

Praying the way Jesus Taught

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of learning to pray like Jesus taught His disciples, focusing on addressing God intimately as a loving Father in heaven. It highlights the significance of understanding God's love for us, His ability to solve all our problems, and the necessity of maintaining a clear connection with Him through confession, forgiveness, and humility in prayer.

Scripture: Luke 11:1, Romans 5:10, Matthew 6:6, Matthew 7:11, Psalms 66:18, Matthew 6:15, Matthew 5:23

Topics: "Intimacy in Prayer", "Understanding God's Love"

Description

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Transcript

There was a request that the disciples made to Jesus that all of us also must make. It says here in Luke 11 that they heard Jesus pray and when he had finished, they said, Lord, teach us to pray. See, these disciples are about 30 years old and they had heard, for many years they had heard the Pharisees pray in the synagogues.

And those were all formal dead prayers. But they heard Jesus pray, it was so different. He was talking to someone so intimately, like a close friend.

And they had never heard anyone pray like that. And they said, can you teach us to pray like that? You know, when I hear so many Christians praying today, I am not here to judge anybody. And I do not judge anyone.

But I wonder whether they are praying like Jesus prayed to the Father. In every area of our life, Jesus is our example. One of the great truths I discovered was that Jesus not only died for our sins, but he came to earth to show us how we should live.

Let me show you a verse in Romans 5. Romans 5. Romans 5. Verse 10. There are two things mentioned here. One, when we were enemies of God.

And now, second, after we are reconciled and become friends with God. When we were enemies, we were saved, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son. That is not when we were friends, we were enemies.

That is not when we were friends with God, but when we were enemies. The Bible says that we are the enemies of God. When we were enemies of God, God sent his son to reconcile us to God.

When we were enemies of God, God sent his son to reconcile us to God. That is how we received Christ and we were reconciled to God. Next when we look at it, we see in the Bible that we are saved by his life.

But here it says we shall be saved by his life. What is the difference between being saved by his death and being saved by his life? Most Christians know what it is to be saved by his death. Saved from hell.

Saved from eternal punishment. Saved by his death. But there is another salvation mentioned here.

To be saved by his life. The devil blinds people to the fact that we can be saved by his death. So the people in the world don't know that we can be saved by the death of Jesus Christ.

And once we are saved by the death, Once we are saved by the death of Jesus Christ, The devil blinds us to the fact that we can be saved by his life. My brothers and sisters, have you meditated on this verse? Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone. But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

We need to be saved by his death, we need to be saved by his life. Through his blood he saved us by his death. Through his blood he saved us by his death.

Now through the Holy Spirit he is saving us by his life. And so that means that the Holy Spirit comes to produce in us the same life that Jesus had on this earth. We know that that was the most beautiful, holy life that any man walked on this earth.

And here are the promises that that same life can come into us. So that means the life of Jesus will save me from the life of Adam which I am born with. All the bad habits we have, we have got from the life of Adam.

And even though we are born again, this life of Adam is still there in our flesh. And the Bible says the Holy Spirit is always fighting against that. But you have to cooperate with the Holy Spirit if you want to put that flesh to death.

And if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit then we will be saved by the life of Jesus. See Romans chapter 8. Tells us how we can be saved by the life of Jesus. Now this is not written to unbelievers.

Verse 12 it says, Romans 8.12 So then brethren, he is writing to believers. And what is he telling believers? Supposing the Holy Spirit is speaking to us this verse right now. This is what he is saying.

Dear brothers, verse 13. If you live according to the flesh you will die. You will die.

You remember what God told Adam, if you eat from that tree you will die. And you know what the devil said. You will not die he told Adam.

No, no, no, no, you will not die. So here also the Holy Spirit says, if you live according to the flesh you will die. And the devil is very quick to come and say, no, no, no, you are a child of God, you will not die.

But it says here, brethren, not unbelievers, brethren, if you live according to the flesh you will die. You know Adam had a choice, either I believe what God says or I believe what the devil says. And we have the same choice.

Either believe what God says in his word or believe what the devil says in our ears. So what is the next part of that verse 13? We don't have to live in the first part, we don't have to die. The second part says, if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

So the Holy Spirit is given to us to put to death these desires of Adam that are in our flesh. We can say in one sentence that the whole life of Adam is centered in myself. Everything is, how will it affect me, that's most important.

Not how it's going to affect God or other people, how will it affect me. Every decision we take is like that. If I do this, how will it help me? How will it help my family? And I take a decision.

Not how will it glorify God. How will it fulfill God's purposes if I take this decision? That's not how man thinks. The thinking of man of the life of Adam is, how will everything affect me? How can I get some benefit from this? How can I get some pleasure from this? Not how will it glorify God.

It's all centered around myself. And even after we become Christians, after we become believers, and we ask Jesus to come into our life, to forgive our sins, still our life is centered around ourself. As long as it is like that, always something will go wrong in our life.

That is the reason why so many problems come in the lives of believers. Their life is centered around themselves. That is the wrong center around which we are to live.

If you have studied geography, you know that for thousands of years, man believed that the sun goes around the earth. And if you have not studied geography, you will believe that today also. Because it looks like that, that the sun is going around the earth.

Every day. But then some people tried to find out and discovered it's not true. For many thousands of years, more than 5000 years, all men thought the earth is the center of the universe.

The stars, the sun, everything going around the earth. We are the center. And so many scientific calculations all went wrong.

You know why it was wrong? Because they had the wrong center. They thought the earth was the center, that was wrong. And then about 700 years ago, some scientists decided to find out and discovered that the earth goes around the sun.

And that the sun is the center. And all the planets are going around the sun. And when they understood that, then all the scientific calculations came correct.

That is a picture of our life also. As long as a man lives with himself as the center, everything must revolve around me. My wife must serve me.

My children must make me happy. If I go to a church, the church must serve me. And I must be happy.

Everything is me, me, me. That is the way to live a defeated, useless Christian life. Because God did not create man to be the center.

Just like he did not make the earth to be the center of the solar system. Just like he did not make the earth to be the center of the solar system. We are not supposed to be the center.

The root of all sin is when we keep ourselves as center. All the conflict in marriages and all the fight in churches is because each person wants to be the center himself. All the conflict in marriages and all the fight in churches is because each person wants to be the center himself.

Do you know what Jesus Christ came to do? Not only to forgive our sins, but to change the center in our heart. God will be the center. And all your thoughts will revolve around God as the center.

And you will not always think how is it affecting you, but how it will affect God. Now many of you have been believers for many years. Now many of you have been believers for many years.

Has this happened in your life? We have to be honest. I was born again at the age of 19. That is 59 years ago.

And for the first 16 years after being born again, And for the first 16 years after being born again, I lived a life that made me the center of my life. And I was thoroughly defeated. I was defeated in my life.

I was defeated in my marriage life. I was defeated in my thoughts. Because I was the center of my life.

I was afraid that anybody hurt me. I was always thinking what benefit can I get. Even when preaching, I want to get some honor.

Until God told me, you have to repent. Repent of what? Repent of making yourself the center of your life. And when I decided to do that, The center of my life changed from self to Jesus Christ.

That is how Jesus taught his disciples to pray. He said, Lord teach us to pray. Jesus said, prayer is not just saying things with your mouth.

I want to teach all of you to pray the way Jesus taught us to pray. That is what he taught me to pray 43 years ago. That is what he taught me to pray 43 years ago.

It is the prayer that Jesus taught in Matthew chapter 6. First of all, he told us how not to pray. He said in verse 5, do not pray like the hypocrites. Because they pray to be heard by men.

That is one of the fundamental problems in our prayer. We pray to impress people how well we can pray. If you don't believe me, When you are praying in a prayer meeting, Ask yourself, What are you thinking about? Are you thinking about God? Or are you thinking about what your fellow believers think about this prayer? Why is that? Because we are centered in ourselves.

Not what does God think of my prayer, But what do people think of my prayer? I was like that for many years. After being born again. The result was my life was defeated.

When we sing, When we sing, Do we think, Is Jesus listening to me? Or are we thinking how well we are singing? How well do the people think I am singing here? That is how much our life is centered around ourselves, Even in the church service. I will show you how well I am centered. First of all, When you are praying, Don't pray to satisfy others.

It is said in the 6th verse, You enter your room, And close the door when you pray. That is the reason Why we close our eyes when we pray. There is no law Which says you must close your eyes when you pray.

You can open your eyes and pray also. But the reason we close our eyes, Is to obey this verse which says, Close the door. Close the door to the outside world.

So in the meeting, I close my eyes, And I shut off all the people here. I want to concentrate on my heavenly father. That is the reason Why we close our eyes.

Close your door, And pray to your father in secret. And your father who sees you in secret Will reward you. Then another thing, Jesus said how not to pray.

Verse 7. When you are praying, Don't keep on repeating the same thing. You don't have to say Same thing 10 times. You may have to pray again Many times.

For example, I pray today, I may have to pray again for tomorrow, And next week keep on praying. But I don't have to repeat the same thing Now in a meaningless way. And the other thing about prayer, It says in verse 7, The gentiles think That they will be heard Because they speak many words.

That means, Don't think if you pray for one minute, God will not hear you. But if I pray for half an hour, Then God will definitely hear me. That is how all the heathen people think.

We have to learn these lessons. But many Christians have not learned These elementary lessons How not to pray. Even after being believers for many years.

Even though they read Matthew chapter 6 so many times. Why is that? Because we have this bad habit Of reading something And not thinking what is written there. Remember the old testament story Where Elijah called all the false prophets To bring fire down from heaven.

850 false prophets And Elijah on the other side. And it says they jumped and shouted And yelled and screamed for many many hours. Today also there are many Christians Who jump and shout and scream and yell For many many hours.

But if there is no answer from heaven What is the use? Then they stopped. There was no answer. All the prophets of Baal They stopped praying.

And then Elijah prayed. You read that in 1 Kings chapter 18 He prayed for one minute. One minute.

That's all. You read that prayer. Less than one minute.

And the fire fell from heaven. You see brothers what we learn there Is not how long you pray. What we see here Is not how long you pray.

How did Elijah get a prayer answered in one minute? Because his life Was centered in God. He told Ahab I live before God's face. He told Ahab I live before God's face As he wishes.

He prayed with faith. My God will answer me. He did not seek his own honor.

He sought the glory of God. So he did not need many words. So Jesus said Another reason why you don't have to use many words Is verse 8 Because your father knows what you need Even before you ask him.

If my father knows what I need Before I ask him then why should I ask him for anything? Because He wants us to have the joy Of being a co-worker With him in the work. He can do his work Without our help very easily. There are thousands of angels Who would be ready to preach the gospel All over the world If God says one word to them.

They can do a better job than us. But why don't the angels Come and preach the gospel? You know in the new testament Once there was a man called Cornelius In Acts chapter 10 Praying to God not knowing who the true God is. And God heard him And sent an angel That angel knew the whole story of the gospel.

He knew Christ died for the sins of the world. And Christ rose up. Christ rose up from the dead.

And He knew if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ You will be saved. Why didn't he tell Cornelius that? He said send for Peter. Peter will take 3-4 days to come.

Why call Peter when Angel knows the whole gospel himself? Have you ever thought about that? I am sure the angel could have preached better than Peter. Because angel was sinless. You know why? One reason.

The angel had no Personal experience Of forgiveness Through the blood of Jesus Christ. He could not say to Cornelius This is what Jesus did for me. Only Peter could say that.

And that is why God asks you And me To preach the gospel. Because we can say something The angels in heaven cannot say. I was a sinner But this is what Jesus did for me.

So God wants us To cooperate with him in his work. That's why he uses us. So then this is the prayer Jesus taught.

Verse 9 He said when you pray You pray like this. First of all Before you make any request Pray our father Who art in heaven This is how he taught us to pray. Now in the old testament They didn't pray like that.

They would pray Lord God almighty Maker of heaven and earth They could only call him Lord or God. They Nobody in the old testament Could ever look up and say Father Not John the baptist Not Elijah Nobody The first person who came to earth And called God father was Jesus Christ. Do you know what an honor that is? The old testament God was like the CEO Of a big company.

You can't walk into the manager's office You got to get permission Many people work in a factory for years Never talk to the manager even once. Never seen him But his little child Can walk into his office anytime And talk to him. We have to see what a Tremendous change happened Because Jesus died and rose again.

I can walk into God's presence and say father Because I know he loves me. So the first thing you must remember When you go to God in prayer Is that He loves you as your father. And he said if earthly fathers Know how to give good things To their children How much more your heavenly father Will give good things to those who ask him.

That he said in Matthew 7 verse 11 How much more Your heavenly father will give Good things to those who ask him. If you ask him If you don't ask him you don't get it. But the best earthly father According to this verse Is evil compared to God.

Listen to that Listen to this Matthew 7 verse 11 When you compare The best heavenly father To the father in heaven They are evil. God is so good and so loving That when you compare His goodness with a good earthly father That good earthly father Looks evil. Why did he Teach us that? So that you never doubt That God is a good God.

Because of this We never doubt That our God is a good God. Even when something happens to us Which we can't understand Or explain We all know the story of Job One day he lost his 10 children. And not only his 10 children He lost all his property and his business.

And you know what he did? He worshipped God He said God has every right He can take away. And he said My God knows everything Of what is happening to me. Even though He did not know God as a father In those days Even then he could say that.

How much more We should be able to see God As our loving father. My dear brothers and sisters If you want to learn How to pray Properly First lesson is this You must be convinced That God is a loving father Who desires the best for you In every area. There are some things We may not be able to explain We read Paul had a thorn in his flesh He didn't know why God didn't take it away.

I believe it was some type of Sickness he had. Nobody likes sickness. Paul did not like it.

He prayed and prayed and prayed Lord take it away. And God said no. Does a loving father say no When you want him to take away a sickness? Why? Why? Because he said Paul Through this sickness Something good is going to happen to you.

You are in great danger Of becoming proud. Because I am using you so mightily God says. I am using you so mightily You are writing scripture You raised the dead You raised up dead people Healed sick people Lost out demons Established churches Written scripture Caught up to heaven Caught up to heaven Which other people have not experienced And Paul You are in danger of becoming proud.

So I am going to give you a little thorn Your balloon is becoming bigger and bigger And going up So I will put a little thorn there And it will come down to the earth Then I can use you. Because God can never use a proud man. There are many people whom God has used Mightily They became proud And they fell I know many preachers Who started so well And then God used them And they became proud And then they went down I have seen that happen To so many people in my lifetime That could have happened to Paul also God pricked that balloon And it came down to the earth He got a thorn in his flesh And when he realized that He said thank you father That is a good gift you gave me A loving father Gives only good gifts And not only Paul The other whole hearted person In the bible was Timothy Timothy also had a problem Timothy also had a problem He had a stomach problem It was so bad He never got healed You read that sometime In 1 Timothy 5.23 Frequently he was having stomach problem And Paul prayed for him I am sure Not healed He again laid hands on him Not healed This man who is the most Whole hearted co worker of Paul He also had a thorn in his flesh Frequent stomach problem If you have frequent stomach problem You know what a problem that can be for you And you pray and pray Get some man of God to pray for you Nothing happens And finally Paul said Take some medicine For some reason God is not healing you I think I know the reason So that Timothy does not become proud Because Paul said This is my best co worker Sometimes a loving father Does some things which we can't understand But it is for our good So when we come to God in prayer The first thing we have to bear in mind He is my father No Before I understood this fully Whenever I prayed I would say Lord Oh God Oh Lord Then I said Jesus said pray father So Now when I pray I say father He is my Lord Sometimes I may say Lord But most of the time I say

father You ask yourself When you pray What is the first word coming out of your mouth You call him father Daddy That's how we are supposed to pray You can say but isn't he Lord Right He is Lord But if you always call him Lord There is something wrong There is something wrong We must call him father He wants us to know him intimately So if you are really born again Develop the habit of praying saying father Daddy That is how our children call us If my son came to me And said Mr. Poonen can I talk to you I say why are you talking to me like that And he said isn't that your name Yeah that is my name But you don't call me Mr. Poonen I will think he is angry with me He calls me daddy And now God is my father I call him daddy My son doesn't have to be perfect To call me daddy I don't have to be perfect To call God my father Learn to obey what Jesus said Call him father And secondly Our father who art in heaven One who has got control of the whole universe Let me come to pray The first thing you need to learn Is how much God loves you The second thing you need to learn Is that you are praying to someone Who can solve every problem you ever had Any problem you have He can solve it Because he is not just my father He is my father who is in heaven So there are two things He is my father So he loves me so much He is in heaven So he can do everything These are the two things On which my faith is based Nobody in the old testament Could pray like that The bible says The holy spirit comes into our hearts And cries out daddy, abba I find that many believers Have not developed this simple habit This is elementary kindergarten lesson For the christians But we have forgotten it But we have forgotten it When we come to prayer With so much of doubt Does God care for me Does he know what problem I am going through now Does he know what problem I am facing in my family I will tell you Pray our father Who is in heaven But make sure Your conscience is clear Because it says in psalm 66 Psalm 66 Verse 18 If there is sin in my heart God will not hear me Very important verse Psalm 66 verse 18 Psalm 66 verse 18 If there is sin in my heart God will not hear me If we are not able to find The signal in the new When we see it We will know that It could be written It could be written But we are not able to find it If there is no sign If we pray to God It will not go Why did we go out There is some sin in our life Something we have not confessed Something you have not said right Or Somebody you have not forgiven Matthew 6 verse 15 If you don't forgive others Your heavenly father won't forgive you If you don't forgive others Your heavenly father won't forgive you Like the prophets of Baal Even if we call out Father father father Jesus Christ says When you come to pray If you see that Your brother has some fault Matthew 5 verse 23 The verse says If you come to your servant To offer your offering If you see that your brother has some fault If he has some fault If he has some fault In the verse before that, he says that he calls his brother as Vinan.

So you hurt him and then you come to pray. Maybe we can say such things and then pray. As Jesus said in verse 24, leave your offering there.

God won't accept it. Jesus Christ says in verse 24, leave your offering and go and reconcile with your brother. So then no use saying our father, our father, our father.

He is not listening. When we call our father as father, our father won't listen to us. It is as if there is no connection between us.

If we keep on talking without any connection, then no one will listen to us. Our God, the God who hears our prayers. The connection is gone, but we are praying.

Jesus accomplished so many things on earth because he prayed. He was teaching us how to pray. Let's learn that lesson.

Make sure the connection between you and God is always clear. And that is so easy. If we confess our sins, he is faithful to cleanse it.

Humble yourself and ask forgiveness from somebody you hurt. Humble yourself and forgive that person who hurt you. Because God has forgiven us so much.

What a wonderful thing it is to have an open phone connection to God all the time. Imagine if you could have an open phone connection with the sheikh of this emirate. Anytime you call him, he hears.

What is your problem? I'll solve it. This is even better than that. That you have an open phone connection with the ruler of this universe.

Let's believe that. Many of your problems will be solved. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, Please help us to make use of our privilege in Jesus Christ our Lord. We have missed so much. We don't want to miss anymore.

We pray in Jesus name.

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