

The Lord's Prayer

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Good morning! Today I want to talk to you about the most famous prayer in the Bible. So how many of you know this passage called, "The Lord's Prayer"? Many churches recite this passage every Sunday in church. In fact a Japanese church that we attended here in Japan recited the Lord's Prayer every week. Not everyone is familiar with this prayer. Let me tell you this story. These two men were out walking one day and one of the guys was a pretty good guy. He went to church every week and seemed to be a pretty religious man. His friend challenged him and he said, "If you are so religious then let me here you quote the Lord's Prayer. I bet you \$10 that you can't do it." His friend said, "Ok and this is what he quoted, 'Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep and if die before I wake I pray the Lord my soul to take.'" The first guy stops and says, "That is pretty amazing" and hands his friend \$10 and says "I didn't think you could do it." So what this guy had done was recited a prayer he had learned as a child. This is a prayer that has been around since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and many people will pray this prayer even if they are not Christians as they think it is a nice prayer to pray before bed and he had confused it with the Lord's Prayer. His friend still thought he had said the Lord's Prayer because he didn't know any better either.

The Lord's Prayer is found in two different places in the Bible. The one that most people recognize is the one found in Matthew 6:9-13. The other passage is found in Luke 11:1-4 and that is the passage that we are going to look at today. Let me read **Luke 11:1-4**, "Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."<sup>2</sup> And he said to them, "When you pray, say:"Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread <sup>4</sup> and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

If there is something that you want to know and you really don't have any idea on the subject matter it is usually best to consult an expert. The problem is that sometimes people think they are experts when they really aren't.

There is a famous actress named Billy Burke. She is most famous for playing Glenda the good witch in the Wizard of Oz. She was enjoying a trans-Atlantic Ocean trip one time when she noticed that a gentleman at a table next to her was suffering a bad cold. She asked him, "Are you uncomfortable?" The man nodded yes that he was uncomfortable and not feeling well. She said, "I will tell you what you need to do. You need to go back to your room and drink lots of orange juice. Take 2 aspirin. Cover yourself with all the blankets that you can find. You need to sweat the cold out. I know what I am talking about. I'm Billy Burke from Hollywood." Then the man looked at her and smiled and introduced himself in return. He said, "Thanks, I'm Doctor Mayo

from the Mayo Clinic.” If you don’t know the Mayo Clinic is one of the leading hospitals in America that was started by this man. He wasn’t in need of an ‘expert’s’ opinion in how to treat a cold. He was well aware of what he needed to do to treat his cold.

The disciples, they needed an expert. They had spent a lot of time with Jesus and noticed that he spent a lot of time in prayer. He would often go off alone and spend time in prayer. On occasion he would invite the disciples to go along with him. Later near the time of his crucifixion he invited the disciples to pray with him. The disciples wanted to know how to pray so they came to Jesus in this first verse of this chapter and asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. I can just see it happening as Jesus is out with his disciples one day and the disciples were talking amongst themselves trying to decide who would ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. You know maybe Peter was tapping James on the shoulder telling him to go ask Jesus and James was like, “No, John, you go do it.” I don’t know how they decided who would ask Jesus but the Bible tells us that one of the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Teach us to pray.” This is the only time in the gospels where the disciples asked Jesus to teach them anything. They didn’t ask to be taught how to perform miracles. They didn’t ask how they could have a long life. They asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. They had learned over time that they had spent with Jesus that prayer was important. They knew that it needed to be an integral part of their life. So they went to the expert on prayer. Jesus teaches them a prayer. He taught them a prayer not so that they would memorize it and just repeat it. This prayer was given to the disciples and to us as a pattern of how we should pray. Many times it happens in the church where this prayer is used and it becomes something that we just say or do every week in the service. Jesus did not intend for that to be the case.

Let’s read what Jesus had to say in **Matthew 6:5-8**,<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”<sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.<sup>7</sup> “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.”<sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

You see in these verses Jesus warns us to not pray with vain repetition. It tells us not to just pray empty phrases. You see that is what happens when we just repeat a prayer to just repeat a prayer. It is just empty and our heart is not in it. As Christians prayer is not optional. Jesus tells the disciples here in Luke 11:2 “when you pray.” Jesus is clearly commanding the disciples to pray and that includes us as followers of Jesus. Now for the next few minutes I would like to take a closer look of the Lord’s Prayer.

The first word of the prayer is **Father**. Jesus most of the time addressed his prayers to Father. You see that we are praying to a personal, loving Father. God is not just sitting off in a corner not caring about us. When we become a Christian we are adopted into his family and he wants us to call Him, Father. Over 70 times in the New

Testament Jesus addresses God as Father in his prayer time so he is clearly establishing a Father/ son relationship. The only time that Jesus did not address God as Father was when he was on the cross and he prayed, "My God, My God why have you forsaken me?" The sin that he had taken upon himself had separated him from the Father. It had broken that relationship. When we pray we should address the prayers to our Father. The Aramaic word for father is 'Abba' which means 'daddy'. This shows us that there is a deep intimate relationship with God and our childlike faith that we have in Him. By addressing God as Father, it also means that we do not have to use big, fancy church words when we pray. You know when you talk to your earthly father do you use big, fancy words that have no meaning in the real world? No, you just talk to him like he is your dad. You have a regular conversation. That is what God wants from us when we pray. He just wants us to talk to Him. I want to encourage you to start praying to your heavenly Father and begin to just talk with Him. Don't be worried about using proper words or saying the right things because you know there is the right or wrong thing to say. God is more just interested in talking with Him.

After Jesus tells the disciples to pray to the Father the next phrase he uses is, "Hallowed be your name." So first Jesus tells us that we need to see God as the Father but then he tells us that we need to see God as holy. This phrase 'hallowed be your name' can be confusing to understand. During my research for this message I read what this one pastor had to say about this phrase, 'hallowed be your name'. This is what he said, "Praying hallowed be your name is a safe guard against self-seeking prayer." In other words, when we pray these words or we have this attitude in our prayer time we make God the priority in our prayer. Instead of making prayer all about ourselves or our requests, we are making prayer about God. So what does it exactly mean to hallow God's name? In the Bible there are two meanings for the word hallow. The first meaning is to make an ordinary thing, extraordinary by bringing it into contact with something extraordinary. This is how we are made holy as Christians. We are just ordinary people but when we become Christians we are brought into contact with God who is extraordinary and he is holy so we become holy via that contact with God. The second meaning for the word hallow is to treat something or someone as set apart or special. God's name and God, Himself, are special and they need to be set apart and treated with holiness and respect. By hallowing His name, we can guard against using God's name in vain or we can guard against his name flippantly or irreverently. God's name is holy and it needs to be treated that way. That is why I get disturbed and upset when I hear Christians say OMG or "Oh My God" because they have lost the sense of God's holiness when they throw His name around as an expression of surprise. Hallowing God's name though is more than just saying and expressing God's holiness during our prayer time. We need to live our life in a way that reflects His holiness. We need to live our life in complete obedience so that we can be the vehicle that takes his holiness into the world. My question for you is when you are praying are we approaching God with the appropriate reverence that He deserves? Are we honoring God with the way that we live?

The next phrase is 'Your kingdom come'. There is a key word in this phrase. I'm going to take a quick survey. By show of hands, who thinks the key word is

'your'? Who thinks it is 'kingdom'? Who thinks it is 'come'? The key word is "your" so those of you who got that right your reward will be waiting for you in heaven. Notice that we are to pray for His kingdom to come not ours. In other words praying is not asking God to do 'my will'. We are not attempting to force God to do things the way we want them done. It is me lining my life up with His will. Pray is not us letting God know about our plans for our life. It is not me telling God, "Hey, I'm doing this on Tuesday and you are invited to come along if you want." Instead of us telling God our plans, prayer is calling for God to fulfill His own plan in our life. A lot of times people get confused by the word 'kingdom' in this passage. They hear the word kingdom and they have these images in their mind of a castle and a piece of property that the king owns. Jesus does have a kingdom and his kingdom is coming but the kingdom in this passage does not refer to an earthly kingdom. In Matthew 6:10 after Jesus says, "your kingdom come," he says, "your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This whole idea of the kingdom and God's will is the idea of God reigning and ruling in our life. In other words when we pray we are praying that God would reign and rule in our hearts and lives. We are putting Him first in our life and in our heart. We are seeking His pleasure and joy before our own pleasure and joy. I want to encourage you this week when you pray that you will pray for God's will to be done in your life and that you would soften your heart so that you are ready to do His will. I want to encourage you also to pray that God will reign and rule in the hearts of those who do not yet know Him. I firmly believe that if we put God first in our prayer life than He will become first in our daily life.

Now we come to Luke 11:3 and at this point in the prayer there is a shift in the focus. The first half of the prayer is solely focused on God. In the second half of the prayer the emphasis is shifted to the emphasis on us. It is only after giving God his due credit and acknowledging His holiness and asking for His will to be done in our life do we begin to pray for our needs. This is what Jesus tells us to pray.

"Give us each day our daily bread." Daily bread does not just mean food although at the time that Jesus prayed this prayer the people who have understood it to mean their actual daily bread because they had to go buy bread every day. This does include our food that we are praying for God to provide our food but more importantly God wants us to ask Him to provide for our daily needs. When we pray and ask God to give us our daily bread we are acknowledging that we are dependent on Him and that we need Him to provide for us. We are not trying to do it all on our own strength. We are not relying on our own skills and job to provide. Maybe that is how God is providing for you is through your skills or through your job but we need to acknowledge that God has provided that job for us that provides for you. That job that provides for you was provided by God. When we ask God to provide our needs we are showing Him that we trust Him to take care of us every day. We are affirming in our life that He will take care of us every day. Do we actually do this? Do we actually take the time to pray for our daily needs? Or are we more concerned about praying for our daily wants? Are we taking the time to ask God to meet our physical needs or at the very least are we taking the time to say thanks for the things He does provide for us? God wants us every day to ask Him to provide the resources to pay our electric bill.

He doesn't want us to wait until the day the electric bill due and we find out we have no money to pay the bill and we begin to beg God to miraculously pay for the bill.

I want you to take a deep look into your heart and ask yourself, "Do I really ask God to provide for me and to take care of me? Do I really trust God to provide for me?" If we don't ask God to provide for our daily needs, then we run into this little problem called pride. In our pride we begin to think we can do it all on our own. We begin to think and believe that we don't need God to take care of the 'little things'. We don't feel that we need to ask God to provide our food, our shelter, or clothing. We begin to believe that we can take care of all those things on our own. It is basically us telling God that we will take care of these things over here on our own and you can spend your time worrying about the big important things in the world. What happens with this mentality is that over time it slowly erodes our trust in God and we get to the point where we don't think we need Him at all in our life. Begin to pray and ask God to provide your daily needs. He is waiting to be asked.

What is the single greatest need in the world today? I will give you a hint. It is the same thing that it has always been. It's not hunger. It's not war. It's not the need for more jobs or higher paying jobs. It's not homes for the homeless. The single greatest need in the world is the forgiveness of sins. This is why Jesus says in **Luke 11:4**, "And forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us." After we ask God to provide for our daily needs, we need to ask him for forgiveness of our sins. Only God can forgive our sin. Only God can grant us forgiveness and pardon us from the penalty of our sin. Only God can wash our hearts and make them clean and new. God offers forgiveness to us but we need to ask for us. Every day we commit sin. Even though we are Christians we fall short and we sin. Jesus is telling us here that every day we need to confess our sins to God. If we don't confess our sins to God, they begin to pile up they become a barrier between God and us and begin to block our relationship with Him. We can't tear that barrier down. Try as hard as we want that barrier is still going to be there until we tell God we are sorry. The barrier is only torn down by forgiveness. The forgiveness only comes from God when we ask. **1 John 1:9**, "9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In this verse John is telling us that God is faithful to forgive. I understand that for some Christians this concept is hard to understand. When we become a Christian our sins are forgiven but that doesn't make us perfect. There are still areas that we will struggle with in our life that we will fall in sin. God is gracious and is willing to forgive us when we ask Him. It does not mean that we lose our salvation when we sin. What it means is that we have damage our relationship with God and that it needs to be fixed.

What you to notice what Jesus says next. After we ask God to forgive us, he says that we are to forgive others. We can't just expect to receive forgiveness without giving it. Receiving God's forgiveness requires that we forgive others. It is wrong for us to ask God to forgive us if we are unwilling to give forgiveness to others. Jesus tells a parable in Matthew 18:21-35. I'm not going to take the time read the whole passage you can read it on your own later. In this parable it talks about a king that was owed a lot of money from one of his servants. In modern day money, it would be equivalent to about 720 billion yen. He owed more money than he could ever possibly

repay. The king was going to have him sold, and his wife, and his children. The servant begs for forgiveness and the king not only forgives him but he wipes out the debt completely. The very next day the same servant went and he found another servant that owed him pennies compared to what he had owed the king and he began to choke this servant and yell at him to pay what he owed. The other servant begged for forgiveness but the forgiven servant refused to forgive his fellow servant and had him thrown into jail. Jesus is telling us that we need to forgive others. Is there someone here today that you need to forgive? I would encourage you to find them after church and forgive them. Take a minute and look at your life. Do you need to forgive someone? Or maybe you have wronged someone and you need to go and ask them to forgive you. Let today be a day of forgiveness in your life.

And the final phrase of the prayer is "and lead us not into temptation." We need to realize that we live in a fallen world. There are forces at work that are trying to hinder our relationship with God. These can come in the form of temptation. We are not strong enough in our own power to fight against temptation. We need God to protect us from temptation. God really wants to help us out in our times of trial and temptation. That is why he tells us in **1 Corinthians 10:13**, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." God will provide a way out for our temptation. That idea should be a relief for us. God is going to provide a way out for the temptation we are in. Many times we face temptation and we don't know how to resist it. What we need to do is open our eyes and look for the way that God has provided our means of escape. The question is are we tuned into Him enough to see that provision? There is always an option. It is not always a sinful option. There is a morally right option. Be tuned in enough to know what is right and what is wrong. Pray for his protection. We need to keep up our guard by putting on his armor.

In conclusion, I want to encourage you to use this prayer as a pattern for your prayer time. I want you to communicate with your heavenly Father. I want you to allow His will to be done in your life. Ask Him to provide for you. Ask Him to protect you from temptation and ask Him for His forgiveness. If there is anyone that you do need to forgive or apologize to, would you really think about doing that today. Let's pray.