

## Teach Us To Pray! (Part 1)

How Jesus Prayed

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Given 05-Nov-11; Sermon #1073

It may surprise you that we owe our knowledge of the prayers of Jesus principally to the physician and disciple Luke. There is, however, one solemn hour of supplication under the quivering shadows of the olive trees in Gethsemane that is recorded by Matthew and Mark.

Though the fourth, the gospel of the John, passes over that agony of prayer, it gives us, in accordance with its primary purpose, the chapter that records Christ's priestly intercession. But in addition to these instances, Matthew furnishes just one instance, and Mark just two references to the subject of prayer. All the others are found in Luke. There must be some significance to that.

The gospel according to Luke is eminently the story of the Son of Man. The record that traces Jesus' descent to Adam rather than to Abraham, which tells the story of His birth and gives us all we know about the child, Jesus. Luke records His growth in wisdom and stature, and has preserved a great number of minute points bearing on Jesus' true manhood, compassion, and work. Luke emphasizes His consistent prayerfulness.

The gospel of the King (in Matthew) or of the Servant which is in Mark or of the Son of God which is in the gospel of John, contain less that dwell on this prayerfulness. Royalty in Matthew, practical obedience in Mark, and divinity in John are their respective themes. Manhood is Luke's, and he is constantly pointing us to the kneeling Christ.

Consider for a moment how precious the prayers of Jesus are; they bring Him very near to us in His true manhood. There are deep and mysterious truths involved in Jesus' life and teachings, but there are also plain and surface truths that are very instructive with regard to living God's way of life.

We are thankful for the story of His weariness when He sat on the well, and of His snooze when worn out with a hard day's work; He slept on the hard wooden pillow in the stern of the fishing vessel among the nets and the litter. We are thankful when we see those personal examples and narratives of his human life here on earth. It brings Him near to us, and makes His life more personal when we read He thirsted, and even nearer when we read the enduring words: "Jesus wept."

Even more precious than these indications of His true participation in physical needs

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and human emotion, is the great evidence of His prayers that He too lived a life of dependence, spiritual union, and submission. It is also precious that in everything in our life, He is our pattern and forerunner.

As the epistle to the Hebrews tells us, Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. Again, that brings it very personal to us. By His life—and surely preeminently by His prayers—He declares, “I will put my trust in Him.” He is speaking of God the Father of course.

We cannot think of Jesus too often or too absolutely as the object of faith and as the hearer of our cries. But we may, and some of us do think of Him too seldom as the pattern of faith, and as the example for our devotion.

A righteous person’s life needs frequent acts and times of prayer. The habits of some people who are scarcely conscious of the necessity of prayer do not realize that neglect of it makes them somewhat careless as to forms and times of formal worship. People who neglect prayer also neglect their duty to appear before God on the Sabbath. Because of that, there is a growing laxity among people who neglect such an essential communication and fellowship with our God and Father through our Savior.

In light of this, we would be wise to pay attention to what Christ’s prayers teach us. We all need it, because no human life is so perfectly lived that it can afford to do without prayer.

If we are to “pray without ceasing,” by the constant desire for fellowship with God, and the constant effort to produce good fruit, we must certainly have, and will undoubtedly desire special moments when the daily sacrifice of doing good passes into the sacrifice of our lips.

In other words, the devotion that is to be diffused through our lives must be first concentrated and developed in our prayers. In a sense, Christ’s life was all one long prayer. Jesus could confidently say what He said in John 8:29

**John 8:29** And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him."

One of the major things He did to please His Father was to keep in communication, and pray to Him. Christ saw the special communication of prayer as essential to the spiritual health of His life. What He needed we cannot afford to neglect. Therefore, Christ’s own

prayers teach us to pray.

**Luke 11:1** Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

If we will take the instances in which we find Him praying, we will gain some hints worth committing to heart. What do these instances of Jesus praying teach us?

First, Christ's example teaches us to pray as a rest after service. Mark gives us in a brief vivid way, in his first chapter, a wonderful picture of Christ's first Sabbath day of ministry in Capernaum. It was busy and crowded with doing the work of God.

The story goes through the busy hours marking the press of rapidly succeeding calls by its constant reiteration of the terms "as soon as," and "immediately." He teaches in the synagogue, without breath or pause; and He heals a man with an unclean spirit.

Then, immediately He passes to Simon's house, and upon entering, He has to listen to the story of how the wife's mother lay sick of a fever. They might have let Him rest for a moment, but they were too eager, and He was His usual compassionate self. As soon as He commands it the fever is gone. And as soon as she is healed the woman is serving them. There was no more than a short nap to rest.

Then, when the Sabbath ended, He was besieged by a crowd full of sorrow and sickness who lay by the door; waiting for it to open. All through the short twilight and deep into the night, He works unceasingly among the suffering crowd.

What a hard day and night it had been of sacrificing to do God's work, and exhausting sympathy took its toll too. What was His refreshment? What was Christ's way of resting? An hour or two of dozing, then we pick up the story in Mark.

**Mark 1:35** Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed into a solitary place; and there He prayed.

In the same way we find Him seeking the same rest after another period of a great deal of exertion and strain on His body and mind. He had withdrawn Himself and His disciples from the hustle and bustle that Mark describes so graphically.

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**Mark 6:31** And He said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Seeking to rest, He takes them across the lake onto the other side. But the crowds from all the nearby villages catch sight of the boat in crossing. So the crowds hurry to the landing place as eager and demanding as ever. Jesus puts off resting, and all day long, wearied as He was, taught them many things by parables.

The closing of the day brings no rest. He thinks of their hunger before His own fatigue and will not send them away hungry. So He ends that day of labor by the miracle of feeding the five thousand. After the crowds had gone to their homes, He could at last think of His own physical health.

What is His rest? He sends His disciples to the other side, as if in a hurry to remove the last hindrance to something that He had been longing to get to.

**Matthew 14:23** And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when the evening came, He was alone there.

That was Christ’s refreshment after His work. So He blended contemplation and service—the life of inward spiritual union and the life of practical obedience.

How much more do we need to insert the physically soothing and spiritually invigorating influences of a quiet spiritual union and fellowship in prayer with our God and Father?

Our external day-to-day work may disturb and dissipate our fellowship with God, and if we allow it to dominate our every waking moment, it can cause withdrawing of our eyes from God, and focus it on ourselves. It may puff us up with the conceit of our own strength, or it may trouble us with the annoyance of distractions.

It may depress us with the consciousness of failure and, in a hundred other ways, may waste and wear away our personal convictions. The more we work the more we need to pray. In this day of activity there is great danger; not only of doing too much, but of praying too little.

These two essentials to life: work and prayer, action and contemplation are twin sisters;

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each pines without the other. We are constantly tempted to cultivate one or the other disproportionately. We would do well to imitate Christ who sought solitude and prayer as His refreshment after work, but never left duties undone or sufferers unrelieved in pain.

Next, Christ teaches us to pray as a preparation for important actions.

Although more than one gospel tells us of the calling of the twelve disciples, the gospel of Luke alone reports that on the eve of that great time when Christ was about to send out His apostles to lay the foundation of his church, He therefore set apart time for prayer especially to seek God's blessing.

**Luke 6:12-13** Now it came to pass in those days, that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve, whom He also named apostles.

It was not an unusual thing for Jesus to spend a lot of time in prayer, and we should not wonder why He passed an entire night in supplication. Why did Jesus need to pray at all if he was divine? Because He was also a man subject to the same sufferings as others, and as a man, He needed the divine blessing.

There was no more inconsistency in His praying than there was in His eating. Both were means used for an end, and both were equally consistent with His being divine. But Jesus was also "Mediator," and as such it was proper to seek the divine direction and blessing.

In Luke 6:12 He has set us an example that we should follow. In great emergencies, when we have important duties, or are about to encounter special difficulties, we should seek the divine blessing and direction by prayer. We should set apart an unusual amount of time for supplication. A similar instance to Luke 6:12 occurs at a later period. You remember the personal declaration made by Peter to Christ that is recorded by Matthew.

**Matthew 16:16** Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus used this to serve as the basis for His giving the apostles spiritual powers, and for increasing the detail and clarity of His teaching about His approaching sufferings. In

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both aspects it distinctly marks a new stage. We also read in Luke alone that it was preceded by solitary prayer.

**Luke 9:18-20** And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

So, Christ teaches us where and how we may get the clear insight into circumstances and men that may guide us with wisdom in righteousness. We have to take our plans and our purposes to God to test them by praying about them.

Do not do anything major or new, nothing minor or old for that matter, until you have asked God in prayer for direction and wisdom.

**Acts 9:6** So he [Saul who later Christ named Paul], trembling and astonished said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

It is a disappointment to parents when their children begin to make their own way in life without consulting them. Do you get counseling from your Father in heaven and have no secrets from Him? It will save you from many blunders and many heartaches.

Counsel from God in prayer will make your judgment clear and your step assured, even in new and difficult ways. If you will learn from the praying Christ to pray before you plan and act, your efforts will be blessed if they are according to God's will.

Next, Christ teaches us to pray as a condition of receiving God's Spirit, and help us in using it. There were two occasions in the life of Christ when visible signs showed His full possession of God's Spirit and the luster of His glorious nature.

After His baptism the Spirit of God descended visibly on Jesus, and at His transfiguration His face shone as the light, and His clothes were radiant as sunlit snow. For both of these occasions Luke's gospel alone tells us that it was while Christ was in the act of prayer that the sign was given.

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**Luke 3:21-22** When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.

Jesus also teaches us that it is possible to pray in the midst of a large number of people yet in secret. The prayer probably consisted of lifting up the heart silently to God. By His example, we see that we may pray anywhere while about our daily work or while in the midst of a crowd, and in this way we may pray "always."

The visible sign of Jesus' face and clothes shining would have immediately reminded those present of Moses' face shining with a bright light when he received the tablets of the law.

**Luke 9:28-29** Now it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.

Putting all the gospel accounts together, it appears that the light did not shine on Christ from the outside, but out of Him from the inside. He radiated. It was one blaze of dazzling celestial glory; it was Himself glorified.

In both of these passages it is clear that there was a true communication from the Father to the man Jesus.

Next, Christ teaches us to pray as the preparation for sorrow. Here all three of the gospel writers tell us the same solemn story. Jesus, though hungering for companionship in that awful hour, would take no man with Him to pray because it was a deeply personal situation that could not afford distraction.

**Matthew 26:36-46** Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here, while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even to death. Stay here, and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as

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You will.” And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

As we view this we catch the voice of pleading rising through the stillness of the night, and the solemn words tell us of a Son’s confidence, of a man’s shrinking, of a Savior’s submission. The very spirit of prayer is in these broken words.

That was truly “the Lord’s Prayer” that He poured out beneath the olives in the moonlight. It was heard and strength came from heaven, which He used and prayed more earnestly as Luke writes in Luke 22:44.

Christ’s prayer was heard and answered when the agony passed and all the conflict ended in victory. He emerged with a strange calm and dignity to give Himself first to His captors, and then to His executioners as the ransom for the many.

As we look upon that agony and these tearful prayers, let us not only look with thankfulness, but also let that kneeling Savior teach us that in prayer alone we can be forearmed to withstand and cope with sorrows.

Christ teaches us that strength to bear flows into the heart that is opened in supplication, and that a sorrow that we are made able to endure is more truly conquered than a sorrow that we avoid. Christ who prayed on earth teaches us to pray. The Christ who intercedes in heaven helps us to pray, and presents our requests; which are made acceptable through His faith, love, and sacrifice.

**Luke 11:1-4** Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. So He said to them, “When you pray, say, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily

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bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil [one].

**Matthew 6:9-13** “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 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.

I purposely omitted the word ‘one’ there in both accounts “deliver us from the evil.” The word ‘one’ does not appear in the original Greek. The effect of adding the word ‘one’ is to limit our request for deliverance to merely that of the dangers of Satan’s deceptions and hatred.

Yes, Satan is behind all the evil in the world, so in that sense the evil one represents all the evil. However, by asking for deliverance “from the evil”—from all evil—is farther reaching because it includes the evil done by human nature because of man’s enmity against God.

Notice the place that this prayer occupies. First, in answer to the request of one of His disciples made on behalf of all of them that He would teach them to pray, He took some of the ideas that were already familiar to them and repeated them; not all, but some.

Look at the prayer as it is found in the gospel of Matthew.

There are some very simple things concerning its structure that I want to bring to your attention. The RSV, ESV, and the NIV Bible translations omit the closing praise to God, “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” This closing phrase is not found in the original Greek text. It was added later.

But it is so eloquent and so appropriate that it seems best to accept its placement there. We all sympathize with that feeling, and certainly it does glorify God and finish off that example prayer, but it is not in the original Greek. Although, we do not know who added it, even though it fits, we should know it was added later.

In this prayer there is a general beginning: “Our Father in heaven.” Then, immediately following, there are six requests or petitions. First, you have three requests ending with

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a qualifying phrase: “Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, and Your will be done.”

I am emphasizing this to indicate that the final phrase qualifies the whole of those requests and not merely one. That phrase is in verse 10, “On earth as it is in heaven.” Then, you have three other requests connected by the word ‘and,’ “Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.”

Now, I do not intend to deal with the details of these requests, especially the details of the second three. I simply ask you to mark the fact of a first three and a last three. Jesus has gathered these sentences all familiar to His disciples long before, and has put into perfect form the whole effect of prayer. First three requests and then another three.

What is the difference between them? You have noticed, of course, that the first three requests have to do wholly with the purpose and the plan of God: “Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

You notice that the second three requests have to do wholly with a person’s walk with God: “Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.”

Without pausing any further, let me ask you to remember: if we catch this structure, and its significance, we have an idea of prayer that is of the greatest importance. According to the revelation of Jesus’ prayer, it is not primarily a method by which we can obtain what we need for our own benefit and need; although that is an important secondary purpose for prayer.

Prayer is primarily the method by which God brings us into cooperation with Himself for the accomplishment of His purpose in the world, so that the underlying principle of life is also the underlying principle of prayer.

**Matthew 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Just as Jesus said in these selfsame instructions, “seek first the kingdom of God,” concerning the life of the subjects of His kingship, and when He gives us the pattern of prayer He says, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”, which in effect says, seek first the Kingdom of God. Test your prayer by that. Include it

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in your prayer.

How does it come out? How many of us pray for everything that touches our own need, and if we have a few moments to spare, we pray for the work of God and brethren in far-flung areas? Christ says, "Seek first God's kingdom." We are not to have such a passion for saving ourselves and avoiding punishment, a perfectly right desire that it overshadows our passion for the coming Kingdom of God and the accomplishment of God's purpose here on earth.

That is the first great broad revelation suggested to us by Jesus when we learn from this great pattern prayer. God and Christ want us to receive eternal life in the Kingdom; in the Family of God.

**Luke 12:32** "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Now mark how this works out in your prayer. You address your prayer to the Father, then you pray first for the coming of His Kingdom; and then you pray for the provision of His love and for your whole walk with Him.

Now let us look at the first part of this prayer which has to do with the purpose and plan of God. Notice the dynamic words found in the request and in the qualifying phrase with which the three requests end "Our Father in heaven", and the first three requests close this way, "On earth as it is in heaven." The word that naturally grabs our attention is 'heaven', which occurs in the request and in the qualifying phrase of the first three requests.

Now, we may seem to be making a digression, but I want to look at the word 'heaven' for a moment in its use in the New Testament.

**Matthew 6:26** Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Look at "birds of the air." The translation is ouranou. Instead of "birds of the air", the literal translation is 'birds of the heaven'. Heaven is translated ouranios.

**Acts 2:19** I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth

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beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

**II Corinthians 12:2-4** I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven [noun ouranou]. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Now you notice in these three passages the word ‘heaven’ is used. It is used of three distinct locales or environments or places. First, Jesus uses the word ‘heaven’ for the atmosphere surrounding the earth.

Then we find, in the Acts of the Apostles, that the word ‘heaven’ is used of the vast stellar places that stretch away beyond the atmosphere “wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath.”

Then the apostle Paul, in Corinthians, uses the term ‘the third heaven’. He declares that he knows of a man, whom he saw in a vision, who was caught up into that third heaven, who nevertheless came back to solid earth. Paul distinctly tells us that he does not know whether the man was in the body or out of it.

Nevertheless, my purpose for mentioning it is to direct attention to a third heaven. There are three heavens. But how they touch and merge is not the question. If we think of them in their basic form in sequence you will have first, the atmosphere, second the stellar spaces, and third, the heaven we speak of as the dwelling place of God and His throne room.

We find this particular word written sometimes in the singular number, and sometimes in the plural; that is one of the things that the translators have not always made clear.

In all the instances we have read, the word ‘heaven’ is rendered in the singular, but you will find that the word is written in the plural when Stephen was stoned. It is said that he saw the heavens opened. When it is plural you must decide by the context whether two or three heavens are referred to.

When Peter speaks of the passing away of the heavens, he certainly means the first and the second, not the third. But when Stephen says, “I see the heavens opened,” he

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certainly saw the whole of them opened. Stephen's anointed eyes baptized for suffering as well as for service saw to the heart of the universe, to the very place where the light of God is supremely evident and visible. There at the heart of light he saw the risen Christ.

Now we come back to the word 'heaven' in this prayer. Why have I taken all this time to describe such a basic biblical truth? Because I want to indicate that in the prayer's request the word is plural, but in the qualifying phrase that ends the first three requests the word is singular.

With perfect accuracy, Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father who is in the heavens [plural], Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven [singular]."

Now here we have two things that are of great value in our praying.

First, the accompanying doctrine of God in which Jesus introduces the prayer from God and His Son, emanates the Spirit of God by which God is omnipresent and omniscient. In a sense, it is in this way that God is in all the heavens.

This adds a wonderful understanding as we pray. He is close and He is not some remote being that is far away and not directly involved in our development as His children.

Is God really concerned about what goes on in the first heaven here in the atmosphere, and environment of the earth?

**Matthew 10:29-31** Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

God is aware of and decides whether the sparrow falls from the first heaven or not. What about the stellar places, the second heaven?

**Isaiah 40:21-22** Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a

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curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

**Isaiah 40:25-26** “To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing.

No argument is needed for the third heaven because it is God's primary dwelling place, and contains His throne room where the angelic choirs sing.

But what is the prayer itself? “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In other words we understand that when these disciples said, “Teach us to pray,” and when in the midst of the pattern for prayer Jesus corrected false methods of vain repetition that is what He was doing.

**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.

Jesus was teaching us that one of the first purposes of prayer is to ask that on this earth, there will be set up the order that exists in that third heaven without sin, and without anything that is contradictory to the will of God.

This is a broad statement, but surely it lies in the request, “Hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.” We are to pray for the setting up of the heavenly order. Granted, that prayer will never be finally answered until Christ's return to set up God's government on earth. But it is our responsibility as members of His church today to pray for the final answer, and to pray for that new privilege when the King Himself comes.

**John 16:28** I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

There is the key to John, not only as to its analysis, but as to its value. John has supremely shown us the fact of Christ as the Revealer of the Father and His dwelling place. For instance, the word ‘heaven’ never occurs in John's gospel in the plural

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number, it is always singular. John's thought of heaven is always of that third heaven.

Here Jesus is not emphasized as the King as in Matthew, and no longer as the Servant as in Mark, and no longer as the perfect Man as in Luke. Here in John He is emphasized as the Word made flesh, the spokesman of heaven made articulate for man's ear. "I came forth from the Father," He said, "and have come into the world. I leave the world and go to the Father."

When He came forth from the Father there came with Him the revelation of the order of the third heaven. In Him and through Him we know what the order of the third heaven is. In the third heaven love is the one and only and all-sufficient reason for activity.

Whether it is God's revelation to those who worship, love is the reason for it, or whether it is the answering worship of those who regard it, love is the impulse of it.

We have to remember that when we pray we are in the presence of God and that the eternal and almighty God is there, looking upon us as our Father. He is more ready to bless us and to surround us with His love than we are to receive His blessing.

While praying we have to realize that we are in the presence of God and that He is our Father. Therefore, Christ says our first desire, and our first request should be, "Hallowed be Your name."

What does that mean? Let us look very briefly at the words. The word hallowed means to sanctify, to revere, or to make and keep holy. But why does He say "Hallowed be your name"? What does this common term "name" stand for? What does it represent?

We are familiar with the fact that it was the way in which the Jews at that time commonly referred to God Himself. There was one thing in which the Israelites, and later specifically the Jews, were commendable. Many had a sense of the greatness, majesty, and holiness of God, at least on a basic level.

You remember that they had such a sense of this that it had become their custom not to use the name YHWH. They had humanly reasoned that the very name, the very letters in a sense were so holy and sacred, and they so small and unworthy that they dare not mention it.

They referred to God as "the Name" to avoid the use of the actual term YHWH. The "name" in the 'sample prayer' means God Himself. We see that the purpose of the request is to express this desire that God Himself may be revered, and may be

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sanctified. The very name of God and all it denotes and represents, may be honored among men, and holy throughout the entire world.

The name in other words means all that is true of God and all that has been revealed concerning Him. It means God in all His attributes, and God in all that He is, and in, and of Himself. God in all that He has done and all that He is doing.

God has revealed Himself to the children of Israel under various names. He had used a term concerning Himself [El or Elohim] which means His "strength" and His "power". When He used the specific name, He was giving the people a sense of His strength, His dominion, and His power.

Later, He revealed Himself in that great and wonderful name YHWH, which means "the self-existent One," "I Am that I Am," He is eternally self-existent.

Notice the names under which God has revealed Himself in the Bible. The first four we find in the earlier chapters of Genesis. The first one is, "God," (in Hebrew, Elohim); second, "LORD," (or YHWH); third, "Almighty," (El Shaddai); and fourth, "Most High," (El Elyon).

These all reveal some distinct attribute or characteristic of the same God. Besides these we have three other names which describe God's relation to certain things or persons rather than His nature; namely "Lord," (in Hebrew Adonai); then, "The Everlasting God," (El Olam); and lastly, "Lord of Hosts," (YHWH Sabaoth). However, the first four names tell us what God is. In every age these first four names have been the rest, refuge, and comfort of His people.

**Psalm 91:1-2** He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High [El Elyon] shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty [El Shaddai]. I will say of the Lord [YHWH], "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God [Elohim], in Him I will trust."

All these varying names are the result of His being what He is, so wonderful and multiple which no one name can adequately express. It is what the apostle Paul calls His "fullness".

**Ephesians 3:19** To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

God cannot fully speak of Himself under a single name or under one title. And yet each differing name contains, hidden in itself because God's perfections are inseparable, something of the special virtues that the other names bring out more separately.

We may see this even in a man of varied gifts and talents. To know King David we must be told that he was a shepherd, warrior, king, prophet, poet, and musician. All these are outcomes of a deep and rich nature.

God—Supreme Ruler, Author of Creation, Sustainer, Judge, and Father who in Himself is love, power, and wisdom—reveals His nature and relationships by many names, each of which can only tell something specific of His glory.

He has revealed Himself to us here a little and there a little. There were many other names by which God described Himself:

The Lord will provide (YHWH-jireh), the Lord that heals (YHWH-rapha), the Lord our banner (YHWH-nissi), the Lord our peace (YHWH-shalom), the Lord our shepherd (YHWH ra-ah), the Lord our righteousness (YHWH-tsidkenu), and another term which means, "the Lord is present" (YHWH-shammah).

As you read the Old Testament you will find all of these various terms used. In giving these various names to Himself, God was revealing Himself, His nature, and being; His character, and attributes to mankind. "Hallowed be Your name." In a sense, "Your name" stands for all that!

In the pattern prayer, Jesus Christ is teaching us to pray that eventually the whole world may come to know God in this way, and that the whole world may come to honor God. It is the expression of a burning and deep desire for the honor and glory of God.

We are unable to read the four gospels without seeing very clearly that was the intense passion of Jesus Christ Himself. It is found again in John 17:4 when He says, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

In John 17:6 He says, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."

He was always concerned about the glory of the Father. In John 8:50 He says, "And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges."

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There is no real understanding of the earthly life of Christ except in these terms. He knew that glory forever belongs to the Father. He says in John 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

Christ came to declare and glorify the name of the Father and to reveal His attributes, and His plan of salvation for mankind.

**John 17:24-26** "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Christ had seen that glory, and had shared it. He was filled with this sense of the glory of God, and His one desire was that His disciples may come to know it, and eventually the whole of mankind might come to know it. Most people lack even a due sense of the greatness and the power and the majesty of God.

Listen to the way people talk superficially about God and you hear how disrespectful they are. It is extremely disturbing to hear people so lightly shrugging off His importance in their lives.

The names of God speak of His nature, and nobody can ever truly see their importance except those who are partakers of that nature. The apostle Paul gets right to the heart of the issue.

**I Corinthians 2:6-12** However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have

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received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit [which] is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Mere intellect therefore will never open what the various names of God contain, nor will even the desire for light, unless the Holy Spirit reveals it to us and our desire is joined with faith and prayer and humility. There is a sense in which we should take our shoes off our feet whenever we use His name.

Do we really appreciate the goodness, the kindness, and the providence of God that His name represents?

The psalmist delighted in celebrating God as our peace, God as our righteousness, and God as the Omnipresent One who will never leave us nor forsake us.

This request or petition “Hallowed be Your name.” in the ‘sample or pattern prayer’ means just that! May the whole world eventually come to know God.

There is an interesting expression used in the OT with regard to glorifying His name that is really quite astonishing.

The psalmist in Psalm 34 invites everybody to join him in “magnifying” God.

**Psalm 34:3** Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

At first sight, that appears to be quite ridiculous. God is the Eternal, the self-existent One, absolute and perfect in all His qualities. How can feeble man ever magnify such a Being? How can we ever make God great or greater (which is what it means to magnify)? How can we exalt the name that is already exalted over all?

It seems preposterous and quite impossible. If we just realize the way in which the psalmist uses it, we will see exactly what he means. He does not mean that we can actually add to the greatness of God, because that is impossible.

But he does mean that he is concerned that this greatness of God may appear to be greater among human beings than they realize and see and know now.

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As a result, it happens that among ourselves in this world we can magnify the name of God. We can do this by words, and by our lives, by being reflectors of the greatness and the glory of God and of His glorious attributes.

That is the meaning of the request and praise: "Hallowed be Your name." It means a burning desire that the whole world, beginning with the firstfruits, may bow before God in adoration, and in reverence, in worship, in honor, and in thanksgiving.

Is that the thing that is always uppermost in our minds whenever we pray to God?

When you go to God even though you may be in desperate conditions and circumstances, or maybe there is some great concern on your mind, and you have to stop for a moment, recollect, and realize that your greatest desire of all should be that this wonderful God, who has become your Father, should be honored, worshipped, and magnified. "Hallowed be Your name."

We know this has always been true in the praying of every true saint of God that has ever lived on the face of the earth.

If you are concerned that your prayers are effectual, worthy, and acceptable, then take into consideration the core principle in this pattern prayer. It is put succinctly in a very familiar statement repeated many times in the Old Testament.

**Psalm 111:10** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.

This is the conclusion reached by the psalmist. That is the conclusion likewise reached by the wise man Solomon in his proverbs.

If you want to know what true wisdom is, and if you want to be spiritually blessed, and prosperous, if you want to have peace and joy, if you want to be able to live and die in a worthy manner, and if you want wisdom with regard to life in this world, here it is: "the fear of the Lord." That does not mean cowardly fear; it means reverential awe!

If you want to know God and be blessed by God, you must start by reverencing Him in humility. This is what "Hallowed be Your name," implies. How can a person go before God in prayer in reverential fear without humility? It is impossible!

"Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done

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on earth as it is in heaven.” This is the first request, the first appeal we make in our prayers. It relates to God’s glory! It does not have to be stated in those exact words. This is a principle that can be applied in many reverent ways as we have seen in the many names of God.

**Hebrews 12:28** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

God’s name relates to Himself. His name should be regarded as holy, spoken of as holy, treated as holy. “Hallowed be Your Name!”