have fellowship with you. He wants you to be a co-worker with Him.

Therefore, you need to pray. And this is how you must pray. He said, Our Father who art in heaven.

And that first sentence is fundamental in all prayer because there are two things there. One, we're speaking to our Father. In the Old Testament they could never speak to God as Father.

They always prayed, O God, Lord, Almighty, Terrible, etc. But now Jesus said in the New Covenant, pray to Him as your Father because you are born again. You become children of God.

Address God as Father. Jesus taught us to pray to the Father. There's nothing wrong in praying to the Lord Jesus.

In fact, we teach children to pray to the Lord Jesus. But as we mature in the Christian life, we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. And that is the most mature way to pray.

With Jesus as the mediator, we go straight to the Father through Jesus Christ. And when we pray in the name of Jesus, it just means that we come with no merit of our own, but only because Jesus Christ is our mediator. But we pray to the Father.

And we don't pray to the Father who's in our hearts, but to the Father who is in heaven. The location is important too. We don't pray to God in a room, or to God in our hearts.

Not to our Father who art in this room, or our Father who art in our hearts. Our Father who art in heaven. There's a sense in which God dwells in our hearts.

Jesus is present where two or three are gathered together in His name. But we are praying to our Father who art in heaven. It's very important to take each word in this sentence seriously.

And two things come through to us in this. First of all, that God to whom we are praying is a loving, concerned Father. And secondly, that He dwells in heaven.

Meaning that He is sovereign, almighty, able to control every circumstance and every person on the face of the earth. We must have both these concepts before us, before we begin to pray. One, concerning His love as a Father.

Second, concerning His sovereign, almighty power as the one who dwells in heaven. Eternal, almighty God. And Jesus said, when you pray, put these concepts foremost in your mind and address God as our Father who art in heaven.

It's not a question of repeating these words every time we pray. He said, pray then in this way. In other words, this is a pattern.

Not to be imitated as a meaningless repetition, as He warned us about in verse 7. But that the form of our praying must be in this way, even if it's not in the same words. Pray in this way, not just with these words. Our Father, think of His love, and that will stir up faith in your heart, that God loves you, He's concerned about you, He knows your need, He's your Father, He will take care of you, who art in heaven, and that will also stir up faith in your heart, that God is able to solve any problem, deal with any situation, handle any person, difficult or otherwise, even the King's heart, Proverbs 21, verse 1, the greatest authority in the world.

His heart is in God's hands, and God can move it in any direction He wishes. Our Father, who art in heaven. Why did Jesus teach us to begin with these words? Because He knew, and He wanted His disciples to know this too, that the most important thing in prayer to get an answer from God is faith.

And faith will be born in our hearts if we think of God as a God who loves us as a Father, and who is sovereign and almighty in heaven, able to do, handle every situation and every person on the face of the earth. It's when we think of these things, that faith is born in our hearts, and we can trust God to answer what we are asking for. Otherwise, we might as well not pray.

If we don't have faith, we might as well not pray. Our Father, who art in heaven. So, the foundation for our prayer is laid in that first sentence.

Faith in God as a loving Father, and faith in God as a sovereign, almighty Lord of the universe. If only we would begin all our prayers with this foundation, we would get many more answers to our prayers. Very often we try to build prayer like a house without a foundation.

The foundation is faith in God's love and His sovereign, almighty power. Don't try to build a house without that foundation. Take time to build that foundation before you pray, and then you'll find even a short prayer will be a house that stands.

Otherwise, it will be a house that collapses. And then, He taught us to pray the content of what we pray should begin with Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. He doesn't teach us to pray for our needs first, which is the natural way all human beings pray.

People go on pilgrimages and make sacrifices and pray. It's usually for their healing or for their children or for some requirement in their family. How many are there who pray like this, in this way? Not necessarily with these words, but with this attitude.

Lord, your kingdom, your name, your will is primary. A true Christian, a true disciple of Jesus Christ is one who does not seek his own. And it is in prayer that we find how much we seek our own.

People pray when they are in need, when they are in distress, when they are in difficulty. There's nothing wrong with that. God uses these situations to draw us to Himself for the highest form of prayer.

And Jesus is teaching us the highest form of prayer here, where we pray not for the glory of God, with faith, trusting God and seeking His honour, the glory of His name, the establishment of His kingdom and the fulfilment of His will. In other words, putting God first and His concern. Then we can come to our needs and you'll find that many of our needs are answered if we put God's kingdom and His concern and His name first.

So the Lord is teaching us primarily unselfishness, freedom from self-centeredness in our prayer life if we are to pray in a mature way as His disciples. Let's turn today to Matthew chapter 6 and verse 9. Jesus says to His disciples, pray then in this way. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Here we see how the Lord taught His disciples to pray. Not beginning with their own need, though their own need does come later on in the prayer, but beginning with God. And this is the whole purpose of salvation.

This is the meaning of conversion and discipleship. This is what Jesus came to save us from. Many know that Jesus came to save us from hell, from the wrath of God.

But they do not know that Jesus died as it says in 2nd Corinthians 5 and verse 15. He died for all that those who now live should no longer live for themselves or live lives centered in themselves but for Him. Live lives centered in Him.

So we can say that salvation is deliverance from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. For many thousands of years, man believed that the earth was the center of the universe and that even the sun went round the earth and all the stars went round the earth. Until people discovered that that was not true.

But that the earth was just a small part of a solar system which itself was just a small part of space, the many galaxies in space. But we learn something from man thinking that the earth is the center. It reveals that man believes that he is the center of all things.

And we certainly find that attitude even today. That even when people are converted, they only think in terms of what they can get out of God for themselves. They remain in the center of their lives.

This is not God's will. In the beginning most of us come to Christ because we want to be saved from judgment and from hell. This is true.

But God's desire is that we be delivered from this. So that the reason why we live for God is that we want to glorify Him. In the Old Testament, the promise was, if you obey God you'll be blessed materially in so many ways.

They could not experience this salvation. Jesus came and taught us that we were to live life centered in God so that whether God blessed us or not we would still live for Him. The way Jesus lived.

He didn't seek to please His Father because the Father prospered Him materially or healed Him of His sicknesses. No. It was the Father's glory that was His one concern.

Not what He would get out of the Father. To be disciples of Jesus means that we are to be delivered from this form of Christianity which many of us have. Which thinks only in terms of what we can get out of God for ourselves.

How can God bless me? Way back in the olden days when we were unconverted we sought to see what the world could give us. And conversion has now perhaps brought us just to the place to see what God can give us now. Healing, blessing, job, solution to our problems, etc.

But that's not salvation. Salvation is more than just being blessed by God. Salvation is being delivered from self-centeredness.

And the way we pray is a pretty good test of whether we are self-centered or not. Not the way we pray in public because most people pray in public, pious, religious prayers to impress others. But what we deeply desire in our heart, the thing that we spontaneously pray to God for, that is a pretty good test of what lies deep within our heart as our burning desire and longing.

And in that connection, Jesus said, pray then in this way. In other words, let your prayer life be patterned after this. Our Father, who art in heaven, we consider that.

We are to think of God as a loving Father who cares for us, who rules in heaven, who is sovereign. And having laid that foundation for our faith, we begin our prayer with three requests that concern God. This is God-centeredness.

Not my name, not my kingdom, not my will. But God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will. This is the mark of a spiritual man.

In fact, only a really spiritually minded man can pray this prayer meaningfully. A lot of people can repeat it like a parrot, and many do. But only a spiritually minded man can truly pray this prayer from his heart.

Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

In other words, the uppermost desire in his heart is that God's name should be hallowed, held sacred and revered. He is not concerned about his own name. The uppermost desire in the heart of a man who is spiritually minded is that God's kingdom should be established on the earth.

That kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, as it says in Romans 14 and verse 17. Thy will be done. True holiness, true spirituality is to say no to our own will and yes to the will of God.

And that is what Jesus has taught us to pray. Thy name be hallowed, Father. Thy kingdom come in a world which is not interested in you.

And of course that kingdom must first of all come in our own hearts. That we acknowledge and recognize God as king and ruler over our lives. That his kingdom may come over every area of our lives.

And that his will will be done. And there there can be a tremendous conflict. For we are all basically eager to do our own will and not the will of God.

And here Jesus has taught us to pray Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Now we come to the requests concerning our needs.

First of all give us this day our daily bread. That relates to our material needs and there's nothing wrong in praying to God for our material needs. Not for luxuries.

We're not, the prayer is not give us this day our daily ice cream, but our daily bread. That's which is essential and necessary for life. Many people pray for luxuries.

God may give us luxuries as a bonus, but Jesus never taught us to pray for that. He taught us to pray for that which is necessary for life. Bread.

And that would include a lot of other things that concern our material necessities. Food, clothing and shelter could all come under that heading. But notice that this request comes immediately after the prayer

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In other words why do I want daily bread? I want daily bread because I want strength to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. We're not praying here for daily bread to do our own will. Note that.

God is not under obligation to give us daily bread so that we can continue to live our own self-willed lives. No. This is Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven and Lord in order to have strength to do your will on earth give me my food.

Give me health. God's will is that we might have health in our bodies. Health for what? Health to do His will.

When we pray for healing it's good to ask ourselves why we want healing? Do we want healing to live for ourselves? To make money? To live for the world? Or do we want healing to live for God? It's the motive that's important. And then we come to the next request which concerns ourselves which is our basic spiritual need. Forgive us our debts or our sins, our moral debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

This verse teaches us that every sin we commit puts us in debt to God. To commit one sin is to be in debt to God. It's just like borrowing money from someone.

And after we have borrowed thousands and millions of rupees from someone you can't just walk up to him and say well, I'm sorry about all that I borrowed. Let's forget the past. Neither can we go up to God and say let's forget the past, Lord.

No. There must be a price paid. That debt has to be cleared.

This is why Jesus had to die for our sins so that our debt might be cleared. And so, forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors. Our debts cannot be forgiven if we haven't forgiven those who have sinned against us.

And then comes the next request. Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. That also is a spiritual request that follows on from forgiveness of sins.

In other words, I don't want just my sins to be forgiven. I want victory over sin. Don't lead me into temptation that is too strong for me.

Of course, God has promised not to do that in 1 Corinthians 10, 13. But He still teaches us to pray that we might not be led into temptation too strong for us, but that we might be delivered from evil. That is a victory over sin.

So the prayer for forgiveness must lead on to the prayer for victory. And then it concludes with again giving the kingdom and the power and the glory back to God. Nothing for self, but everything for God.

This is the way all our prayers must be prayed. Let's turn now to Matthew's gospel in chapter 6 and verse 9. We were considering in our last study how Jesus taught His disciples to pray putting God first and themselves next. Not putting their own needs first.

We can look a little more closely at this prayer and discover that the real secret of a spiritual life is found in this prayer. We considered how He taught His disciples and us to pray that first of all we must be concerned about God's name, God's kingdom and God's will. This is the mark of a spiritual man.

That uppermost in His desires and longings is that God's name may be hallowed, His kingdom come and His will be done. It's very difficult to find a spiritually minded man. There are not many on the face of the earth.

But if you could cut open the heart of a spiritually minded man you'd discover that deep down in his heart his greatest longing is that God's name should be hallowed, that His kingdom should come and that His will should be done on earth as it is in heaven. We can ask how is God's will done in heaven? As soon as God speaks to the angels, they obey immediately. They obey completely.

They obey joyfully. And here the spiritual man is praying that God's will should be done on earth in the same way. In other words, in his own life.

You know whether you are spiritual if your desire is that you might obey God like the angels in heaven do immediately, completely and joyfully without grumbling, without questioning, without hesitation, without any half-heartedness and no half-obedience. This is the meaning of this prayer. Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

If we don't mean it, it's better not to pray that prayer. And so we see that it's not easy to pray this prayer. Of course it's easy to repeat it like a parrot but to really pray this prayer and mean it, it's not easy.

If a man could do it sincerely, one would say he's really a spiritually minded man. That he's confessing that he believes in a loving Father who rules in heaven and his first and foremost desire is that God's name should be hallowed. Not that my backache should be healed or that my children should get promoted in their examinations but that God's name should be hallowed first of all.

Whether I get healed or not, whether my children get promoted or not, let God's name be hallowed. Let God's kingdom come. Among believers, one would say that the vast majority do not know such a level of spirituality and yet this is discipleship.

This is the narrow gate that Jesus spoke of later in chapter 7 where a man is so thoroughly converted from his self-centeredness that he seeks God's honor and glory primarily in his life. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And notice in the requests for our personal needs we mention that it's right to ask God for material necessities but not for luxuries. Give us this day our daily bread.

But notice even there the prayer is not give me. It's deliverance from self-centeredness at another level. We can say, well, alright I seek the glory of God first but having sought that I seek my own.

No, I've got to seek my brother's interest too. Give us. That means me and the other children of the Father.

The Father in heaven has got other children too. They are my brothers and sisters. And so my prayer is not just for my daily bread but our daily bread.

Mine and the daily bread that my brothers and sisters need. In other words, Lord I'm not just concerned about my need, my material necessities. I'm concerned about the material necessities of my brothers and sisters as well.

This is a spiritually minded man. And forgive us our debts. He's concerned not only that his own sins should be forgiven.

He's concerned that the sins committed by his brothers and sisters and the sins they've fallen into should also be forgiven. He doesn't gloat over the sins of others. If you have the habit of gloating over the sin and the failure of other believers, you can't pray this prayer.

You're not a spiritual man. You can't pray forgive us our sins because you're not interested in that man's sins being forgiven. You're more interested in that man's sin being advertised and publicized.

No. Here is a spiritually minded man who is praying forgive us. Lord, I don't want my sin to be publicized or advertised.

And I don't want that brother's sins to be publicized or advertised either. Forgive him and forgive me our debts just as we have forgiven our debtors. And that's a very important qualifying phrase.

And if we can't add that qualifying phrase to our prayer, then our sins will not be forgiven. And out of all the six requests mentioned in this prayer, three concerning God and three concerning ourselves, it's this one request, this fifth one, that Jesus picks out and repeats in verses fourteen and fifteen. He says, for if, and there's a very big if, it's a capital I-F.

If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. And so we see here that it is a very clear statement by the Lord Jesus Christ that the Father in Heaven will not forgive the sins of anyone who does not forgive others.

He's not speaking here about God, he's speaking about a Father. If he had said God would not forgive you, then of course we'd say he's talking to unbelievers as well. But when it says in verse fourteen your heavenly Father, in verse fifteen your Father will not forgive you, that means he's already your Father.

You are born again. You're a child of God. Otherwise God's not your Father.

Otherwise you'd have to say that if you don't forgive other men, your God will not forgive you. That's not what he says. You are a born again child of God and therefore he says your Father will not forgive you.

In other words there are certain children of the Father whose sins are not forgiven by the Father. Because of one simple reason, that they don't forgive other people. And therefore these children finally lose their salvation and go to Hell.

Because they don't forgive others. That is so clear. If you were to read Matthew chapter eighteen, the last part of that chapter with an open mind, you'd get that answer so clearly.

Matthew eighteen verse twenty-one to thirty-five where Peter came to Jesus and said, Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother? He's a believer talking about forgiving another believer. And Jesus told him this parable about a slave who was unmerciful towards his fellow slave and his master. It says, handed him over, verse thirty-four, to the torturers.

That is to the evil spirits. And he had to repay all that was owed him. How many of us can repay God for all the sins we have committed against Him? Impossible.

He's a so shall my Heavenly Father, verse thirty-five of Matthew eighteen do to you if you don't forgive your brother from your heart. It's not enough just to externally say I forgive you. So clear there in Matthew eighteen thirty-five it must be from the heart that you forgive.

And so that's a very important condition for unsaid prayer. In fact it's an important condition for forgiveness itself. We know that no one can enter into the presence of God and live with Him without His sins being forgiven.

That's clear. And yet it says here that the Father will not forgive the sins of any person who does not forgive His fellow human beings. But you may say that person did a terrible crime against me.

Maybe he did. But you still got to forgive him. Because the gravity of your crime against God is far greater.

You got to forgive as God's forgiven you. And so that's an important thing. Don't pray if you haven't forgiven somebody.

Don't pray. Jesus made that very clear. In Mark chapter eleven He said whenever you stand praying forgive.

That's very important. Matthew eleven verse twenty-five. Whenever you stand praying forgive if you've got anything against anyone.

Otherwise your prayer just won't be heard. Then only can we go on to the next and last request. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil which is a prayer for victory over sin.

Lord keep me protect me from evil when it comes to tempt me, to lead me astray from Your will. What is sin? Sin is to do my own will. What is temptation then? Temptation is to do my own will, is to be tempted to do my own will, to have my own way and to please myself.

And Lord there's such a lust in my flesh to please myself. And when I face that, give me grace. Deliver me.

And not just me, deliver us. I want victory over sin for my brothers and sisters too. I don't like to see them defeated.

If you can gloat over the fact that you got victory and somebody else has defeated, you're not spiritual. The spiritual man prays Lord not only lead me but lead us not into temptation, not deliver me but deliver us from evil. And when we've got that victory we're not to take the glory to ourselves.

No. Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Thy power that keeps us from sin and it's Thy glory that's going to be enhanced when we are kept from sin not our own.

Amen Amen means so be it. It shall be so. An expression of faith.

Lord You're going to grant this prayer. What a wonderful prayer. If we meditate on it there's much we can learn concerning how all our prayers should be patterned.

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