

# SERMON GUIDE

## Learning How to Pray - God's Glory

### Matthew 6:9-13



1.14.2024

#### SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 6:9-13

#### SERMON NOTES:

We started a 3-week series last week on prayer. We are studying the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6. Prayer is a vital part of our spiritual lives. However, most Christians don't feel very competent in prayer. I've never met anyone who thought they were as good at it as they could be. Everyone feels the need to get better at praying.

Last week we talked about the prelude to the Lord's Prayer. Jesus tells His disciples that we are not to pray like hypocrites or pagans. We don't pray for public consumption while neglecting private devotion. We don't pray to be primarily seen by men. But we must also avoid praying like pagans, who think they will be heard because of their many words and demonstrations. Instead, we remember that God wants us to go to Him in secret, and the One who sees in secret will reward us. We also have the promise that He knows what we need before we ask. So it comforts us.

Today we get into the content of the prayer and a framework for how to pray.

#### Scripture exegesis: Matthew 6:9

**V 9 -- Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."**

Have you ever had someone give you information that felt like "duh, I knew that"? You know what I'm saying, the kind of information that you intuitively knew, but they felt the need to tell you anyway?

Several weeks ago, my mother in-law was raving about the movie Equalizer 3. She asked if I had seen any of them. I said "no." She proceeded to explain Equalizer 3 to me and how good it was, but then finished by saying, "You should start with 1 & 2 though." To which I was super glad she told me that, because you know my instinct was to just start with number 3. But she helped me avoid that mistake. I thanked her for letting me know to start with the first movie before I watched the latest movie. Jesus teaching us how to pray is not useless information. It's kind of a massive deal that God in the flesh would teach us how to address God in prayer. That's why after Jesus tells us how not to pray (like hypocrites/pagans) we should really lean in when he says, "**Pray then like this.**"

There is an expectation that we would pray. Time and time again in Scripture, we are exhorted to pray. Why? Because prayer connects us to God and moves God to act on our behalf. We're told in James 4:2

that we have not because we ask not and in James 5:16 that the prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much.

So why do we struggle so much with prayer? What are the reasons many of us fail to pray? There are 4 main reasons I believe we are slow to pray (one or more could be a struggle for you):

**1. Pride and Self-Reliance** -- We depend on ourselves and attempt to do everything from our own wisdom, strength, and efforts.

**2. Ingratitude** -- If we are not regularly giving thanks to God for all His blessings in our lives, it is because we are blinded to how we owe everything we have to Him. A lack of genuine thankfulness leads to prayerlessness.

**3. Blindness to our Need** -- We fail to recognize our helplessness. We don't see how vulnerable and weak we are. There are dangers around us each day. Sin within and enemies around us. A lack of prayer shows we don't understand how needy we are for His help in all things. In Him we live and move and have our being.

**4. Inadequate view of God** -- We don't realize His willingness to help us. We think He's uninterested or unable to meet our needs. This shortsightedness produces prayerlessness because we forget or don't understand God's power and nearness and love.

If you recognize any of these in your own heart, make this a matter of confession and repentance before God. Acknowledge this area and seek the Lord's help to walk in the truth.

The word "**Our**" in this prayer is significant. It demonstrates that while prayer is personal, it is also a corporate event. When Jesus gives us a model for praying, it is fascinating that He uses the word "our" and not "my." This doesn't mean we aren't praying alone, but it does mean 1) even when we pray privately, we still pray as a member of a body (church), and 2) we are to pray with other believers (we should be praying together).

Jesus shows us how to pray by first telling us to address God as "Father." This is not to be quickly breezed past. Through Christ, we are children of God. We have the righteousness of Jesus. And our sins have been removed as far as the east is from the west. This access allows us to approach God and call Him, "Father." There is a warmth and welcome as we come to Him.

We highlighted this last week, but it's worth repeating again. The structure of the prayer is two-fold: God's glory and our good. Jesus shows us to pray, teaching us to begin with God's glory (first 3 petitions).

***Hallowed be your name --***

To "hallow" something is to glorify it, to revere it, or honor it. For something to be hallowed is for it to be magnified in its glory and splendor. Jesus says that our prayer begins with the hallowing of God's name. When we hear Jesus tell us to pray for the Father's name to be hallowed, it is a prayer for God Himself to be hallowed. God is His name. God's name contains the sum of all His attributes and works. When we hallow God's name, we hallow God and all He is. This is a petition to keep God's name holy.

The Old Testament speaks repeatedly about God doing things for the sake of His name. This means that God acts for the sake of His own integrity, glory, and greatness. The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 47, says, "'Hallowed be your name' means to bless, worship, and praise you for all your works and for all that shines forth from them: your almighty power, wisdom, kindness, justice, mercy, and truth. And it means, help us to direct all our living--what we think, say, and do--so that your name will never be blasphemed because of us but always honored and praised."

This is a prayer for God to do a miracle in our hearts, actions, and world, that His name be set apart. We not only want to hallow His name in our lives, but we want the peoples of the world to hallow His name.

The reason the prayer begins with this petition is because before any other petitions are made, it sets the framework of our hearts and minds around the name of God being glorified.

### ***Your kingdom to come --***

This next petition concerns the coming of Christ's kingdom. That word (*basileia*) "kingdom" occurs 162 times in the New Testament. That's a lot! It's obviously an important word and concept.

So what is the kingdom? The easy answer is a territory a king reigns over. Since we understand that God is the Creator of all things, the extent of His realm must be the whole world. The kingdom of God is wherever God reigns, and since He reigns everywhere, the kingdom of God is everywhere. But the New Testament is getting at something even more. When John the Baptist said, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" there is obviously an aspect of the kingdom that hasn't yet come. And when Jesus tells us to pray for the kingdom to come, we are asking for something that isn't yet fully here. We're asking for something.

Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (meaning, originated from this world), but it is certainly for this world. This prayer petition is for the kingdom of God to break into the world on earth, as it is in Heaven. In Heaven, Christ is worshiped by all, adored by all, and obeyed by all. Our prayer is for that to be so here and now, like it is there. Now make no mistake. Jesus is king now, right now this minute. But submission to His kingdom and authority has not yet reached its fullness. There is a conflict between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of Christ. It is those of us who regard His name as holy, who hallow it, that have the responsibility to make the kingdom of God manifest.

John Calvin said the task of the church is to make the invisible kingdom visible. We do that by how we live. We do it by how we show the kingship of Christ through our jobs, families, schools, finances, and

every sphere of life. The way the kingdom comes on earth as it is in Heaven is when Christians truly live as citizens of heavens and subjects of the King.

Praying this keeps orienting our entire lives toward this reality.

### ***Your will be done --***

This request on the surface looks simple. Praying for the Lord's will to be done seems straightforward. But this is the last petition before we ask the Lord to meet our needs. I want you to notice that before we start making our personal requests for God to meet specific needs we have, we are first submitting ourselves to His will above all. His will supersedes our desires. That's the heart posture we want to be in.

Jesus Himself modeled this perfectly. He is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, moments from being arrested, hours from the cross. His heart and spirit are dreading the wrath of His Father. He's burdened. His flesh desires for there to be another way the Father's wrath could be satisfied for sinners. But He anchors His prayer by saying, "***Nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done.***" Friends, that is the heart of this petition.

Now, we're going to dive into some deeper theology for a few minutes. How many of you, by show of hands, have ever been told about the two wills of God? The will of decree and the will of desire. The will of decree is what God has sovereignly decided WILL come about. He has decreed it so. The will of desire is that which God has revealed as His desired will. These would be things He has revealed through His Word (commandments, teaching). The will of decree (which only God knows) is what supersedes everything.

An example will help. God commands us not to bear false witness. Joseph's brothers do so, and in doing it, sin against God. They are responsible for violating God's will of desire. They broke His commands. Potiphar's wife did too. But when Joseph eventually gets to the right hand of power in Egypt and sees his brothers, he tells them, "What you meant for evil, God meant for good." In other words, it was God's will. God's will of decree was fulfilled, even though His will of desire was violated. Another example is our salvation at the cross. The will of decree was that Jesus would die on the cross for our sins, bearing the wrath of God in our place. How did He get there? By being betrayed, lied about, and eventually murdered. Everybody that acted against Jesus violated the will of desire (God's revealed law), yet all of it was in accordance with His will of decree (we know this because it was the plan from the foundation of the world and revealed beforehand through the prophets).

So when we pray, "your will be done," we are asking for both for sure. We want God's revealed will (in His Word) to be followed and obeyed. But above all, we are aligning our hearts and lives to His will of decree. Just as Jesus did. We submit ourselves fully to what He wills.

Elisabeth Elliot was a lady who knew the reality of suffering. Her husband was murdered by the very people he sought to reach with the gospel, leaving her widowed at a young age with children. When

she remarried, she lost her second husband to cancer. But she had such a biblical perspective of how-to walk-through life and suffering. She embodied what it meant to live in such a way that hallowed the Father's name, sought His kingdom, and desired His will.

For all of us in the room, but maybe particularly to those who have gone through struggles and suffering. Listen to her words.

“Whatever is in the cup that God is offering to me, whether it be pain and sorrow and suffering and grief along with the many more joys, I’m willing to take it because I trust Him. You either believe God knows what He's doing or you believe He doesn't. You either believe He's worth trusting or you say He's not. If your faith rests in your idea of how God is supposed to answer your prayers, your idea of heaven here on earth or pie in the sky or whatever, then that kind of faith is very shaky and is bound to be demolished when the storms of life hit it. But if your faith rests on the character of Him who is the eternal I AM, then that kind of faith is rugged and will endure.”

***Psalm 9:10 -- And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.***

It begins with hallowing the name of your Father, who made you, redeemed you, and loves you. And orienting your heart to see His kingdom to come here on earth. And sincerely seeking His will to be done, even if it conflicts with your will. That's what Jesus is teaching us to pray here.

How does your praying stack up against this? Is your heart aligned to this? If not, pray yourself that direction. Recognize the gap between this prayer and your prayers, the heart behind this and your heart. Pray this prayer until your heart more reflects this prayer. This is how Jesus wants us to learn to pray.

## LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you GROW in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you GO to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?

## BUILD UP

- **REVIEW:**

- Read Matthew 6:9-13 and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
- What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
- Additional Scripture:
  - Ephesians 4:6
  - Psalm 68:5
  - Isaiah 64:8
  - James 1:17
  - Matthew 6:33
  - John 18:36
  - Luke 17:20-21
  - Revelation 11:15
  - Romans 12:2
  - 1 Peter 2:15
  - Ephesians 5:17
  - Matthew 28:18-20
  - 1 Timothy 2:4

- **REFLECT:**

- Why is it significant that Jesus tells us to address God as Father? What does "in heaven" add to this name?
- What does it mean to hallow the name of God?
- What are we asking for when we say:
  - Your kingdom come?
  - Your will be done?
- What are the two wills of God?

- **RESPOND:**

- Do you relate to God as your Father?
- How does your life "hallow" the name of God?
- What parts of your will are you allowing to supersede the will of God?

- **MEDITATE:**

- Matthew 6:9-13 --
- 9 Pray then like this:  
“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
10 Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
11 Give us this day our daily bread,  
12 and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
13 And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

- **MEMORIZE:**

- Ephesians 4:6 -- One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**SEND OUT**

- **GROW:** How will you abide in Christ this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?
- **GO:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story or the gospel?
- **PRAYER:**
  - Pray over any request from your group members.
  - Kids Director - **Laurie DiCicco**
  - Ministry - **Kids Ministry**
  - **Pray for our long-term families on the field:**
    - The Wilsons
    - The Grays
    - The Starks
  - **Pray for our mid-term sent ones on the field:**
    - Kaesi
  - **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG):** Hui in Malaysia



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- **Population in country:** 16,000
- **Global population:** 14,005,200
- **Christian Adherent:** 0.00%
- **Evangelical:** 0.00%
- **Primary Religion:** Islam
- **Primary Language:** Chinese, Mandarin
- **Summary:** The Muslim Hui people who live in Malaysia originally lived in China. Many left China to establish businesses in Malaysia or to escape religious persecution after the communist takeover in 1949. Even though they share the Muslim faith of the majority of the Malaysians, the Hui are not seen as Malaysians because their family language and ancestry is Chinese.
- **Prayer Focus:** Pray that the few Hui believers in Malaysia would build relationships with other Hui and tell them the truth about Jesus. Pray that Hui Christians would have a sufficient number of Bibles and trained pastors. Pray that each Hui in Malaysia would have the opportunity to hear the gospel. Pray for rapid growth of followers of Jesus among the Hui in Malaysia in this decade.
- Want to keep up with other Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>