

February 27, 2011

Born Again Series - Discipleship

Matthew 6:5-13 – “How do I talk to God?”

INTRO...

This morning we are going to be talking about one of the most important subjects of a Christian's life...

- ...whether you are a new Christian...or you have been a Christian for years...every Christian...
 - ...need to grow in the understanding of...**“How do I talk to God?”** ...

ILLUST: Playing golf with my dad...early in the morning!

- ...getting up so early it was still dark...as we would tee off...you couldn't even see the ball

I don't think there was anything I loved more than playing golf with my dad on a Saturday morning...

- ...getting ready would start right after dinner the night before.
 - ...I'd wash my clubs make sure everything was in my bag...
 - ...anticipating the morning...I could hardly sleep...

He didn't have to do much if anything to wake me up...I was eager, ready to go.

- ...anticipating nothing but the best possible day...how could it not be...I was with my dad...

Sometimes...I would play great...other times I would stink...

- ...either way...I was eager and ready to go again the very next Saturday...
 - ...and extremely disappointed if we didn't play...I loved playing golf...and I loved playing golf with my dad...

PRAYER...in its purest and simplest form...is spending time with our Dad...spending time with God...our Creator...

- ...if you look the word prayer up in the dictionary...it is defined as...
“communication with God”...it is simply talking with God...

I want you to think about a time when you were falling in love with someone...

ILLUST: Jenny...my every thought was on her...I couldn't wait for the next moment to talk with her...

- ...the more I talked with her...the more I wanted to talk with her...and while our first conversation was rather short...
 - ...before long we would talk for hours on end...into the early hours of the morning...
 - ...AND...you guessed it...when I got up in the morning...I couldn't wait for the next time to talk with her again...

AND SO...it should be in our relationship with our 'new love'...with God...the one who rescued us from darkness...

- ...and brought us into a wonderful relationship with Himself through his son Jesus Christ...

God wants to talk with us...we get a picture of this in the book of Jeremiah...when God is appealing to Israel who was being rebellious to God at the time...

Jeremiah 7:13 (NKJV) — 13 “...I [...God...] spoke to you, **rising up early** and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer,

The Lord is waiting for us to call out to Him...first thing in the morning...He loves us and is interested in hearing what is on our hearts...

- ...just like I wanted to hear everything about Jenny's day and what she was thinking and so on...
 - ...so it is with God who wants to hear the same sorts of things from us...

Some may think, “But if God knows everything already, why does he want to hear us?”

- ...because He loves us and simply wants to hear us talk to Him about things...about everything that is going on in our lives...

ILLUST: Judah at Fred Meyer asking for Candy...

- ...I knew that I was going to buy him candy...BUT...I just wanted to hear him ask for it...this is the way it is with the Lord...

Prayer can be intimidating when we are first learning to pray...it is not important how we pray...

- ...BUT RATHER...that we are in fact praying...and sometimes the simplest of prayers can be the most powerful...

ILLUST: Jeremy, *"Lord please heal my Uncle George...Amen!"*

Our prayer to God does not have to be long and complicated...in fact Jesus warned the religious leaders about praying in such a manner...

LET'S LOOK AT OUR TEXT...

Matthew 6:5–13 (NKJV) — 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. **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 [...Jesus says...] do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

AND...then Jesus proceeded to teach them what manner they should pray...and Jesus said...

- ...AND...He gives us a great outline for how we can effectively pray...

9 In **this manner**, therefore, pray: [...Jesus is saying...“This is how you are to 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 this day our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. **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.

Now...it can be easy to think that we should always pray in this manner...verbatim...word for word...and call it good...and while there would be nothing wrong with that...

- ...upon closer observation we see that there is a model of prayer here...a simple and powerful structure or outline for prayer...
 - ...that can be very beneficial in developing a productive prayer life...AND...I want to take a closer look at that this morning...

The first and most important aspect of our prayer...is acknowledging who it is that we are praying to...

Our Father...

Romans 8:15–16 (NKJV) — 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “**Abba, Father.**” **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

- ...the word...**Abba** here...is the word framed by the lips of infants, and indicates unreasoning trust; “father” expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship...
 - ...the two together *Abba Father...* express the love and intelligent confidence of the child...
 - ...it would be the equivalent of our modern day...*Papa...or Daddy...*

When we say...***Our Father...*** we are acknowledging...right off the bat...that when we became a Christian...when we were born again...

- ...God became our Father...we recognize Him as our *Papa...*and love Him accordingly...

Our Father...in heaven...Our Father...who dwells in heaven...

Psalms 115:3 (NKJV) — 3 But **our God is in heaven**; He does whatever He pleases.

Isaiah 57:15 (NKJV) — 15 For thus says the **High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity**, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

2 Chronicles 20:5–6 (NKJV) — 5 Then **Jehoshaphat** stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, **6** and said: “O LORD God of our fathers, **are You not God in heaven**, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?

There are so many people in the world who are on a ‘great search’ for God...creating a myriad of scenarios as to where He can be found...

- ...and yet the word of God is clear...that He is ***in heaven...***and we need not search any further...

AND...the Word also tells us that Jesus is right there next to Him...sitting at His right

hand...(Heb 12:1-2, Psalm 110:1)

John 14:5–6 (NKJV) — **5** Thomas said to Him, “Lord [...Jesus...], we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” **6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father [...in heaven...] except through Me.

Anyone who wants to know how to get to heaven...anyone who wants to know how to have access to God...

- ...all they need to do is ask Jesus for directions...

Our Father...in heaven...*Hallowed be Your name...*

- ...the word ***hallowed***...means....*to be holy*...

Whenever we think of the word holy...we think of God...even unbelievers will think of God...

- ...because God is the epitome...the essence of holiness...of purity...of everything that is good...

When we think of the holiness of God...we should think about what went through the great prophet of God...Isaiah’s mind...

Isaiah 6:1–5 (NKJV) — **1** In the year that King Uzziah died, **I saw the Lord** sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. **2** Above it stood seraphim [...angelic beings...]; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. **3** And one cried to another and said: “**Holy, holy, holy** is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” **4** And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. **5** So I said: “**Woe is me, for I am undone!** Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

God is so holy...that when Isaiah stood in His presence...he was completely undone...

- ...in other words...Isaiah was speechless...it was as if he were dead...unable to say anything...

TURN WITH ME...Hebrews 4:15...

NOW...the wonderful things for us...is that because Jesus lives in us...we can come boldly before the throne of God in prayer...ANYTIME we want to...

Hebrews 4:15–16 (NKJV) — **15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. **16** Let us therefore

come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the Old Testament...we learn that it was only the high priest could go into the ‘most holy place’...the inner room of the tabernacle or temple...

- ...and then...but only once a year...to **temporarily** atone for the sins of the people...and being in God’s holy presence was so dangerous...
 - ...that if the priest made one wrong move...he would be killed instantly...

FORTUNATELY...by the precious sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross...sin has been permanently dealt with...

- ...AND...because of this we can come boldly to the throne of God’s mercy and grace...
 - ...through Jesus Christ...our High Priest...any time we desire it is truly a glorious thing...

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name...Your kingdom come...

When we pray...we must pray with an eternal perspective rather than the temporal perspective we have always had...

- ...in other words...because we became a new creation...and the Holy Spirit took residence in our hearts...
 - ...we are able to look at things from an eternal perspective...

Even though things may not make sense to us here...on earth...

- ...in regards to hardships and violence and all of the crazy things that go on in our world...
 - ...we can take great comfort in the fact that there is a new kingdom that we can look forward to...
 - ...ONE which is eternal...forever in fellowship with God our Savior and our Creator...

In the same mindset...we pray... [...God...] ***Your will be done on earth...as it is in heaven...***

- ...another way of saying this...of making applicable to our own lives is...
 - ...*Your will be done...in my life...as it is in heaven...*

When we surrendered our lives to Jesus...we decided that He knows what is best for our lives...

- ...and because we weren't doing a good job of running our own lives...and we never want to go back to that...
 - ...we must always pray...for the Lord's will to be done...

To tell the Lord...in prayer... ***Your will be done...*** is a submission to His Lordship and the fact that He knows what is best for us...

- ...Jesus Himself understood this truth...when He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the late eve or early morning of His crucifixion...

Matthew 26:38–40 (NKJV) — 38 [...Jesus said to the disciples...], “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” **39** He [...Jesus...] 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 You will.**”

- ...Jesus knew that God the Father knew what was best...and willingly submitted to that...AND...so it should be with us...

NOW...once we have acknowledged who God is and expressed a submission to His Lordship...to His will in our lives...

- ...then we can begin to present our needs and our requests to Him...

Jesus taught them to pray... ***Give us this day our daily bread...***

- ...speaking of our various needs and requests to the Lord...

We can begin to present our needs...and then the needs of others...remember He wants to know EVERYTHING that is on our hearts...

- ...YES...he knows our needs already...BUT...He wants to hear us ask Him...He wants to hear us say our dependent we are on Him...
 - ...He wants to show us how much He loves us...by providing our needs...

AND...He will be faithful to provide...NOTICE... ***our daily bread...*** those things we need

on a daily basis...

- ...NOT...necessarily everything we want...thing about the things you wanted and got...
 - ...that afterwards you realized you would have been better off without them...

As we are praying for our **daily bread**...we must trust that the Lord knows the things we need...

- ...trusting that He will protect us from things we may want...BUT...may not be that good for us...

The next thing Jesus says is...**And forgive us our debts** (our sins)...

CONFESSION of sin...must be a regular part of our prayers to God...

- ...even though our sins have been forgiven...we will still commit sins...either sins of **commission**...where out of frustration or anger...
 - ...we purposely do wrong...or **omission**...where we discover we have sinned because we have failed to do what we realize we should have done...

1 John 1:9–10 (NKJV) — **9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

AND...we see that a good ‘barometer’ for the sincerity of our confession is our response to that confession...

- ...Jesus instructs...**forgive us our debts**...*forgive us our sins*...**As we forgive our debtors**...

Sometimes this is hard...especially when we have been seriously wronged or hurt...

- ...BUT...that is when we need to reflect on how forgiving the Lord has been towards us...

Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV) — **32** And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God in Christ forgave you.**

- ...in this same manner...we must be willing to forgive others who have hurt us...

Jesus says...***And do not lead us into temptation...***God would never tempt us to sin...

James 1:13 (NKJV) — 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, **nor does He Himself tempt anyone.**

- ...a more accurate translation of this verse would read...***And do not leave us in temptation...***

Jesus wants us to pray for protection from the temptations that can lead to sin...

Jesus said...

Matthew 26:41 (NKJV) — 41 Watch and pray, **lest you enter into temptation.** The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

TURN WITH ME...1 Cor 10:13...

This is a most amazing verse...regarding how we are able to avoid temptation...and thereby avoid falling into sin...

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV) — 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man [...in other words...there is no temptation you will ever experience...]; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted **beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will also **make the way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it.

It is with the understanding of this truth...that in our times of prayer...we must be diligent to pray...

- ...1) to recognize those ways of escape when God reveals them...2) for the strength to take the escape after He reveals it..
 - ...God is eager to accomplish both of these things in our lives...in order to protect us from falling in the sin that will harm our relationship with Him...

If you understand this profound truth about God’s way of protecting us from sin...

- ...you will always be able to overcome sin when it comes knocking at your door..

...leave us not in temptation......then Jesus says...***But deliver us from evil...***

We previously learned...that without the Lord...we are powerless against the devil...

- ...which is why we must regularly pray for God’s protection...

Psalm 121:7 (NKJV) — **7** The LORD shall preserve you **from all evil**; He shall preserve your soul.

Jesus is our protector...always praying for us to be protected...

John 17:15 (NKJV) — **15** I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should **keep them from the evil one**.

AND...He is ever faithful to keep watch over us...

2 Thessalonians 3:3 (NKJV) — **3** But **the Lord is faithful**, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

Jesus CONCLUDES His instructions on how to pray with...

- ***...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.***

The best way to end any prayer...is to acknowledge how great and wonderful and eternal God is...

- ...and that according to His kingdom...there is power and glory forever more...
 - ***...Amen...***which means... *“so let it be”*...in other words... *“God...let these things that I have prayed...come to pass!”*

In regards to prayer...one question that can arise is...

Q: Do I pray to God or to Jesus?

Remember...they are both one in the same...AND...because of that you can count on the fact...

- ...that if you pray to One the other will hear and respond accordingly...and vice versa...

John 8:29–30 (NKJV) — **29** And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for **I always do those things that please Him.**” **30** As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

John 10:30 (NKJV) — **30** I and My Father are **one**.”

Q: When is the best time to pray?

I believe that the best time is first thing in the morning...

...we saw this demonstrated by Jesus...and others throughout the Scriptures...

Mark 1:35 (NKJV) — 35 Now in the morning, [...Jesus...] having risen **a long while before daylight**, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

- ...when Peter and the others got up...and couldn't find Jesus...they went out to look for Him and found Him praying...

David...whom the bible describes as a man after God's own heart...said...

Psalms 63:1 (NKJV) — 1 O God, You are my God; **Early will I seek You**; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.

EM Bounds...a chaplain in the civil war...and author of numerous writings on prayer...

- *"He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day."*

FINALLY...Recognize that prayer will never come easy...

In the garden...as Jesus is praying...He tells the disciples...

Mark 14:38 (NKJV) — 38 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. **The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**"

- ...the spirit in us will ALWAYS want to pray...BUT...the flesh will never want to pray...

The devil doesn't want us to pray...and will try and do anything to distract us from it...you can expect it...

- ...BECAUSE...He knows...that prayer accomplishes MUCH...

James 5:16 (NKJV) — 16 ...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man **avails much**.

- ...because of our righteous standing before God...through faith in Jesus Christ...
 - ...when we pray...things begin to happen...we can count on it...

LISTEN...God will ALWAYS...answer our prayers...perhaps not the way we want Him to...

- ...BUT...He will always answer...SOMETIMES that answer will be NO...sometimes it will be YES...but either way it is an answer...

The question is...never...will God answer...BUT...will we trust His answer when we receive it...

CONCLUSION...

Prayer is the greatest privilege we have...as it is an opportunity to communicate with God...

Prayer allows us to participate with what He is doing...and there is nothing more exciting about what God is doing...

ILLUST: When kids were little...working on a project. I would hand them a screwdriver...or wrench...

- ...they had no idea what they were doing...but they were participating **with me** with what I was doing...
 - ...that is what prayer like...participating...with what God is doing...

TURN WITH ME...Philippians 4:6...

There is a lot to be anxious about in this world in which we live...prayer puts all things into perspective...

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV) — **6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything **by prayer and supplication**, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **7** and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

God want us to talk to Him...so that He can reveal to us...all of the things we need to know...

- ...to have a fruitful and productive life in the now...with the expectation and anticipation of the life that is to come...

PRAY...

WORSHIP...