

Feb. 7, 1971 P.M. WXRI

A PATTERN OF PRAYER

Matt. 6:8-13

INTRODUCTION

The civilized world is now talking about the exploration of space. I never read all the details of just why we need a man on the moon, but we can only think about the possibilities that are there.

Tonight we talk about the exploration of space. I want us to get an understanding of the subject of prayer. Last Sunday night we studied this matter on the necessity of prayer, and the reaction that our Lord calls attention to people of those who stop on the street corner or pray in open places. In India at the hour of prayer, the people are called together, no chairs, just a marble floor. They leave their shoes at the door and line up their mats in rows and there is no noise. All is silent, as they go into meditation. Now there is a reaction to that type of praying or piety.

Most Christians we observe have a weak prayer life, or some do not pray at all. How often do you pray? The question was asked a group of pastors. And of course many ~~had~~ had to bow their heads in shame. Not enough, many of them said. The greatest weakness among Christian people is at this point. We will work a little bit, we will give some, but I fear the cry of our prayer is not We are uncomfortable when we come into the presence of God alone. If we are going

to be spiritual athletes, not only willing to serve, but want to do what Jesus wants us to do.

Jesus here is like a *Dentist*. He touches the nerve. We need to let the Holy Spirit probe us about the matter of prayer in V. 8. "By ye not therefore like them."

It is like a prescription. The doctor gives you a prescription. You put it inside your pocketbook. Now you are sick enough to go to the doctor. You have paid him for the visit, but you never have the prescription filled. You never use it. This is very much like prayer. Now this is what the sermon on the mount is all about. We are going to look at the prayer life of Jesus.

More than ~~one-tenth~~ one-tenth of the Sermon on the Mount in the middle of it, is given to prayer. We study his life. "He went out ~~at~~ a great while before day and prayed." The ~~verses~~ verses preceding the pattern prayer lead us in preparation for prayer, for prayer is essential to our communion with God.

He gives us some principles that will help us to get ready to pray. *

^{1st} In V. 5 - sincerity. "When you pray, you shall not be like the

hypocrites, in public." At stated times, and there was the temptation to do this for show.

V. 6 ^{2nd} Second, in secrecy. Matt. 6, "Having shut the door, go into the closet

into the ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ inner room" - where there was no traffic and you were locked in. You can have secret in public worship as well as in private, as well as in your home. We are tempted to have trouble with this sort of prayer. The idea is to shut the world out, to get rid of the noise that is on the inside of your head, and that which is on the outside.

They were on the street corners with plenty of spectators. Now, Jesus said they got their reward openly. They got their reward of men.

1.7 ³⁻² Third, the preparation through simplicity. V. 7 - "Don't use vain repetitions, requests and petitions were not to be empty and idle and ruinous as the heathen prayed. Don't babble. Some groups chant. Some groups use vain repetitions of everyone praying in a different way at the same time.

Now I think prayer - a person ought to have more than one prayer. As one person said, she had one prayer and that was enough for her life. That's like the Pharisees. You know some people by their one prayer. They can give you a prayer written on paper. And they say this over and over again. As somebody said, "It is like a prayer on ice. Always ready to use." So Jesus said it ought to be with simplicity.

A woman came to Moody and asked him to pray for her son. Here's the prayer he prayed: ("O Lord, this boy. Amen.") He said all that was needed to be said.

The Lord did not need a briefing on the daily situation. I read about a man once who prayed, "O Lord, as thou didst read this morning's newspaper, thou dost know the ways of a certain church."

V. 8 ^{4/2} Fourth, serenity. In V. 8. "Your father knows the things you have need of." As has just been remarked, we do not pray to supply God with information, about our wants or our needs. We ~~prx~~ pray because it enables us to enter into communion with him. Now don't pack up and leave. Now this is what God wants us to do, like a couple in middle age. They don't pack up and leave. They continue to hold hands. And you like the sight of it. This is what God wants us to do. There ought to be sincerity, secrecy, simplicity, and serenity in prayer.

We come now to discover this main teaching on prayer. A pattern for prayer. We have concluded the preparation.

V. 9 - after this manner pray ye. Here is a command. And it implies that all God's children are to be praying children. The smallest babe in Christ must learn how to pray. This is the way to begin the Christian life. He says now, prx pray after this manner. Here is the (invocation) to prayer. One who ~~xxx~~ ^{is} invoked in this prayer is a father. "Our Father, which art in heaven."

Now, prayer is beyond any question, the highest activity of the human soul. Man is at his highest when he gets on his knees and comes face to face with God.

A man engaged in prayer is the really ultimate test of his spiritual condition. Everything we do in the Christian life is easier than prayer. We talked about alms giving last week. And we can do that with greater ease than we can come to God and speak to him. When a man comes in secret, in private, and he is alone with God, and there is no congregation with him, ~~★~~ he is by himself. And this is where we discover some of the great saints of God have been developed. These disciples no doubt had asked Jesus on several occasions, "Lord, teach us how to pray." Have you ever felt that? Have you ever been satisfied with your prayer life, and longed to know more about it? ~~xHxx~~ There is no question that will help your life any more than perfect instruction in how to pray.

Now, this is a pattern prayer. "After this manner." And you have to understand that this is a matter in principle. Nothing is left out of this prayer. It is all-inclusive. It is not like our prayers, but it's very simple.

Now there is another thing about this pattern prayer. It is meant for Christians, for only Christians can really pray this prayer and say, "Our Father." If you do not know Christ, you cannot pray this prayer.

Now there are certain things you are going to notice. You are not going to rush into prayer and start on an impulse, and you are going to bear in mind that you are going to follow certain principles.

He is going to tell us how to pray and what to pray for. The vital importance of the right approach. Someone will say, "You know, I prayed and prayed and nothing happened." Do you seem to get satisfaction? Maybe most of your trouble is the wrong approach. We seem to be self-centered in our prayers. We drop down on our knees ~~to~~ before God and we think only of ourselves and our ~~own~~ troubles, and we start talking ~~about~~ about them at once. Now the Lord is going to teach us that this is not the way to approach God.

The first step is to perhaps after this manner close your mouth, be ~~quite~~ quiet when you come into his presence, and offer an ^{invocation} invocation. ~~xxx~~ "Our Father." Now this shows a relationship. Now there are people who believe that prayer is a good thing because it does them good. But that of course is not prayer as Jesus is teaching us here. He is teaching us to forget ourselves. One's prayer should be very brief and pointed. That is something that he is going to teach us. We are not to have vain repetitions. We start with the matter of worship.

Daniel the prophet was very perplexed. But when he prays to God he starts off by praise. Jeremiah the prophet, when he was confronted with problems did not rush into God's presence, but worshipped him first.

Paul, in writing to the Phillipians 4: v. 6, "In nothing be anxious,

but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." He starts off with an invocation before he begins to think about his petitions. Now I know that this doctrine is unpopular, but this is the doctrine of the Bible. And this is the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. You have to be a Christian to come and pray this prayer, 'Our Father.'

This is the matter of approach. It is like Princess Margaret who mentions her father, and she refers to him as "His Majesty." She prefers not to use the familiarity, but the transcending note. And this is the thing that we should do in the matter of prayer as we come as brothers and sisters in Christ, we come to our father. He taught them that this was the way he prayed. Now this is never intended to be just a ritual. But it is to have meaning. And you cannot pray that, I repeat, unless you are a Christian, for Jesus was giving this to his disciples. Now the universal fatherhood of God may sound good, and contain a noble ideal, but you cannot find it in the teaching of the word. We ~~get~~ become children by a birth, by the new birth.

✓ "Which art in heaven." He was concerned with the glory of the Father. The phrase speaks of the Father's perfection and His wisdom and His love and His power. "In heaven" - this is the one, the changeless one, from the beginning to

the end.

What a transformation is taking place here in this prayer as he lifts up the high and noble idea of God. A father who is near, but transcends! who is personal, but is high and lofty and dwells in the holy place.

v. 10 - you will note that these three petitions are in reference to God.

v. 9 - First, "Hallowed be Thy name." Now this is the pattern of prayer.

It is not our wants, our wishes, but it ~~x~~ is all about the name of God. This reflects the practice of Jesus. ~~x What God is x~~ What God is, and this petition still requires that God's name be not blasphemed. But is enables us to exalt and revere his name. It means to make holy the name of God. Reverence to the one to whom you are going to pray. You are in the chamber in the audience of the King. Can you pray this prayer?

Too often, I hear people approach God like he is the "man upstairs". Now familiarity with deity is never conducive to prayer.

You would not approach the (President) of the United States in such a flippant manner. Why then would you presume on the King of Kings - that you ought to have due respect for him?

Certain (modern translations) have substituted you and your for thee and

to me. They are the language of our religion, familiar to every worshipper.

Now you may call me old-fashioned if you will. I do not so regard the use of words associated with a reverent approach to God.

What is your attitude toward the name of God? Think of the ancient Jew in his reverence to the name of Jehovah. His concept of diety. They would not even write it with quill or ink previously used. They used a new quill and fresh ink to write it. And then used them no more. They refused to pronounce it.

Now that is an extreme attitude perhaps, but at the other extreme, we have the

common practice of using the names for diety only in a profane manner. If I should have to choose one ~~xxx~~ attitude or the other, I certainly would not choose some of the modern approaches and call God a "wonderful doll."
~~ex~~

We are in the presence of God, he is our Father, and whatever we may say about the Jews ~~about them~~ in the Old Testament times, however great their failures, there was one respect that they are most commendable, and that is they sensed the majesty and the greatness and the holiness of God. Every name of God denoted something and represented honor among men. As God had revealed himself to Israel Elo ulohin, which means his strength, his power, his might, his dominion,

Later he reveals his great and wonderful name, Jehovah which really meant,

"the self-existent one" "the eternally self-existent", as God describes himself.

And another revelation "The Lord will provide" - "Jehovah jireh". Another

revelation "The Lord that healeth." - "Jehovah rapah." "The Lord our banner."

"Jehovah nissi." "The Lord our peace." - "Jehova, shalom." "The Lord our

shepherd." - Jehova ra-ah." "The Lord our righteousness." "The Lord is present."

These various terms were used as God was revealing himself. Now Jesus our Lord

is teaching us the proper way to approach this God, Even in a due sense of greatness

and might and majesty sometimes listen to men or hear about God, what He looks like,

and glibly use terms in reference to Him. The ancient Jews ~~havexxxxx~~ never done this.

~~ThexxxxxxJews~~ He would talk about the Almighty, the Great One, and he would take

his shoes off his feet whenever he heard the name. What a strange idea this is in

the matter of prayer. If we are going to learn how to pray Jesus said, You must

come and hallow this name, and pray ~~thexxxxx~~ "thy kingdom come". Why do men not

bow before this sacred name? The answer is, "Of course because of sin." There is

another kingdom, the kingdom of satan, the kingdom of darkness.

It is in prayer we indicate we are ~~ixx~~ looking forward to the coming

of this kingdom. II Peter 3:1 and 2.

The kingdom means "Let the righteous triumph over the unrighteousness."

We are praying that the kingdom to the individual is not an individual end. It is only the beginning, but this kingdom will come.

Another thing, the kingdom also has a future event to it. The kingdom Christ said was at hand. And this is important. And Jesus said, "Pray that thy kingdom come. Now this is no easy-going prayer. This is a real petition addressing God, reminding God that you are interested first of all in bringing in his kingdom. And Jesus telling us to pray so that you are going to follow the right pattern. As a Christian, your first concern will not be in ~~xxx~~ terms of this earth but will be in ~~the~~ terms of his kingdom and the role of God in the hearts of man. This comes before you pray for your daily bread, or pray about your problems. You cannot pray any at all unless you pray this. John Ruskin said, "If you do not wish for his kingdom, don't pray for ~~xxx~~ it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it. You must work for it."

10^e The third petition has reference to (God's will.) "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Pray that God's will might be done, and this was the thing that Jesus often prayed, ~~x~~ even in the face of going to the cross, that he might be enabled to do the will ~~xx~~ of God and bring all of his will in harmony with God's will. In the Garden ~~x~~ of Gesthemane, Jesus prayed such a prayer. Are you

willing for God's will to be done in your life absolutely? If not, beware how you pray this ~~prayer~~ petition. It cannot be done on earth until it is done in your heart. If this is to be true, some things will have to be ~~put~~ put out of your life and ~~some~~ other things will have to be brought in. It may mean that one of your children may have to preach the gospel in a faraway land. Are you willing? Now (in heaven), God's will is done without reservation. And Jesus is praying for his ~~disciples~~ disciples to examine their own motives as they learn the lesson of prayer. He says, "Thy will be done." Do you have a desire for this to be done in the souls of men? What is it that troubles and worries our minds? It is the manifestation of sin in the world.

That is, prayer is not like calling a bell-hop to come in and satisfy our appetites. The blessed members of the kingdom of Christ are going to strive to bring in the wonderful kingdom of our God here in this world.

Fourth, the petition for our daily bread, V. 11. We are encouraged now to ask things for ourselves. And this will be carried out as we bring in God's glory and God's kingdom. (Human needs) - our need for bread, our need for forgiveness, our need for victory will now follow. So he says pray to the Heavenly Father for the material necessities of life and ask him for your daily bread. Now this could be rendered for the coming day or for what is needful or sufficient.

The request is not for bread to cover many days in advance. It is to cover each day as it takes place. It reminds of man of his limitations, and of his dependence upon God. It curbs human greed and ambition, and man is not instructed to ask for luxury, but merely for bread for the day. We are alive. We must be kept alive. And this is dealing with life in a physical sense.

This principle was enforced in the Old Testament in the controlling and the laying down of the law, that they were to collect enough manna for one day's use morning by morning. Ex. 16:15. A day's portion every day.

The same principle is in II Kings 25:30. Every day a ~~portion~~ portion every day of his life. This is the petition related to the Christian and his daily need for living bread.

Sometimes we are over-anxious concerning the temporal needs. We think about the needs of tomorrow and so on in years to come. Think how the Heavenly Father has met your needs yesterday. Will he fail you tomorrow? So the situation is that we ask for the daily bread for today. Now, this really makes sense, when you think of a woman's grocery list or a soldier's daily rations. Buy enough food for today and tomorrow.

David in his old age looked back and he said, "I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread." The promises of God never fail.

Dr. A. B. Simpson gave a great illustration on this. "Many times," he said, "we think that God as our Father, gives us the great gift of grace in one great lump sum, and that having received it, we just go on living on it. But he said, it is not like that. That would be very dangerous for us. If God just gave us his glorious gift of grace in one lump sum, we would be in danger of enjoying the gift and forgetting all about God. No, the Father likes the child to come and speak to Him, and this is the way God is doing," says Dr. Simpson. "Exactly through our Father who puts a deposit for his son in the bank and the son can only receive a supply each time by writing a check. When there is time for another installment, he can write another check." And so we are dependent upon God, even for our daily bread. We cannot live without him for one day. All is in his hands.

V. 12 - the fifth petition, we need for forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts," - or tresspasses - "as we forgive our debtors." There are two main points in this petition. The word debt is not only an accurate wording, but it is a description of the tragic significance of our sins. Here in this prayer, this word means more than just an ordinary debt. It refers to a moral debt which is incurred with God when we sin. John's definition of sin - "Sin is lawlessness." I. John 3:4. Breaking God's law. Every sin is a blow at the heart of God.

The second point in this petition is that of getting forgiveness from

God, and that is not an easy matter.) God's forgiveness is conditioned it seems. If we wish to be forgiven, we must be forgiving. No one who really does not have this in his heart, cannot pray the Lord's prayer at ~~ix~~ this point.

"Forgive us as we forgive our debtors." Nursing our wrongs, keeping it in memory, is morally wrong, he says. And this is the ground of God's forgiveness.

Now these are moral and ~~ps~~ spiritual debts. Beware before you pray this prayer.

If you exact revenge, you must expect revenge. That is what you assume, and this prayer would be frightening. Indeed, we should pray that God will withhold His wrath until we have obtained the right attitude toward others to obtain His mercy.

We know that we have been forgiven; we need forgiveness of other failures which we have. Now, this is not a prayer for anybody as he has stated in the beginning.

It means that the proof that you and I are forgiven, is that we have forgiven others. ~~xix~~ If we think that our sins are forgiven by God and we refuse to forgive someone else, we are making a mistake. We have never been forgiven.

If we have been forgiven through the shed ~~ix~~ blood of Christ, then we must forgive others. A man cannot really help himself - if he really knows Christ, he really will be a forgiving person.

13

The sixth petition, V. 13, concerns our temptation. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Or the Evil One. In a sense we are taught

to pray that we will not be brought into circumstances where we are going to be tempted and tried in this way. We may understand the word which originated in evil passions and desires and ~~ps~~ springs up in our fallen nature. Temptation may come forth from those things, although not even in themselves may be, if allowed to master us, will take us into bondage. Temptation may be understood. It implies simply to try or to test. For example, God did prove Abraham, tested the strength of his faith. God proved Phillip. That was not evil, but righteous trial. But ~~here~~ is a prayer to be delivered from evil, that the Evil One not triumph over us. Why pray for deliverance from temptation? Bring you not into these trials. We must remember that we shall never reach the point where these temptation will completely disappear. That is why we need to pray. We need to remember that there are stumbling blocks in the way, and let him that thinketh he standeth do two things: Let him take heed to himself, and let ~~in~~ him pray. Our very privileges and opportunities may become temptations. We need to pray to be kept from the Evil One. Do not allow us to be led into temptation.

13.B Jesus knew that we needed to pray for this because of the wonderful reason of maintaining our fellowship with God that it may not be ~~ga~~ broken.

The (Doxology) - this is the closing part of the Lord's prayer." For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." The prayer began

with God and it closes, it returns to God.

In the Doxology, we discover, "Thine is the kingdom" - ~~it~~ directs our thoughts to God, the Son, who rules in the kingdom. "Thine is the power" - directs our thoughts to the Holy Spirit. "Thine is the glory" - directs our thoughts to the Heavenly Father.

So these three great declarations the Christian can have faith in.

First, "Thine is the kingdom" - ~~it~~ faith in the kingdom. "Thy kingdom come." That the King of Kings will somehow soon conquer.

Second, "Thine is the power." The meaning of the Holy Spirit which gives inward dynamic power for daily living.

Third, "Thine is the glory" may mean the excellence and the glory that is ascribed ~~it~~ to the Father. *Our Home Song Seven Nights (To God & The Glory)*

All three of these the Christian ~~explains~~ exclaims "Amen." That is to say "Verily, verily, surely" - to the declaration. The prayer starts with the Father. This prayer does not ignore man's daily needs, man's sins, man's trials, yet its primary concern - God's glory, God's kingdom, and God's will.

Prayer is your means to contacting God. The redeemed person is like one who has inherited a vast fortune of oil lands. But they ~~are~~ need work. The oil lands must be worked, if they are to produce. The same is true in the matter

of prayer. What does this prayer teach? The ~~Duk~~ Duke of Wellington said, the Lord's prayer contains the sum total of religion and morals." G. Campbell Morgan said, :"He reminds us that it teaches about God,"our Heavenly Father who is in heaven and on ~~x~~ his throne."

I trust that this study has helped you in the matter of discovering a true pattern for prayer. I close with this poem.

"Seek Him in the Morning."

"I met God in the morning, when my day was at its best,

And His presence came like sunrise like a glory in my breast.

All day long the presence lingered, all day long He stayed with me.

And we sailed in perfect calmness o'er a troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered, ~~an~~ other ships were sore distressed,

But the winds that seemed to drive them, brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings with a keen remorse of mind

When I too had loosed the moorings with thy presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret learned from many a troubled way.

You must seek Him in the morning if you want Him through the day."