

# The Model Prayer

Pastor Chris Baker // 08.04.19 // Centralia FBC

## Intro

Good morning, church! We have the privilege of studying God's Word together this morning from Matthew 6. If you don't have a Bible with you there are some black ones in the pew rack in front of you and in them you can find today's text on page 859.

We're continuing our study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in this section dealing with prayer.

We discussed prayer last week as we looked at verses 5-8. There we saw really more of what not to do than what to do. Don't pray in a way that draws attention to yourself. Instead, pray in such a way that your heart is connecting to God's heart because God is your father and knows what you need in the first place.

Now, we're going to move on to verses 9-13 and look at what some call the Lord's Prayer, I prefer to call it the model prayer. Let's begin our reading back in verse 5 so that we take in this whole prayer section again:

**5 "Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. 8 Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.**

**9 "Therefore, you should pray like this:**

**Our Father in heaven,  
your name be honored as holy.**

**10 Your kingdom come.**

**Your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**11 Give us today our daily bread.**

**12 And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13 And do not bring us into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.**

**14 "For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive  
you as well. 15 But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your  
offenses.**

## **Prayer**

I said this last week but it bears mentioning again. My hope for these two weeks we've been studying Jesus teaching on prayer together is simple: I hope we pray more. If the only takeaway for us is that we as God's church pray to our Father more tomorrow than we did yesterday then our time in this text has been worth it.

But let me add a second hope to that statement today: I hope we pray more and I hope we pray better. You may find that offensive. You can't tell someone their prayer is bad.

Maybe it will help if you think about it this way, prayer (to me) is like pie. All are good, but some are better than others. I've never met a pie I didn't like. All pies are good. But I think some pies are better than others.

It's good simply that you pray. But what Jesus gives us here is a model for prayer.

## **Pray Like This**

He told His disciples, 'pray like this.' There are a lot of ways we can pray, and a lot of things we can pray for, but Jesus gives a template for what our prayers should look like. And if we conform our prayers toward the template Jesus lays out for us then I think our prayers will be even more God honoring and therefore more effective.

The reason I like to call this the model prayer is because I believe that is what it is. This prayer is recorded both here in Matthew 6 and again in Luke 11. And in both instances Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray. I don't think He's teaching them 'a' prayer. There's a difference.

I don't think this prayer was meant to be repeated. Though, I don't think it's necessarily wrong to repeat it from time-to-time, that isn't Jesus's intent. And I believe that for three reasons.

First, that isn't what He says. He doesn't say pray this prayer. Look at verse 9, He says pray like this. He doesn't say, pray this. Second, He has just condemned the prayer practices of the Jews and the Pagans who both used long memorized prayers as a part of their worship.

And the third and most compelling reason I don't think this is a prayer to be repeated is that when used as a template it becomes so much deeper and more intimate and, I believe, God glorifying.

So, if it's a template, how do we use it? That's what we'll spend the rest of our time looking at.

Because I firmly believe that **God is glorified most by our prayers when they're conformed to His model.** Jesus has just told us how to prepare our hearts for prayer in vv. 5-8 and now He sets out the model for what our prayers should look like.

There are a lot of different ways you could break down the model prayer, but we have to settle on one for our time together today. So we'll be walking through the model prayer in terms of **Six Elements of Jesus's Template for Prayer.**

All six of these don't need to be present in every single prayer you pray. But I think it's safe to say every prayer you pray should find its root in this model. And we should pray often enough that we do cover all six elements of Jesus's model from time-to-time because it keeps our prayers centered on the right things.

How vastly different is the content of Jesus's prayer here than so many of the prayers we utter on a regular basis? I think the most stark contrast is in how God-focused Jesus's prayer is and how 'me' focused some of my own prayers can be.

Just as a general rule of thumb, it's never good when our prayer sound more like a Toby Keith song than they do like the words of Jesus. You remember the one, right?

I want to talk about me

Want to talk about I

Want to talk about number one

Oh my me my

What I think, what I like, what I know, what I want, what I see<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Songwriters: Bobby Braddock / I Wanna Talk About Me Lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

That song sold because we get that! We want to talk about us. And there is certainly a place for that in our prayers. God wants to hear from you, but the conversation doesn't start with us. It starts with God and it's more about Him than it is about us.

And that truth is revealed when we begin to look at these Six Elements of Jesus's Template for Prayer and see that the first one is

## **Adoption**

Verse 9: Our Father in heaven. Jesus begins the model prayer by recognizing God as Father. The first 18 verses of chapter 6 are all about how we practice our righteousness—how God works out His character in us—and it's no accident that Jesus addresses God as Father 10 times in those 18 verses.

Acknowledging our adoption into God's family is extremely important when it comes to living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. I know that may be hard for some in this room because you had a broken relationship with your earthly father.

And if it's hard for you to think of God as Father because of the hurt that is in your heart due to abuse, abandonment, distrust, or difficult memories of your earthly father let me first say on behalf of your church family we hurt with you. And there will always be hurdles for you to overcome to get to this point but know that you have a perfect Father who loves you in all the ways your earthly father failed to. One day you'll experience that love perfectly. But today we trust that love by faith and we experience it little-by-little over time.

For all of us, though, acknowledging our adoption into God's family is extremely important when it comes to living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. That's intentionally the starting point for Jesus's prayer. When you're in the presence of your Father you're safe.

Nothing you can do, nothing you can say, no sin you commit, no attitude of your heart will ever change who your Father is. We've been adopted into the family of God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Listen to Ephesians 1:

***3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. 5 He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.***

He chose us before the foundation of the world to be holy, blameless, and to be adopted into His family. This is why the doctrine of election is so important for us to understand. You may not think it impacts your prayer life all that much but look at it right there on the screen. You didn't do anything to effect God choosing to adopt you into His family. We know that because it happened before the foundation of the world.

Therefore, nothing you do can change the fact that you're His now. Adoption is a present reality but it's also a future reality. The prayer is Our father in heaven. Adoption brings inheritance. A promise of a future and it's right there in the model prayer.

God loves you because you're His. Not because of anything you do or don't do. We try to help our kids understand this by telling them we love you always and forever no matter what. I stole that from another pastor, but I absolutely love it. No matter what happens, you have a loving Father who has secured your eternity.

How's that for the starting point to prayer? The first element of Jesus's template for prayer is adoption. And the second grows right out of it: adoration.

## **Adoration**

Look at the end of verse 9: your name be honored as holy. This is a prayer of praise for who God is. Remember, prayer is more about God than it is about us. And if our prayers aren't about me, me, me, and my name then they're about God and His name. Listen to Ezekiel 36:

***22 "Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord God says: It is not for your sake that I will act, house of Israel, but for my holy name, which you profaned among the nations where you went. 23 I will honor the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations—the name you have profaned among them. The nations will know that I am the Lord—this is the declaration of the Lord God—when I demonstrate my holiness through you in their sight.***

God is serious about His glory. And so when we pray we acknowledge His attributes. We do this through song, don't we? We did so earlier:

Hail Him Who saves you by His grace,  
To Him all majesty ascribe

We sang these words last week:

Holy, holy, holy!  
Merciful and mighty  
God in three persons  
Blessed Trinity!

When is the last time you've sat in private prayer and praised God for who He is?

He is infinite, He is incomprehensible, He is self-sustaining, He is self-sufficient, He is eternal, He is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, He is sovereign, He is just, He is gracious, He is merciful, He is One, He is the Creator, He is the King, He is love, He is peace, He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, He exists above and beyond creation, He is the healer, He is the counselor, He is wise, He is faithful, He is wrathful, He's the comforter, He's the just judge, He's our master, He is all that and a whole lot more and He deserves to be praised for all those things!

If we're to follow Jesus's model for prayer we'll acknowledge our adoption and we'll shower Him with adoration out of a heart thankful for who He is.

The third element of Jesus's template for prayer is ambition. Namely, that our ambition be shaped to match His ambition.

## **Ambition**

Verse 10, Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Contrast this with the prayers of the pagans we talked about last week. Where they, through repeated prayers and vain babbling thought they could manipulate their false gods into doing their will.

Here, Jesus points us to prayers that would welcome God's plan for both our lives and our world and in doing so would mean that our own wills would have to bend to His perfect one.

Kingdom has been a recurring theme of the Sermon on the Mount. It's more than heaven. It is that, but it's so much more. If we pray for God's kingdom to increase then we're praying for God's will to be accomplished here and now more perfectly.

God's Kingdom on earth is advanced by the spread of the Gospel and Jesus said it's the reason He came. Luke 4:43:

***But he said to them, "It is necessary for me to proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because I was sent for this purpose."***

God is most glorified in His creation when people are impacted by the good news of the Gospel. That happens in at least three ways that I want to address really quickly:

First, in our lives as we become more obedient to Him. God's is more glorified in your life as His character is more clearly reflected through your righteousness. Second, in others' lives as they either repent of their sins or grow in righteousness. And third, it will be fully realized when Christ returns to establish His visible Kingdom on earth.

Remember, the Kingdom is here and now, but not visible. Its visual representation is the church, but the King isn't physically present. One day, though, He will be. And we should pray for that day, just like we pray for our own spiritual growth and the salvation and spiritual growth of those around us.

Adoption, adoration, and a bending of our own ambitions toward God's ambitions are elements that should be present in our prayer lives. We're halfway these six elements and do you notice that we haven't really even asked God for anything yet?

And the first real petition of the model prayer comes in verse 11 when Jesus asks for the Father's provision.

## **Provision**

Give us today our daily bread. This is a simple heart request from the Son to the Father for provision. God, give us what we need.

We ask God for so many things, but how simple is Jesus's appeal for God just to provide. I think about how starkly different that is from so many prayers we offer today.

I don't think any of us in this room would go so far astray, but listen to a prayer from a recent book by a wildly popular Christian author:

*Because I honor Him, His blessings will chase me down and overtake me. I will be in the right place at the right time. People will go out of their way to be good to me. I am surrounded by God's favor. This is my declaration.<sup>2</sup>*

That might make you feel good, but it sounds like a foreign language when you compare it to what Jesus models for us here. We can debate a little bit about how broadly to take this request for provision, but we can't debate its simple reliance on the Father to supply our needs.

It seems almost otherworldly to so many of us to think about where our next meal is coming from because we are so well off. Most of our next meals are already in the freezer or the pantry. But that hasn't been so for most of history and it's still not so for many today. We could, perhaps, learn much about relying on God's provision from some of our brothers and sisters in less stable situations than our own.

Some, though, interpret this petition more broadly than food and I think that can be a fair way to look at it. Martin Luther said Jesus's request here is for **"everything necessary for the preservation of this life is bread, including food, a healthy**

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<sup>2</sup> citation upon request

**body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good government, and peace.”<sup>3</sup>**

When we consider our true needs in light of God’s sovereignty we really do rely on Him for all those things. And we recognize that He is a God who has given us everything we need already and He’ll continue to do so for all eternity.

I think there’s a logical progression to this model prayer because it’s as we reflect on the abundance out of which God provides for us we see the glaring difference in the Creator and the creation. He provides everything necessary not just for you and I but to keep the entire universe existing every second of every day.

Meditating on God’s provision reminds us how small and inadequate we really are and, perhaps, brings to mind our unholiness in the face of His righteousness.

The fifth element is extremely important. Confession is a vital part of a healthy prayer life. Look at verse 12:

12 And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

## **Confession**

Confession is to be a regular practice for Jesus’s disciples. Our initial confession before God is an outgrowth of the new faith worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 10 teaches us 8b ***This is the message of faith that we proclaim: 9 If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God***

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<sup>3</sup> Stott, John. *Christian Counterculture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1978], p. 149.

***raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.***

Faith leads us to confession and repentance. And it changes your eternal destiny once-and-for-all. You are no longer guilty in the sight of the Lord. God declares you righteous based on the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We call it what happens in that moment justification. It's a one-time act of God and it takes place in the believer once for all time.

But at the same time, confession should be an ongoing practice for disciples of Jesus Christ.

***1 John teaches that 1:8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.***

Does this mean that every time we sin we lose our salvation? Absolutely not. Your works didn't save you and your works can't cause you to lose your salvation. That's part of why I try to avoid the language of rededication. You can't dedicate something that doesn't belong to you in the first place and if you belong to Jesus your life is no longer yours to dedicate. I think a healthier way to look at it is that you confess your sins, repent, and return to walking with Jesus Christ or pray for God to save you.

So if we're already justified in God's sight, why do we need to ask forgiveness? First, know that it's not a new justification. It's a renewed application of our justification, at least in our sight. Remember, from God's standpoint He has already forgiven our future sins because our future lies before Him as an open book.

Yet, in our sin we have clearly lost sight of that. Because if we fully grasped the gravity of our justification, we'd have achieved righteousness.

So when we confess our sins, by the work of the Spirit, we are reawakened to what Christ has done for us, and God revives our security in him and assurance of our salvation.

Disciples, then, continue to pray daily for forgiveness—not with the despair of one who thinks he is lost, but in the confidence of justified and adopted children approaching a heavenly Father who has declared them just in Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>

We need to notice, though, that in the model prayer confession is unique in one regard. It comes with a condition. We'll cover verse 13 in a minute but jump ahead to verse 14 with me:

*"For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses."*

Due to time constraints we won't really get to camp out here but I need to make one bold, potentially offensive statement and then move on. What we learn here is this: *when you come to Jesus Christ you have forfeited your right to withhold forgiveness from anyone for any reason.*

I wish we had more time here, but we just don't right now. For more evidence of this truth from this same gospel I'd point you to the parable beginning in Matthew 18:21. Forgiveness is extremely difficult for some of us in this room because of things that others have done to you, and I hurt for you. Jesus doesn't callously force forgiveness. Remember, He entered into our suffering and allowed humanity to murder Him all the while praying for the Father to forgive.

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<sup>4</sup> Further reading: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/if-all-my-sins-are-forgiven-why-must-i-continue-to-repent/>

And through His Holy Spirit God will empower His children to forgive. Just landing here for a minute can dredge stuff up, so I just want to remind you that you have a family here. You have, or could have, a Sunday School class or discipleship group to help carry this burden with you. If you need to talk to me about it, I'm here just about every day. Call the office, shoot me an email, my cell phone number is printed in the bulletin. I want to help.

But we need to move on to the final element of the model prayer. Let's jump back to verse 13:

### **Preservation**

And do not bring us into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.

There are two appeals here and both of them speak to a heart desire for God's preservation of His people.

We sing a song here from time-to-time with very honest lyrics I love:

*When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;  
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.  
I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;  
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.<sup>5</sup>*

You don't often get lyrics as honest as those. But here Jesus shows us that very attitude should be a regular part of our prayers. And as we learn our own hearts, we learn that protection from temptation really means protection from ourselves.

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<sup>5</sup> Ada Habershon/Matt Merker

James 1:13 No one undergoing a trial should say, "I am being tempted by God," since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn't tempt anyone. 14 But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire.

Sure, we need protection from Satan, too, and I think that's what the second petition in this verse is for, but first and foremost we need the Holy Spirit to protect us from our own evil desires.

As we close I want to point out one final thing. The version of this prayer you memorized, if you're like me, is probably a little bit different than the one in the text today. The KJV ended with another phrase: *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

That doesn't appear in most modern translations because it seems as though it was added to this prayer as it was prayed in the early church, but it's not in the oldest manuscripts we have of Matthew's gospel.

It doesn't mean it's bad, though, because it is actually drawn from Scripture and I think it points us in the right direction as we close. Those words are an adaptation of 1 Chronicles 29:

1 Chronicles 29:10b-13

***May you be blessed, Lord God of our father Israel, from eternity to eternity.***

***11 Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to you.***

***Yours, Lord, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all. 12 Riches and honor come from you, and you are the ruler of everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all.***

***13 Now therefore, our God, we give you thanks and praise your glorious name.***

Remember, our prayers began with acknowledging God's goodness. And I think we'd do well to conclude them in the same manner.

Folks, prayer is important. You will simply not grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ if you don't devote yourself to prayer and the study of Scripture. There's no other way to say that. If we want to see God work in a mighty way in our lives, in our families, in our neighborhoods, and in our church we must be devoted to prayer.