

Title: Don't Pray Like a Hypocrite

Passage: Matthew 6:5-15

Introduction:

The Lord's Prayer

- a prayer of revolution as we pray for God's will to be done and His kingdom to come.
- Takes merely 20 seconds to say but a lifetime to learn.

Passage: Matthew 6:5-15

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: *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 also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Initial Observations on The Lord's Prayer

Context

- Luke 11: disciples asked Jesus to be taught how to pray. (Their only request of Jesus)
- Matthew 6: timing placed as the center/emphasis of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Why?

- Why would disciples ask Jesus to pray?
- Answer: disciples must have seen the correlation between Jesus' prayer life and the power displayed in His life
- Jesus prayed extensively. Ex: He prayed all night before choosing the twelve disciples

Luke 5:15-16

But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

Luke 6:12-13

In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:

Mark 6:46

And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

Who

- Jesus was both fully divine and fully human.
- In His humanness, Jesus genuinely prayed.

Philippians 2:5-7

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Hypocrite

False Piety of People

- The focus as verses that preceded the Lord's prayer speak to hypocrisy

Matthew 6:1

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 6:5

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites..."

Word "hypocrite"

- root word = stemmed from actors who wore masks that played different characters
- Meaning = anyone who treated the world as their stage who casted themselves as the "starring role" and portraying themselves as someone who they really not.

Matthew 23:27-28

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Wrong motivation

- Prays not to be holy but merely be portrayed as holy

Matthew 6:5

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others.

- Clarification: there is nothing wrong with standing or publicly in of itself (see Hannah, Jehoshaphat who prayed standing)

Question of reflection: Are you a hypocrite?

- compare the amount of time you spend in public prayer vs. time you spend privately.
- motivation in prayer is about how appear vs. genuinely talking to God.

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

What is the hypocrites reward?

- merely their spoken words, which is temporary and fleeting.

Matthew 7:21

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Aspects of Biblical Prayer

Motivation with a heart for God

- not as a hypocrite

2 Corinthians 4:18

as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Pray in secret

“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.”

- Where: A particular place out of the public eye where only you are with the Lord.
- A particular scheduled time with God. Be specific in your prayers (ex: pray about a particular topic or area on a specific day)

Psalms 139:7-10

Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

- God sees and knows all things. He can hear your prayers wherever you may be.
- The unseen God is not one who doesn't see. He sees and hears all things!

Pray awaiting rewards from God

“And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

- God answers prayer!

Don't consider prayer as something magical

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.”

- don't rely on mere recantations or recitations of mere words that are mindlessly repeated.
- when pray Lord's Prayer, give thoughtful consideration. It is an *example* of godly prayer, not mere words to say.

Praying to the good, trustworthy God who already knows

“Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Question: What good does prayer do since God already knows?

- Prayer doesn't change God's mind.
 - God knows all things - past, present, and future. (See Isaiah 40-48)
 - God never does anything that is not perfectly good.
- Prayer does change things: you!
 - Changes our hearts so that we are in so commune with God can say “Thy will be done”
- See Jesus' example in the Garden of Gethsemane:

Luke 22:42-44

[Jesus] saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

- Jesus knew why He came. So why pray? In His humanness, to realign and recognize God's will.

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Key point of prayer: Re-aligning your life to God's will and purposes, always acknowledging God is in control and He is good regardless of circumstances.

Psalms 9:10

And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.