

THE LORD'S MODEL PRAYER

Intro: D.A. Carson once observed concerning the Lord's prayer of Mt. 6 that there is no prayer "more all-encompassing, more pointed, more exemplary than this one". As a child, every day in the school room, we all stood and said the Lord's prayer. The memories of those day still linger in our minds. Without a doubt, all of us can say the Lord's prayer, repeating its lofty phrases; but how many of us could truly pray it!

As I studied for this sermon I found myself torn between two approaches to the prayer. On the one hand it is tempting to see the model prayer merely as a spiritual masterpiece to be examined like a beautiful painting, focusing on each stroke of Jesus as he masterfully uses words to create a picture of detailed beauty and then focusing on the harmony of all its parts to see the portrait of a complete disciple. But on the other hand, what does the model prayer say about the pray-er? The model prayer not only petitions God; it probes us! It challenges us to consider what dominates our thinking, what concerns and priorities we have.

With that purpose in view I encourage you to take a fresh look at words you've known for years! I encourage you to see how the model prayer is an outline of the foundation upon which a kingdom citizen builds his life.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

The first phrase remind us that we are children of God, not merely by creation but by redemption through the blood of Christ. He is our spiritual father, who loves, trains, and blesses us!

We are a part of the spiritual family, all of which have access to his heart! Its not "my" father, but "our" father! All of God's children approach him with their needs and concerns.

Though he loves us and is near us, he is also far above us! We are on earth; he is in heaven. We come to him aware of his transcendence over the whole creation!

Can you come to God that way? Have you entered his family by being born of water and the Spirit? Do you acknowledge and love his family, the church? Do you approach him aware of the His greatness and power? Only when we do these things are we truly praying this prayer?!

HALLOWED BY THY NAME

In this phrase we are saying, "Your name is holy". And since God's name stands for all that he is we are saying, "You are holy in all your actions".

We are saying, "Let all men acknowledge your holiness".

That phrase the product of a process of reason and observation. First, We catch a glimpse of his greatness and power in the creation. Then, we see a revelation of his justice in the fairness and holiness of his laws.

Consequently, because of man's sin we see a demonstration of his righteous

wrath in the punishment of sinners. But then, we see a manifestation of his incomparable love in the sacrifice of his son to reconcile all these qualities together and make salvation possible to us. When we have come to truly take this in how can we keep from saying, "Hallowed by thy name". What about you?

THY KINGDOM COME; THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

If then we see God as he has revealed himself, we should see his right to rule in all things. The term "kingdom" refers to the rule or reign of God. It is used in at least four senses in the Bible: 1.

For that reason it is easy to say that "thy kingdom come is essentially to say, "let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

Without doubt, He is the undisputed and great King of the universe. But is He king of your life! Only if His will is considered in every relationship; in every decision. Only if obeying him is your number one priority! Only if you seek first to lead others to obey him! I know you can say it, but can you really pray it!

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

This petition makes God the source of all that we have. In it we acknowledge that He is the giver of every good and perfect gift, including our food! B. Furthermore, it reminds us of the need to live one day at a time rather than worry about tomorrow. People in the Bible often lived from day to day, the wages of today's work supplying the food for the next. That is the thought here. It is prayer for the immediate physical needs of the life to be sustained.

Can you pray such a prayer? Do you think when you get your check--this is mine, I worked for it, I earned it, and I will use it as I please? Or, do you say, the Lord has enabled me to work and earn a living, this money is loaned to me to use to his glory and meet my needs?

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

Sin is likened unto a debt because it calls for repayment in punishment. It reminds us of the need for forgiveness for there is no means by which we may personally repay this debt to God without dying ourselves.

For that reason God "gave" his son by his "grace" so that we are justified as a "gift" by his "grace" which he freely bestowed upon us in the beloved". By his death our debt is cancelled--He made us alive blotting out the certificate of debt which was contrary to us, he took it out of the way nailing it to the cross. So that we sing, "Gone is all my debt of sin, a great change is wrought within, and with him I now begin, risen from the fall, yet the debt I could not pay, someone died for me one day, sweeping all the debt away, Jesus paid it all!

Do I see Jesus as the source of my righteousness? Do I see that it is only through his shed blood that I was freed from sin? That I am now freed from sin?

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

Now having enjoyed God's mercy, how shall I live? Shall I continue in sin that grace may abound? May it never be! If in Christ I have died to sin, how can I now present the members of my body to be servants of sin? Just as Jesus died to sin once for all, so should we in baptism. And now our attitude is one of seeking sanctification!

And that is so clearly revealed in this text! Let me not move in the direction of temptation but rather let me depend upon God to avoid it! This verse reminds us that salvation is not only a fact of the past, but it is an ongoing process! 1 Cor. 1:

Can you then truly pray this prayer? Do you want to move closer to the Lord's will, avoid temptation, being saved from evil? Do you depend upon the Lord for his help in overcoming sin?

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.

The final phrase sets forth the basis upon which all these petitions go to God; but particularly the last ones concerning deliverance from sin, or salvation. We should live this way because God has a right to reign! (the kingdom is His) God is able to deliver! (the power is his!) God is worthy to be served (the glory is His). So then, let it be that way, Amen! If you can see God as he is, then this prayer takes on a new dimension. It acknowledges His rights over each of us and submits to him as God!

Conclusion: And so, somewhere beneath the externals of a well-worn and repeatedly spoken prayer is a spirit expressing itself to God, either sincerely or hypocritically. Does this model prayer reflect your concerns? Your priorities? Are you putting the principles of that prayer into daily living? If so, may God hear and bless you for it. If not, may you see the futility of praying to God concerning things that are not really important to you personally, and let him change your heart; let him change the priorities of your life.