

MASTER'S DEGREE IN PRAYER
Matthew 6:5-13

INTRODUCTION

The reason I entitled this “Master’s Degree in Prayer” is because we’re going to learn from our Lord and Master Himself, Jesus Christ.

Read 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. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 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.

7 “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. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:

“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 also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you,

15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Pray

What is prayer?

Etymology : proseuchomai “pros” and “euchomai”

Pros (preposition) towards, near “euchomai” pray to God

Prayer is going near to God. “Lumalapit ka sa Dios”.

God is near but when you pray you going near to God.

Malapit sa iyo ang Dios pero pag nanalangin ka, lumalapit ka sa Dios.

When to pray?

7 and when you pray

Our Lord did not say “if you pray”. He said, “when you pray”. It means the Lord assumes His people will come near to Him. It's not a matter of “if” but a matter of “when”. In short, God expects you to pray to Him.

To the people of God, PRAYER IS PRIORITY ONE.

And this is how our Lord taught the disciples how to pray.

People call this The Lord’s prayer but this is supposed to be The Disciples Prayer.

Luke 11 : One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

And more than reciting this, it should serve as a guide when we pray.

Last week, we talked about

I. **THE RIGHT ATTITUDE WHEN PRAYING** (*Matthew 6:5-8*)

1. **Authenticity** “*and when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites*”
“hypocrites” – actor
2. **Humility** “*for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men...*”
3. **Intimacy** – *6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*
4. **Simplicity**

7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him”

Greek : battalogeo (meaningless repetition)...babbling; vain repetition

Why don’t you need vain repetition?

“for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Today, we will study why our Lord Jesus said to approach God like a child would approach his own father.

II. THE RIGHT APPROACH TO PRAYING

“This then, is how you should pray:”

Note : But it doesn't also mean we can't recite this prayer...(Luke 11:12). As in the previous verse, what our Lord is against is meaningless prayer.

(Show photo) The Resolute Desk; We all know that it's not easy to enter into the White House, specially in the Oval Office. Most of the time, only generals, staff, cabinet ministers can go in and out the office. Senators and Congressmen need an appointment, much less ordinary citizens but this photo of JFK Jr. has become iconic because he is shown in his pajamas, playing under the desk of the President. Why does he have this kind of access? It's because he is the son of the president.

How then should we pray?

1. **Pray with confidence. “Our Father in heaven”**

Why can we pray with confidence?

a.) He is “Our Father”

Now you may ask me, “Pastor, if God is our Father, what kind of father is he.”

It's because some of you might have had strict fathers who are easily angered.

Some of you might have had very permissive fathers to the point that you can ridicule them.

Or some of you might have had absentee fathers that did not care for you at all.

So what kind of Father is our God?

Let our Lord Jesus Christ Himself illustrate.

If you remember, the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32, that story should be titled “The Lovesick Father”

The younger son wanted nothing to do with his father that he asked for his inheritance. We all know the story, he squandered his inheritance in wild living until famine strikes and he became so desperate that he wanted to go back to his father.

Look at what happened next.

Luke 15: 17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ 20 So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

Now let's quickly look at this :

1. His father saw him while he was still a long way off. That means, the father was watching out for his return.

Christian, are your hearts and even your life far away from God right now?

You might think you are so far away from God that He will not accept you back?

You think you are so deep down unclean just like the prodigal son in the pigs that you will not be accepted by God?

Have confidence, that when you make your first step towards the Father...our Father in heaven runs to meet you.

2. His father was filled with compassion.

Etymology : "filled with compassion" "had compassion" (KJV) *splagchnizomai*... where we get our word spleen. The greeks believe that emotions come from our gut.

This means our Father loves you with a fervent kind of love. He loves you that he runs to meet you. Our Lord even said, he ***threw his arms around him and kissed him.***

That is the love of our Father to us.

That's why whenever we kneel down as His children, we can have confidence that He hears us. It's because of His great love for us.

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

This is the privilege of the follower of Christ. Why do I say it's a privilege?

Romans 8: 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

We have been adopted as His children.

Only a true believer and follower of Christ can call God our Father. It's not everyone who can call God our Father. Not everyone is a child of God.

In fact, our Lord called the religious people during that time their father is the devil.

John 8: 41 "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. 43 Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires.

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS : How do you become a child of God?

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

You need to believe in what Jesus Christ has done on the cross for you. Just like the prodigal son, you need to come to your senses, that you are a sinner and not deserving of heaven and repent of your sin. You also need to repent of your own righteousness. And then realize, that the only way to the Father is through Jesus Christ... not because of your own goodness.

John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

What part of “no one...except through Jesus Christ” is not clear here?

We cannot go to the Father in our own goodness but only through Jesus Christ.

That's why

*Galatians 3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God **through faith**,*

Do you want to do that? Do you want to call God, our Father. It is only through Jesus Christ.

b.) He is “in heaven” s.

The reason we can pray with confidence is because our Father is in heaven.

He is above...He is in control... He is powerful...

Pray with confidence that our prayers are heard. It's not based on how you feel. It's not based on what you do. **It's based on relationship. And if it's based on relationship...it's a relationship with the Almighty God.**

It means God our Father is seated on His throne and through Jesus Christ alone, we can approach Him.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And knowing that He is in heaven, we know that God is infinitely holy and infinitely good, this means He only wants the best for us

Matthew 7 : 7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Now let me give a commentary here based on our Lord's teaching and it's the reason why I am bold and I am encouraged when we pray as a church.

Why?

Our Lord Jesus said, . *9 Pray then like this:*

"Our Father

It means when we as a church who is God's children approach our Father, we know He is there.

2. **Pray with reverence. "hallowed be thy name"**

"hallowed" "hagiazo" – holy, sanctify, consecrate

Remember : Even though He is our Father...He is God Almighty.

Hebrews 4: 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Yes, we will receive mercy and find grace **but we have to remember it is still a throne.**

Our Father is The King! Yes, He is our Father **but we are still talking to a Holy, Holy, Holy God.**

Biblical Illustration :

Isaiah 6: 1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

This is the reason why I cringe when somebody calls the Pope, Holy Father. There is only one Holy Father and that is our Father in heaven.

Now you might ask, "Pastor, God is our Father and yet He is Holy, so how do we reconcile this?" There's no contradiction.

You are not talking to a father like some kids or teenager talk to their earthly fathers.
What do I mean?

We approach God with confidence, knowing we have a relationship with Him as our Father, **meaning we can rest and be relaxed in His presence.** But relaxed doesn't mean disrespect. **Our posture should be with respect and awe and reverence because He is God.**

Since God is holy, we do not disrespect Him by thinking we can come to Him without repenting of our sin. Remember, the prodigal son "came to his senses" and went back and realized his sin, changed his mind about the situation and went back...that's repentance.

Illustration : A rich man was given a big party and it's a formal party and the invitation says attire should be formal because it will honor the rich man. Everyone comes and are excited wearing their nicest formal clothes and then the son of the rich man appears in soiled shirt, ripped jeans and sneakers and drunk. Isn't he showing his disrespect and distaste to his own father? This is what happens when we approach God knowing that there's sin in our lives and we haven't confessed and repented of it.

This is the reason why the father in the story of the prodigal son, the father asked the servants to bring the son the best robes...

Luke 15: 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

Yes, we are children of God... the child of a Holy father. Our clothes should be holy.

1 Peter 1 : 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

That's why the Psalmist said :

Psalm 24: 3 Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? 4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.

Luther's Catechism wrote

Quote : "How is God's name hallowed among us?"

Answer : When both our doctrine and our life are truly Christian. – Luther's catechism

hallowed be thy name

What is the name of God?

Exodus 3: 13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am. (ehyeh asher ehyeh)

It's a very powerful name. He did not say, "I was" or "I will" He said "I am who I am."

This means, He is self-sufficient – He doesn't need anyone.

He is self-existent. No one created Him so He doesn't owe anyone a favour. It also means He is always present.

This give us confidence that our Father is God. Yes, we ask, we pray but we can trust that His answer will and His timing will always be what's holy and best for us.

Which bring us to...

3. Pray with submission.

“your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

Now this verse shows that prayer is not just simply a way for us to get what we want.

“your kingdom come”

We have to remember that the basic premise of a kingdom is that there is a King and there are subjects.

So when we pray your kingdom come, we are simply saying, “May the King and His will happen on earth.”

That’s why it’s followed immediately by

“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

And what is the thing that they do in heaven?

They worship and give Him glory!

Revelation 4 : Day and night they never stop saying:

*“Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.”*

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

**11 “You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.”**

So when we pray, “your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”, we can look at it on three different aspects at the same time.

1. We are praying that the people who belongs in God’s kingdom will give Him glory.

That is what we are praying for. In everything that we do, we pray that His name will be honored and glorified.

It doesn't matter where you are, we have to remember that we represent the King here on earth. The basic questions we should be asking are, "How can I glorify God in my work, my situation and relationships?"

How do we know we are living like the children of the King? How are we giving Him glory?

Is it because we are singing the same songs? Is it because of the food that we eat? Is it because of the "rules" we follow.

No, here's what kingdom living looks like.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

There righteousness in our lives. What is righteousness? Is our life acceptable to God. Let us remember that because of Jesus Christ, His righteousness is already in us. Our position in front of God is we are already accepted by Him. Remember, Romans 14 was written as a practical application of Romans chapters 1 to 10 which explains our position in Christ.

Now that we are accepted by our Father because of Jesus, let us live lives that is just appropriate to our position – children obeying God and His Word.

There is peace and joy in our lives. We know that we are not doing God's will when there's no righteousness, peace and joy in our lives.

That's why

1 Thessalonians 5: 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Some people may ask, how do I know I'm doing or that this is God's will... if your lifestyle is acceptable to God, and we have peace and we have joy and we constantly pray and giving thanks no matter what is happening in our lives, you know you are at the center of God's will... you are doing kingdom living.

2. The second aspect is that we pray that unbelievers to give Him glory.

How can we do that? It's by telling people about the gospel of Christ.

In short, we are obeying God's will to share the gospel so that people will give Him glory!

When our Lord was here on earth, He was always talking about the Kingdom of God and how can people enter the Kingdom of God.

John 3:3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

And how can you be born again?

As explained earlier, you can only become the child of the King, in short part of His kingdom if you believe in what Jesus Christ has done on the cross.

That's why our Lord said in

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

This is the reason why we pray to our Father in heaven that He uses us to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

3. We want God's kingdom to literally come here on earth.

One of these days that will happen. We pray for that to happen soon.

Revelation 21 : 1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"

Summary :

In summary, when we approach God, it is with a heart of worship.

You might say, Pastor, what is a person with a heart of worship.

It is a person who is ready to yield, to surrender His entire life and His entire being to the Lord.

Our Lord Jesus demonstrated that when He was about to face the cross, in obedience to God our Father.

Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

Story : When Chicay was in the middle of her third battle with cancer which was the hardest, Joi Lardizabal got her story and published it in a magazine called Tahanan (Home) magazine. She also included it in her blog.

Remember, she was diagnosed with Stage 3c Ovarian cancer in 2007. She had to undergo chemo. Then the cancer came back in 2008. In 2010, it came back again.

Let Joahnna and Joi tell it in their own words as they wrote :

A Privilege To Be Sick

During the times when I was feeling so down, frustrated and depressed, I cried to God like a child crying to a parent. God would always gently remind me that "THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU, JOAHNNA, THIS IS ALL ABOUT ME." I have always known that my sickness will be used for His glory, and I thank Him for that wonderful privilege.

- Against All Odds, A Survivor's Story : Conquering Cancer

<https://joifuljourneyblog.wordpress.com/2018/06/13/against-all-odds-a-survivors-story-conquering-cancer/>

In the end, prayer is not about us...the right approach to prayer is knowing that it's all about Him. **We pray so that we will give Him glory as He answers our prayers. THAT IS THE RIGHT APPROACH TO PRAYER**

Psalm 50:15 Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory." (NLT)

S.G.D.