

Sermon

Grace Street Fellowship, Dr. Jim Burgin, pastor
Sunday, February 4th, 2018

Matthew 6: 9-13 (NIV)

“This, then, is how you should pray:

*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 today 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 the evil one.”*

OPENING

Do you pray? Is your prayer effective? Do you feel like you need someone else to pray for you, or can you pray? Have you ever heard someone pray and wish you could have the same connection with the Lord that they do?

TRANSITION

Since the beginning of the New Year, we have suggested that we resolve to pattern ourselves after the marks of the early church. Acts 2:42ff says that the early church was characterized by the following four practices:

1. The Apostle’s Teaching – How are you doing with your reading of God’s Word so far this year?
2. Fellowship – Dr. Brooks taught us last week that a church isn’t a building, but a people. Are you connected to the church? I don’t mean that you merely attend – come and go – but your making connections here – lifting up others and being lifted up yourselves. Are you allowing anything to come between you and your connection to the body of Christ?

Personal Illustration: This past Friday, Debbie taught devotions at Mission Arlington. She taught about the purity of worship and staying connected. When we sang the last song, my voice was engaged, but my heart wasn’t. I was thinking about everything I needed to do that morning. Interestingly, the song we were singing was “the heart of worship.” I was singing the words, “I’ll bring you more than a song. A song in itself is not what you require.” Yet my heart wasn’t connected. I wasn’t worshipping.

3. “The Breaking of Bread” The Lord’s Supper centers us, purifies us, reminds us what our faith is about. When you come back to the supper regularly, as our church does, we look to the cross, the epicenter of our faith.
4. Prayer – Today we will consider the fourth Mark of a New Testament church – prayer.

WHAT ARE COMMON DESCRIPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER?

A HOLY HUNGER

1. Jesus had been to a certain place to pray. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray.”
2. This is a sacred Discontent.

3. They saw something in Jesus that they wanted. Jesus had been away to pray – sometimes to the point where they wondered if he was shirking his responsibilities. Peter even told him so.

A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

1. Heavenly Father - We are His children;
2. This means confidence and trust;
3. Paul said it like this in Ephesians 3:14 ff– For this reason I kneel before the father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you being rooted and established in love may have power together with all the Lord’s holy people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
4. Matthew 7:23 – Not everyone who says to me, “lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, “lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers.
5. You are coming to your heavenly Father – to your daddy.

A GOD-CENTERED FOCUS

1. Focuses outward, not inward – It must not be about us;
2. Begins with praise – Hallowed be your name; Let it flow from you. Praise the one who commands angel armies. Praise the one who makes mountains flat, who turns darkness into light, brokenness into wholeness.
3. Desires His Will
 - a. Whatever it takes to extend His Kingdom; - your kingdom come;
 - b. Whatever it takes for his will to be accomplished.
 - c. Jesus taught us how to pray this way in the garden of Gethsemane. – not my will but thine;

AN AUTHENTIC FAITH

1. Hebrews 11:6 says “Without faith, it is impossible to please God.”
2. The Word says that “Seeing is Believing.” But is that true?
3. A scene from the 1977 fil “Oh, God!) starring George Burns & John Denver stuck with me. It is a comedy about an unassuming supermarket manager named Jerry Landers who is chosen by God to spread his message despite the skepticism of the media, religious authorities, and Lander’s own wife. The climax of the movie comes when George Burns appears on the stand as God, and the case is closed. But right afterwards, people begin to believe that what they saw wasn’t real. It was a dream. His voice wasn’t on the court reporter’s recordings, so people began to believe that God never showed up at all.
4. We are so forgetful.
5. Illustrations:
 - a. Sunrises & sunsets

- b. Man in our church who was kicked out of the mission, now works there five days a week ministering to others
- c. Lady in our church who was kicked out of the mission now knocking on doors every week to share Christ with others.
- d. Another man worked for an armored car company, was shot from 4 feet away. The bullets went through his body, but nothing important was touched. The man returned fire and killed the man. This was a miracle. There are still people today who think this young man was very tough, but the truth is that this was a miracle.

OPEN & HONEST ABOUT OUR NEED – Tell Jesus about your daily needs. Be honest with him. It is interesting to note what Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 – “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

LET HIS LOVE FLOW THROUGH YOU - forgive as you have been forgiven. Who do you need to forgive this morning? When you receive, you give and become the body of Christ to the world.

OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH – the very first part of this paragraph says “Our Father.” This lets us know we are part of a body of faith. We ask others to pray for us and with us. One of our men has a grandson who is pretty sick. Early this morning, on our prayer gram with Facebook, he sent out a prayer request. Oh my, so many Grace Street Families responded with affirmation. We are a praying church.

CONCLUSION

You can see that the Lord has been gracious to us by allowing new carpet to be installed in the sanctuary just prior to this morning’s service. Before the carpet was place on the ground, I was able to write something on the floor which I want to ground us as a church.

*Acts 4: 31 says - 31 “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”*

The very first sermon I preached from this pulpit when Grace Street moved from East Arlington years ago was from this passage. It has been my heart and hope for this church since we began in 1994. May God shake this place, and may the Word of God leave from here boldly. Praise His Name!

INVITATION