

Introduction: People have always had a tendency to be materialistic. We are physical beings, so it is easier to relate to what we can see and touch than to what we can only know with our minds or spirits. In the United States over the last half century we have become a consumer society. We have an obsession with money and all it can buy. Coupled with this, profit hungry manufacturers produce goods with shorter durability that wear out too soon and never satisfy in the first place. People are slow to learn that material goods will never satisfy the deepest longings of their soul. *** In this middle portion of Jesus' inaugural address as The King of God's Kingdom, He discusses prayer, forgiveness, fasting and treasures. He concludes that people can store up treasures on earth for current consumption (at the risk of corruption and decay), or they can store up treasures in heaven (dedicating them to God's Kingdom now and forever) to have a heart that is right with God. *** We can summarize this portion of His address with: ***Pray to store treasure in heaven.*** *** We can sum up our passage from the Psalms in this way: Because The Covenant God, Yahweh, has saved His anointed, His people may call on Him to save them. *** Let's now dig into the details of God's Word to us this morning.)

I. Jesus' teaching on prayer. (*Matthew 6:7-15*)

A. How NOT to pray. (*Verses 7-9a*)

1. As you are praying you may not babble as the nations, because they think in much speaking they will be heard. (*Verse 7*)

Babble: Jesus is speaking about people who foolishly say the same meaningless words over and over.

Many words: Jesus pairs this prohibition with a word meaning much talking with many words.

2. Therefore, you all may not be made to be like unto them. (*Verse 8a*)

3. Because your Father has known of what things you all have need before you all ask Him of the thing. (*Verses 8bc*)

Your Father has known: Jesus assures them their Father God has full knowledge of their needs.

4. Therefore, you all must be praying in this way. (*Verse 9a*)

Like this: 'The Lord's Prayer' is actually an outline of topics Jesus wants His disciples to pray.

B. Address our Father in His holiness, then present our needs to Him. (*Verses 9b-13*)

Address our Father: Father of us, The One in the heavens. (*Verse 9b*)

Family: This is not a prayer for individuals to pray, but for God's family to pray together as His sons and daughters and Jesus' younger brothers and sisters.

Heavens: There are at least three 'heavens' in Scripture. The first is the atmosphere of the earth; the second is all the empty space in the created universe; and, the third is the eternal space where God lives with angels and His people who have finished their lives on earth.

1. It must be made holy, The Name of Thee. (*Verse 9c*)

Holy Name: God is awesome and holy. Our prayers do not add to this. The command-petition is that people will be made to realize their obligation to fear Him in faith to obtain wisdom.

2. It must come, The Kingdom of Thee. (*Verse 10a*)

3. It must be done, the will of Thee, as in heaven, also upon earth. (*Verse 10b*)

As in heaven: The *Revelation* John received helps us understand these two command-petitions. He saw living creatures and elders falling down before God and worshipping Him (*chapters 4-5*); those who died for their testimony of Jesus as The King (*chapter 7*); and, angels doing His will throughout all the final judgments He brings on those on earth who refuse to do His will (*chapters 8-9, 15-16*).

The needs of His children. (*Verses 11-13*)

- 1'. The bread of us sufficient for the day, Thou must give it to us today. (*Verse 11*)

Sufficiency: The first phrase about 'sufficient bread' addresses every daily necessity for the family of God in a specific location. They may make a command-petition to Father God that He will supply the amount necessary for the family of faith to do its daily duties with joy in their heart.

Sharing: This requires communication among all family members, as some individuals will be supplied with more than is needed and others less, but in sharing all needs are met by Father God.

- 2'. Thou must forgive to us the debts of us, as also we, we have forgiven the debtors of us. (*Verse 12*)

Debts: A debt is what is legally owed. Metaphorically, it is an offense or sin.

WE must forgive: The emphatic repetition of **we** indicates that to expect forgiveness from Father God, we must forgive others. Jesus will soon return to this subject to fully drive home this point.

- 3'. May Thou not lead us into temptation; but, Thou must deliver us from the evil. (*Verse 13*)

Desire: The request to not be tempted is not a command-request, but a desire expressed.

Evil: The final command-petition is to be specifically delivered from THE evil. This is a three-fold request covering the evil in our own hearts, the evil in the world system and the evil one himself.

Omitted: The last declaration of praise ('For Thine is The Kingdom ... forever') is not in any text of the Gospel of Matthew before the fifth century (a four hundred year gap).

C. Centrality of forgiveness. (*Verses 14-15*)

1. For, if you all may forgive men their trespasses, He will forgive you all, your heavenly Father. (*Verse 14*)

Trespass: A trespass is a wrong action that is a deviation from the truth of God.

Positive: Jesus promises forgiveness for transgressions to those who ask the Father and have themselves also forgiven the transgressions of others. May we all act together on this truth that forgiveness is the key to God's forgiveness and our access to God in a right relationship with Him

2. For, if you all may not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (*Verse 15*)
Negative: This is the greatest incentive to forgive others: we must forgive to be forgiven our Father!

II. Fasting, stewardship and salvation. (*Matthew 6:16-21; Psalm 20:6-9*)

A. Commands concerning fasting. (*Verses 16-18*)

1. When you all may be fasting, you all may not be gloomy-faced as the hypocrites, because they are disfiguring their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. (*Verses 16ab*)
Fast honestly: Fasting involves forgoing food and water in order to focus on God without the distractions of daily living.
NOT for men: Anyone fasting to be seen by men is being motivated by approval of men, not God.
2. Truly, I am saying to you all, they are receiving their reward. (*Verse 16c*)
Limited reward: Men will reward them with some esteem, but the rewards men give pale in comparison to the rewards God can give.
3. When thou are fasting, thou must anoint thy head and thou must wash thy face. (*Verse 17*)
Anoint and wash: Jesus goes from speaking to all His followers to speaking to each individual.
True fasting involves giving diligence to all daily routines.
4. That thou may thou may not appear to men to be fasting, but thy Father seeing in secret shall give out to [reward] thee. (*Verse 18*)
NOT impress men: Unlike hypocrites, followers of Jesus do not desire men's approval over God's approval. The week before the crucifixion John says that some who believed in Jesus would not go public with their faith because they loved praise from men more than from God (*John 12:42-43*).
Now and future reward: God will give back to those putting Him first, both now and in the future.

B. Commands concerning treasure and heart. (*Verses 19-21*)

1. You all must not be storing up to you treasures upon the earth, where moth and eating rust are destroying, and where thieves are breaking through and are stealing. (*Verse 19*)
NOT on earth: Any riches we horde on earth are fleeting, we cannot keep them.
2. But you all must be storing up to you treasures in heaven where neither moth nor eating rust are destroying, and where thieves are not breaking through nor are stealing. (*Verse 20*)
NO corruption in heaven: All we dedicate to The Kingdom of Heaven is not subject to corruption.
3. Because where the treasure of you all is, there will be also your heart. (*Verse 21*)
Heart: By practicing good stewardship habits our hearts will be made more like Christ's heart

Bottom Line: Jesus began with commands concerning prayer and has ended with proper stewardship of treasures. From this we can conclude that all who follow Jesus in obedient faith should live by this truth:

Pray to store treasure in heaven

C. Because Yahweh has saved His anointed, we may call on Him to save us. (*Psalm 20:6-9*)

1. Now I know because Yahweh has saved His anointed ... (*Verse 6a*)
Know: The psalmist knows by The Holy Spirit that Yahweh has saved His anointed (messiah).
2. ... He will answer him from His holy heaven in mighty salvation of His right hand. (*Verses 6bc*)
Answer: Whatever messiah asks from Yahweh will be answered in mighty salvation. This is an allusion to the resurrection of the anointed (christos) after His death on the Cross for the sins of people.
3. These in chariot and these in horses, but in The Name of Yahweh our God we will remember. (*Verse 7*)
Chariots and horses: Non-Israelites look to creatures and what they make with their hands.
Name of our God: But, God's people remember that all they need, including their salvation is from their Covenant God Yahweh.
4. They have collapsed and fallen, and we, we have risen and have been restored. (*Verse 8*)
They have fallen: Those trusting in everything but God have collapsed and fallen, and can't get up.
We have risen: We (emphatically) have been raised and restored to God through our remembrance (in faith) of Him.

Those trusting in God are raised

5. Yahweh must save the king; He will answer us in the day when we will call. (*Verse 9*)
Petition: They petition Yahweh to save the current anointed human king in David's line.
Hope of faith: They make this petition based on their knowledge of Yahweh's salvation of His anointed.
For this reason they call out to Him on the grounds of faith. In the same way, if we desire the obedience of faith that gives salvation in Jesus we may call out to Him for salvation; and, then in order to be disciples growing to be like our Teacher, we may:

Pray to store treasure in heaven for the sake of our hearts.

Conclusion: Jesus teaches His followers how NOT to pray, then He gives an outline of what prayer should be. First, address our Father in His awesome holiness. Then present our needs, especially for forgiveness. Finally, He gives guidelines for fasting and financial stewardship. The psalmist anticipated the salvation of Messiah as an encouragement to God's people to call on Him for their salvation. Then they should always:

Pray to store treasure in heaven