

## Harmony of the Gospels

### Part 33

### “When You Pray”

#### What is the purpose of Prayer?

- ☞ **I mean**, if you really think about it, Prayer is a very strange thing to do.
- ☞ **I don't mean that disrespectfully**, but think about the actual mechanics of prayer.

We still our hearts, bow our head, close our eyes, speak either out loud or in our mind, to someone we have never seen or actually heard.

- ☞ **Now, If we saw someone doing that**, and we didn't know that they were praying, we would think that person was out of their mind...

**But Just the process of prayer, speaks of the fact that we believe that the Lord is hearing us.**

- ☞ **If we didn't** have at least a small amount of faith, why would we even pray at all?
- ☞ **We must** believe that He hears us.
- ☞ **That He has** the ability to answer us.
- ☞ **That He cares** about what we are saying.
- ☞ **That He will** answer us.

#### **John Harding said:**

“Those who do not believe, do not pray. This is a good functional definition of Faith. Faith prays, unbelief does not...”

**And when you pray, you want to know that you are getting through.**

- ☞ **Aren't you glad** that when you call on the Lord in prayer that you don't get one of those answering machines that never seem to understand your voice..

*“Press 1 if this is an emergency...Press 2 if you know your parties extension...”*

Video: “Prayer, Live Richly”.

**This morning, as we continue in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus will now address the issue of “Prayer”, and specifically “How to Pray”.**

## Matthew 6

5 "and **when you pray**, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, **that they may be seen by men**. Assuredly, I say to you, **they have their reward**.

6 "but you, **when** you pray, **go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray** to your father who is in the secret place; and your father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Notice in verse 5, Jesus say's "When you pray", again He is addressing this to those who believe that Jesus is the Savior of the World. To these Jesus assumes that we do have a prayer life.

"When you pray, here is how you should pray..."

- ⊕ **The religious leaders in Israel** loved to stand on the street corners or yell out their prayers while they were in the synagogue just so that people would notice them and think they were holy men.
- ⊕ **Jesus calls them "hypocrites"** because they weren't really praying to God, but to an audience of people watching them.

### Have you ever listened sometime to the way that we pray?

- ⊕ **Sometimes it sounds** like we are **making a speech** to the people around us, rather than talking directly to the Lord.
- ⊕ **Praying** so that we can be heard by people rather than heard by the Lord, Jesus said that this is the way the Pharisees prayed...
- ⊕ **Other times We pray** and **instruct the Lord** on how we want Him to answer our prayer.

*"Lord, this person is struggling in their life, so Lord we ask you to give them more finances and take them out of their trial..."*

- ⊕ **Now, how in the world** do we know that this person really needs more finances? How do we know that the best thing for that person is to take them out of their trial?
- ⊕ **Perhaps the lack of finances** or the presence of the trial **is exactly** what that person needs in their life right now.

### We don't know what the person really needs do we?

- ⊕ **So we pray** and say "Lord Jesus this person is really suffering right now, Lord we don't know what you desire for this person, but you do, so Lord we ask you to meet the needs of this person in your wisdom, and according to your will..."

Our prayers out loud should be heard by those around us, as though we are having a direct conversation with the Lord. As though we are there our self before the Lord speaking directly to Him...

## Matthew 6

6 "but you, **when** you pray, **go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray** to your father who is in the secret place; and your father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

I don't think that this phrase "**Go into your room...**" is only about going away by yourself into an isolated place. It appears that Jesus is saying this also about the times when we do pray openly before other people...

"Go into that quiet isolated room in your mind where it is just you and the Lord before you...not thinking or have a conscious awareness of those around us..."

- ☞ **If we do that**, then our prayers that are heard by others, will be much more personal and directed towards the Lord.
- ☞ **Prayer is not** so that we can be seen or heard by people, but so that we can have the supreme and awesome privilege of communing with our creator.
- ☞ **If we pray out loud**, we should forget that there are people around us, and just focus on being before the Lord.
- ☞ **Our prayer** is not so that people around us can hear, but so that the Lord who is also there, can hear us.

Then there is also that part of prayer where we just go away by ourselves and pray alone in a quiet, isolated place.

- ☞ **Notice in verse 6** Jesus says "*Find a private place where you can be all alone with just you and the father and He will hear you.*"

**Is most of your prayer life, public before other people? Or do you have an ever deeper, more intimated prayer life with the Lord when you are all alone with Him?**

- ☞ **Jesus is not saying** that we should not pray in public, corporate prayer by the body of Christ in a group setting is extremely important.
- ☞ **The idea here** is that if you only pray in public or most of your prayers are in public, your motivation for prayer might be wrong.

Remember that the most important reason for Prayer is to fellowship with the Lord, not so that people can hear us pray...

- ☞ **The Lord already knows** about those needs that you have and the needs of others, but what He is desiring with us is fellowship, communion, where we talk to Him openly, and then LISTEN to Him.

If a person sincerely desires fellowship with the Lord, they will seek a private place where they can be all alone with the lord.

**Leonard Ravenhill said:**

*“The self sufficient person does not pray—the self satisfied person will not pray—the self righteous person cannot pray—but **no person is greater than their own personal prayer life**”*

- ⊕ **Your personal prayer time** with the Father allows you to pour out your heart to him and express your true feelings to him.
- ⊕ **Then listen** in the quietness of your own heart for him to answer.

**Remember that** *“The Lord’s answers are wiser than your prayers”*

- ⊕ **Nothing in this life** can replace that kind of personal and intimate fellowship or be more wonderful.

**Matthew 6**

7 "and when you pray, do not use **vain repetitions** as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

8 "therefore do not be like them. **For your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him.**

**Verse 7—“vain repetitions”**—the word “vain” means—“empty” or “meaningless”.

- ⊕ **This phrase “vain repetitions” comes from the Greek word “battalogo” (bat-tol-og-eh’-o)** Literally “**To Stutter**” or repeat the same words over and over, or to babble.
- ⊕ **Repeating over and over** the same phrase or words.
- ⊕ **It was common** during this time for the pagans in their prayers to their many gods, to repeat the same words over and over, believing that this would increase the likelihood that they would be heard.

**The church began to adopt this policy for praying the same prayer over and over**

- ⊕ **Within 500 years** of the establishment of Jesus church, they began to substitute the 150 Psalms for praying the “Our Father” 150 times.
- ⊕ **Shortly After this**, the church established the “Ave Maria”, or Hail Mary” prayer, repeating it over and over again.

**Matthew 6**

7 Jesus Said: "and when you pray, do not use **vain repetitions** as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

The problem with reciting the same words or prayer over and over again, is that it is just human nature that it will become “Vain or empty and tedious and no longer hold too much meaning for us.

- ⊕ **The intention** of reciting the same prayer over and over was good, but the outcome is bad.
- ⊕ **This is what happens** when men make rules in the church instead of just doing what the Bible says to do.
- ⊕ **Repetition of prayer** removes the intimacy and personal relationship before the Lord and replaces it with tedious duty and empty worship.

**Jesus said**, “*Don’t pray the same prayer over and over like the heathens do, thinking that you will be heard for your many words...*”

- ⊕ **When you pray**, just tell the Lord in your own words, what is really in your heart, and what you really need, and He will hear you and answer you.
- ⊕ **Remember** that you are just having a conversation with the Lord, when you pray.

**How would you like it if one of your friends came to talk to you and they spoke like this:**

Rob I really want you to call me more often so that we can spend more time together...  
Rob I really want you to call me more often so that we can spend more time together...  
Rob I really want you to call me more often so that we can spend more time together...  
Rob I really want you to call me more often so that we can spend more time together...  
Rob I really want you to call me more often so that we can spend more time together...  
Rob I really want you to call me more often so that we can spend more time together...”

Imagine the Father hearing the “Our Father or Hail Mary” repeated over and over non stop, from millions of people at the same time...

**Can you hear Him?** “Shut Up! Just talk to me in your own words and tell me what is on your heart...”

**In the book of Act chapter 19, there is a similar story to what we have been talking about this morning”**

Paul was traveling on his way back to Jerusalem.

- ⊕ **While on the way**, Paul and 2 of his traveling companions, **Timothy** and **Erastus**, went to Ephesus to visit one of the thriving churches there.
- ⊕ **One of the silversmith’s in the town** by the name of “**Demetrius**”, along with other silversmith’s, had a tremendous business selling the little statues of Dianna to the pagan worshippers in Ephesus.
- ⊕ **As the new Christian church** in Ephesus began to teach the word of God, many people there began to turn away from worshipping Dianna to worshipping Jesus.
- ⊕ **As a result**, the business owners in Ephesus that were selling the statues of Dianna, were losing a lot of money.
- ⊕ **This created such an uproar** that the people who worshipped Dianna, gathered together in one place to have a meeting about how to deal with this situation.

## We pick up the story in acts chapter 19, verse 32:

### Acts 19:32-34

32 some therefore cried one thing and some another, for **the assembly was confused**, and **most of them did not know why they had come together**.

33 and they drew alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And **alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people**.

34 but when they found out that he was a Jew, **all with one voice cried out for about two hours**, "great is Dianna of the Ephesians!"

For 2 hours they shouted "Great is Dianna of the Ephesians..."

- ☞ **So Jesus in verses 7 and 8** tells us—"Don't' be like the pagans..." just repeating the same words over and over again when you pray...

Notice what it says in verse 8: *"For your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him."*

### Matthew 6

8 "therefore do not be like them. **For your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him**.

9 Instead Jesus says: Pray "**in this manner**, (gr: "houtu"—in other words "for example, using this outline") :**therefore, pray: like this our father in heaven, hallowed be your name**.

First, we recognize that God dwells in heaven and that He is Holy, that He is majestic and that He is far above anything of this earth. He is also very personal and extremely loving and kind, so we approach him with humility, reverence, and in awe...

10 **your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**.

Expressing our desire for God's kingdom to come to this earth, and for his will to be accomplished in my life..

- ☞ **Incredible to think** that earth is the only place in the Universe that is in rebellion to God.
- ☞ **In heaven**, the Lord's word reigns, His will is done.
- ☞ **Here on earth**, about 6 billion little bugs, hold their fists up at the Lord and refuse to submit to His will.
- ☞ **Our prayers** should contain the acknowledgement that we want the Lord's will done here on earth and that we are willing ourselves to submit to His will.

11 **give us this day our daily bread**. Asking for what we need today in our life.

12 **and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.** Petition for forgiveness for our sins and stating that we forgive others who have wronged us.

13 **and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.** Asking the lord for his supernatural protection from being tempted by satan, acknowledging that the only true kingdom in this universe belongs to Jesus.

These verses have commonly been referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer”, but it is really not the Lord’s prayer...

**The Lords prayer is found in John Chapter 17, where Jesus pours out HIS heart to the Father for us to all be ONE even as He and the Father are ONE.**

This example of prayer in Matthew 6 was intended by Jesus to be a FORMAT for prayer, of what our prayers should contain. It is an example from the Jesus to us, of what elements our prayers to the Father should have in them.

- ☞ **It was never intended** by the Jesus that we would pray this exact prayer over and over endlessly, as though the prayer itself had some kind of magical powers.

Using Jesus format for prayer, I would pray something like this:

**Father—you are so holy—you are so awesome —I worship you just for who you are—how I desire with all of my heart father—that you would send Jesus quickly to this earth so that it would be under your authority and power—father— I ask you to provide the finances I need this month to pay my rent and to purchase my food—please forgive me father for my sins—I have sinned against you—I ask you for mercy—and I forgive Brett for what he did to me the other day—father—please give to me wisdom and discernment—so that I can make the right kinds of decisions—so that I can honor you every day in all that I say and do—help me to resist when I feel tempted by my own flesh or from satan—and help me to stay away from those things that would cause me to stumble—you are my Lord—Jesus—and I pray you would comes soon—because you are worthy to rule over us all—I pray these things in Jesus name—amen.**

The idea here is to use this format in verses 9-13 as an example but to use your own words, your own requests, from your own heart as if you are really speaking to a living being.

- ☞ **So if the Lord already knows** what we need before we pray why should we pray at all?
- ☞ **Prayer is never about** getting what we want from God or changing His mind, prayer is about submitting ourselves to what HE wants for our life and changing our minds to conform with His mind.

We might have our own set of agendas when we begin to pray, but as our prayers develop, and we continue to read the Bible every day, we find that we start praying for the same things that the Lord wants as we read it in His Word.

But there are some moments in our life when we pray, ask for help and it seems as though the answers or the help never comes...

### **Video... "Are You Even Listening"**

This morning we are going to close out the service with doing what we have learned.

- ☞ **Everyone in this service** this morning has one or more issues in their life that are bigger than they can handle.
- ☞ **If you will get up out of your seat right now**, and come and kneel before the Lord, He will meet your needs and answer your call for help.

An Opportunity to Respond...

**Perhaps you just need to come and take this format for prayer that we learned and pray a real personal, intimate prayer to your God...**

Maybe there are things that you need help with that you need to bring before the Lord and Place them on the altar and let Him take care of them...