

Praying To Be Heard

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- [0:00] If you have a copy of the Scriptures, I invite you to turn to Matthew chapter 6, the same chapter we were in last week.
- We'll be there this morning as well. If you're using one of the few Bibles that are scattered around in the chairs, you just have to turn to page 811, and there you'll find Matthew chapter 6. It is the middle of what is known as the Sermon on the Mount.
- It is the longest recorded sermon of Jesus in any of the Gospels in all of the New Testament. It's three chapters long, chapters 5, 6, and 7. So we landed last week in the middle of it, and we're this morning again in the middle of it, learning what it is to pray, how we ought to pray.
- Last week, why we ought to pray. What is the motive of our prayers? And so we looked last week at the few verses before the passage that we're looking at this morning.
- Last week, we looked and saw how Jesus in verses 5 and 6 teaches us that we ought to pray looking ahead to a future reward. We ought to long for that reward.
- [1:12] We ought to want that reward. But there's also in the present, there is the blessing of being those kinds of people who are looking ahead to the reward, who receive even now in the present a glimpse of the future reward.
- In fact, we said that the Beatitudes at the very beginning of this sermon, some of you are familiar with those, all the blessings. Blessed be, blessed be, blessed be. Over and over, Jesus begins the sermon that way. The Beatitudes are in a lot of ways.
- It is a glimpse of what is to come. So even though we pray for a future reward, as we saw last week, and that ought to motivate us, we pray even expecting to experience a piece of that reward in the present.
- Because the reward ultimately is God Himself. It's the presence of God. It's fullness of joy in the presence of God. But we can expect that now we can experience some part of that, even in our lives in the present.
- So we saw last week the motive of prayer. And this morning, I want to look and see the manner of prayer. How should we pray? If we ought to pray with our hearts geared in a certain direction, shouldn't that make us pray in a certain way?
- [2:20] And we're going to see that Jesus says, yes, it should make you pray in a certain way. So I want you to glance down at the text here in Matthew chapter 6. And we're going to begin. We're going to pick up in verse 7 and read all the way down to verse 13.
- And I'd like you guys to stand in honor of the Word of God as we read together. Jesus instructs His disciples, 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. Father, we're thankful that Jesus took it upon Himself to teach His disciples and through them to teach us, His present day disciples, how we should pray.

[3 : 31] And we ask this morning that the Spirit would teach us through the words of Christ recorded by Matthew, would teach us how we ought to pray. And we ask these things in Christ's name.

Amen. You guys take a seat. Every year at this time of year when we celebrate Independence Day as Americans, we are faced with a reality as followers of Christ.

We are reminded of the truth that we are dual citizens, that we have a heavenly citizenship. In fact, the Bible goes so far as to say that in light of our heavenly citizenship, in this world we are, in fact, strangers and aliens in this world.

And yet, on the other hand, we acknowledge that we live in a particular place. We come from a particular place. We have roots. We have connections with both places and peoples.

So that you might have an ethnic identity that identifies where your ancestors came from. Or you may simply have a national identity as an American or as a Canadian, perhaps. I don't think we have anything else represented in here.

[4 : 40] But you'll have some sort of identity, right? And so we're struck by this reality that, yes, we are citizens of a heavenly kingdom. We are strangers and aliens in this world.

And yet, in this world, we are also citizens of earthly kingdoms. We have ties to the world. And so we are confronted with questions like, what role should patriotism play in our lives?

To what extent should we identify as an American? And at what point do we stop and say, no, I will not be identified as an American if that's what American means?

Is there a point in time where we say, we draw a line and we say, no more? Because the fact of the matter is, we live between two worlds. We are, in fact, citizens of a heavenly kingdom.

But we do live in this world. And everything that we do reflects that. The way that we live our lives reflects that reality. And, in fact, I believe that the Sermon on the Mount is written specifically to address the fact that we are citizens of two kingdoms.

[5 : 40] Or, to put it another way, that we are people who belong to another kingdom who yet live in the midst of this world's kingdoms. We are a people looking ahead, but a people living in the present.

And the Sermon on the Mount, in many ways, is written to disciples of Christ who expect the full coming of the kingdom someday and know that it is broken into this world and who yet need to live in the present, in this world in which we now live.

So the scholars have struggled for a long time to really understand who's the audience of Jesus here? Who is he addressing these instructions to?

Because sometimes, when you read the things that Jesus says in these chapters, they seem like things that would be impossible for anyone living in the real world. How can you never lust?

Jesus says, if you lust in your heart, you've committed adultery. He says, if you're angry with your brother without cause, you've practically committed murder. And so, when Jesus begins to drill down into our hearts, we think, how can this possibly be an ethic that should guide people who live in this world who are still fallen people surrounded by a fallen culture?

[7 : 00] How is that even possible? But then, on the other hand, you read at the beginning of the sermon, he gave these instructions to his disciples. And we come to understand how the sermon functions and how it teaches us and how we're expected to live if we will read it in light of the fact that we have a heavenly kingdom and a heavenly citizenship.

We are looking forward to a future reward. And yet, even now, in the present, in this fallen world, we are expected to live in a fallen world as citizens of another kingdom.

In fact, there's a terminology that scholars have come up with to describe this, and they call it the already but not yet. In other words, the kingdom is already here in some sense, but it's not yet here in its fullness.

And our lives must be lived out as people who are aware of that, who know that and feel that tension. And we felt that tension as we looked last week at Jesus' instructions on how to pray.

We are looking ahead to a future reward, but we're praying for things in the present so that our motive is shaped by the already and the not yet.

[8 : 15] But then, obviously, if that's true of us, then how we are going to pray also should be shaped by the already but not yet reality that we face. And, in fact, it is.

Jesus not only tells us why we should pray, but He tells us how we ought to pray. In fact, if you look down at the text, you'll notice that He starts with how not to pray. He's been doing that.

He talks about how not to give alms. He talks about how not to pray in comparison to the Jewish religious Pharisees, the hypocrites of His day. And now He's going to tell us another way that we should not pray.

He says in verse 7, 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. Now, it's not wrong to want to be heard.

In fact, I would argue that Jesus is showing us how we should pray if, in fact, we do want to be heard. The Gentiles are not going to be heard. Despite all of their repetitions, despite all the time that they will devote, Jesus says they won't be heard.

[9 : 16] If that word Gentiles is confusing to you sometimes, there are times like this when we can simply read it as non-Christian, unbeliever. In Jesus' context, of course, He's talking to His Jewish disciples, so Gentile to them signifies somebody outside the covenant.

And so we can read it here as, how do people of other religions pray? How do non-Christians pray? And you can look around the world, and the vast majority of non-Christian religions are characterized by a kind of repetitiousness in prayer, by a lot of routines and rituals that surround prayer and take up a lot of time.

And Jesus says, no one will be heard for their adherence to rituals and for the repetitiveness of their prayers. He's not, of course, saying that we ought not to ever repeat ourselves when we pray.

Jesus, in fact, elsewhere in the Gospels instructs us that we ought to ask over and over for the same things. It's not repetitiveness that Jesus has as His target here. Nor is it a great deal of time spent in prayer that Jesus has as His target here.

Because Jesus Himself, we are told a few times in the Gospels, would sometimes pray all the way through the night. So if it's not repetitiveness that Jesus has as His target here, and it's not length of time spent in prayer, then what exactly is His target?

[10 : 27] Because He says, don't pray as they pray. They think that they will be heard for their many words. What is His target here? His target here is praying in the way that He describes in the following verse.

Here's how we are to pray. Not simply throwing out words, not simply spending time, not simply building a mountain of vocabulary that we can use so that we sound impressive when we pray. No.

He says, You should pray like those who are praying to their Father. He says, Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. We do not pray like those who need to pray either for a long time or with a lot of verboseness in order to capture God's attention.

We pray as those who have a Father who already knows everything that you need and everything that you could possibly say and that you are in fact going to say to Him.

So how do you pray to a Father who knows everything that you need and knows everything that you're going to say? That's the real question.

[11:31] How do we pray to the kind of God that we acknowledge and worship? And Jesus answers that in what we call the Lord's Prayer. He says, Pray then like this.

We know, of course, that He doesn't simply mean us to repeat this prayer over and over. It's a good prayer to repeat. You should memorize the Lord's Prayer. But He means more than repeating these words. This is a manner of praying.

This is an example of how we ought to pray. Pray then like this, He says. And then if you look at the prayer, it's not overly complicated. There are seven separate petitions in this prayer and you can see them very easily.

He says, We ought to pray for God's name to be hallowed, for His kingdom to come, for His will to be done. We ought to pray that He'll give us our daily bread, forgive us our debts, lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil.

Seven straightforward petitions that He says, These are the kinds of things that you ought to pray. When you pray, these are the areas that you want to cover. These are the sorts of things you want to be saying. But it's not an exhaustive list, is it?

[12:34] Even if we treat these things as large, broad categories of prayer, which is normally how we treat these when we come to preach through them. In fact, I've preached through the Lord's Prayer and it took me a number of weeks at a time to do that.

You don't want me to do that this morning and cram that entire sermon series into one sermon. Trust me, you really don't. We don't have time. We have to be out of here by 1230. They start locking the doors. But we can treat it like that.

We can go through each petition individually and treat them as broad categories. And we can see in that sense that the examples that Jesus offered do cover most things that we could think of to pray.

But it's not all inclusive. For instance, there's no encouragement for thanksgiving in here. And yet when you read through the Apostle Paul's prayers, almost all of Paul's prayers that he writes down for us in his letter, letters begin with thanksgiving.

So where is the thanksgiving in Jesus' prayer specifically? Where is it? He never commands us in this prayer to give thanks, does he? No, he doesn't.

[13:34] So it's not an all inclusive. This is everything you could possibly pray for. This is, in fact, I believe, instructions for how to pray as those who live with the tension of the already, but not yet.

The kingdom of God is already here in some sense, but not yet here in its fullness. We await a future reward, and yet we experience that reward to some degree in the present.

We are citizens of a heavenly kingdom, and yet we live in this world that has fallen. And this is the kinds of prayers that people who live in this sort of tension ought to be praying.

So I want us to look at this prayer. We will look at each petition, but not in as much detail as we could. In fact, what I would rather you walk away with, rather than remembering every detail about each petition, I want you this morning to come away with seeing how this prayer is broken up.

You can break it into two neat sections, into two parts, and you can see it if you'll just pay attention, even in the English, to the way that things are worded. You'll notice that the first three petitions group together in the way that they are worded, and the last four petitions group together in a particular way.

[14:47] Notice how the first three are worded. They are all the kinds of prayers that are, let this happen. May this happen. So he says, hallowed be your name, or a little bit more literally, let your name be hallowed.

Let your name be sanctified. Let your name be consecrated. Let it be that way. And then he follows that up with, let your kingdom come. And then finally, let your will be done, or may your will be done.

The grammar here matches from phrase to phrase, and yet there's a change when you get to the fourth petition. No longer is it may this happen, or let this happen.

Now it's more straightforward requests. Give us our daily bread. Forgive us our debts. Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from evil.

So there's a clear division in the prayer. First we have all the let us, or let your name be, let your will be, the lets we'll call them. And then we have the gives. Give us this.

[15:47] Forgive us this. Lead us not. It's the straightforward ask preceded by, we're saying, God, let this be reality. Let these things be true.

And so this morning I want to ask, how do these two parts of the prayer relate to one another? And if we're reading them in light of the sermon being written to people who live in the tension of the already and not yet, how does that affect the way that we understand the prayer?

And how does that affect the way that we make use of this particular prayer? So let's take the first three petitions. Let's take those together. Okay. We have three petitions that I believe are, are so closely connected that you could say on one level that they are three ways of saying the same thing.

Now there are definitely clear differences between the three requests. All right. So don't hear me saying that it's just vain repetition. It's not. It's not just mere repetition or vain repetition.

There are differences and there are distinctions between the three requests that if we were going to divide this prayer up into multiple sermons we would focus upon. But there's also a unity to them.

[16:53] There is a sense in which they're all aiming at the same thing. They're all requesting the same reality. So what is that reality? If I had to describe it in one phrase, I would describe it as it is a prayer that all the realities of the kingdom of God would be manifest in the here and now.

So all the things that we hope for, all the things that we are wanting, all the things that we look forward to, it is a prayer that those things would more fully break into this world and our lives in the present.

So let's look at each one individually. We'll see how that works. First, there is our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Now, this is an interesting phrase.

We can't go into a lot of detail, but it's an interesting phrase because most of the time throughout the New Testament that we find this particular word used, it's usually translated sanctify. And it's usually used to describe not God, but us, something that we want done to ourselves.

So, for instance, we read in Paul's letters that he says, this is the will of God, your sanctification. It's the idea of you being made holy, you being transformed into something that you are presently not.

[18:12] But that's surely not the case with God. When we are told to pray, God, let your name be sanctified. Let your name be hallowed. Or, better yet, let your name be holy or made holy.

How are we to understand that particular phrase? It cannot mean, God, let your name become something that it's not. Or let you become holy when you are lacking in holiness.

Now, it cannot mean anything like that. So, what exactly does it mean? In fact, we don't find a whole lot of instances of the name of God with this particular verbiage being made holy or consecrated or hallowed.

But we do find God himself being sanctified a few times in the Old Testament, particularly in Leviticus and in Numbers. We'll find a few instances there. But even in those books, the vast majority of time that we come across this language, it's about God's people being sanctified, God's people being consecrated.

A couple of times, though, we do find language of God's name being sanctified. I want to show you just one of those this morning. I want you to hold your place there in Matthew.

[19:23] And I want you to turn all the way back in the Old Testament to the book of Ezekiel. We're not going to turn and look at Old Testament examples of all the petitions, but I think this is significant for what we have said about the context in which Jesus teaches the prayer.

In Ezekiel chapter 36, we find one of the most well-known predictions of the new covenant that was to come from the perspective of the people of Israel.

The people of Israel had failed to live up to the stipulations of the old covenant, the covenant that God made with them in the wilderness through Moses when he gave them the Ten Commandments and all those other commands. They had failed.

God had judged them for that failure and taken them into exile. But God in the midst of that exile speaks through the prophets and promises another day when he'll make a new covenant with his people, a covenant in which he doesn't simply give them laws and say obey, but a covenant in which he actually sends his spirit to give them new hearts so that they're capable of obeying.

But even more than that, he will write and inscribe the law upon their hearts. He will fundamentally transform them on the inside rather than merely externally giving them a standard to which they cannot attain.

[20:31] They're looking forward to that. And in Ezekiel 36, we find one of the most well-known predictions of that future covenant, which we know in the New Testament has come in Christ himself.

But in Ezekiel 36, I want you to glance at verse 22 if you're there. We read this, God speaking to the prophet, Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name.

Now mark that down. God is going to do something, and we know what he's going to do is initiate the new covenant. He's going to do something for the sake of his holy name, which you, the people of Israel, have profaned among the nations to which you came.

And now here's the language that we see. In fact, in the Greek version of the Old Testament, it mirrors very closely what we see in the Lord's Prayer. Verse 23, And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned.

Or much more literally, I will hallow or I will sanctify my great name. That's what God is saying. I will sanctify my name.

[21 : 48] You have profaned my name among the nations. That is, you have lived in a way that has dishonored me. You have proclaimed me to be your God. You are the people set apart for my name.

The nations that surround you know that I'm the God that you claim, and yet you have profaned my name by your actions and by your lifestyles and by your failure to live up to the covenant I made with you.

You've profaned my name. So now I will sanctify my name. I will hallow my great name. And then he goes on to lay out the promises of the new covenant, in which he will do that by fundamentally transforming the hearts of his people.

Now, Jesus comes along to see in the Sermon on the Mount, having already proclaimed that the kingdom of God is among you. It's near. It's here. It's arrived.

And he says to them, the first thing that you will pray, as people who live in the already not yet, as people who are members of the new covenant, the first thing that you will pray is, let your name be sanctified.

[22 : 54] God has already said that he would do it. And now you're saying, God, do what you said you were going to do. And it's contrasted in Ezekiel 36 with the name of God being profaned.

So in a very real sense, to ask God to hallow or to sanctify his name is to ask God to make us into the kinds of people who bring honor and glory to his name, rather than the kinds of people like his old covenant people who profane his name in the world in which they live.

In the world in which we live, we are first saying in this prayer, God, let it be that you would let your name be hallowed in us, in your people. Let your name be sanctified.

Let us not be like your old covenant people who profane your name, but let us be a people through whom your name is hallowed. It's asking that God would work in such a way that among his new covenant people, we would be so changed that his name would be honored and held up as high and lofty and exalted.

That's what we're praying for here. As people who live with the tension of new and renewed and transformed hearts, but yet who are still pulled away towards sin.

[24 : 15] As people who know that we have been set free, that the old man has been crucified and we are new in Christ, and yet who feel the pull and the whisperings of the old man.

As those people, we ought to be praying constantly, let your name be hallowed. sanctify your name. That should be, that should characterize all of our praying.

And what that entails, really, are the next two petitions. That's why I say in some sense, they are asking for the same thing in three different ways.

To ask for God to do that is, in fact, to ask that his kingdom would indeed come in more fullness. We know, of course, that the kingdom of God has, in some sense, arrived with the coming of Jesus into the world.

In fact, you can just probably turn back a page or two in your Bibles, and you can see that at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, in chapter 4, verse 7, Jesus announces his ministry.

[25 : 18] We are told that he began to preach and said, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's here. It's now. It's arrived in my ministry, in my preaching. I take that to mean that Jesus is initiating the new covenant.

He will really initiate it as he sheds his blood on the cross. But even in his preaching ministry, he's come to announce the kingdom. It's here. It's present. It's among you. It's among you.

And we pray, let your name be hallowed. Let your kingdom come. It is a prayer that the future reality of the kingdom would be manifest even more in the present.

The kingdom of God did not fully arrive with the first coming of Christ. It did not. Had it fully arrived, all the promises concerning the kingdom in the Old Testament would have been fulfilled.

Had it fully arrived, we wouldn't have the book of Revelation where Jesus comes and descends from heaven, is proclaimed King of kings and Lord of lords. We wouldn't need all that. That wouldn't be future. That would have already happened.

[26 : 19] The kingdom did not fully arrive, but it did come in some sense. And our prayer is that the kingdom would be manifested more fully in the present.

Which means, of course, that we are asking for God's will to be done now here upon the earth in the same way that it's done in heaven.

In fact, Jesus makes a clear connection between the coming of the kingdom, the manifestation of the kingdom in the lives of His people, and the will of God being done in the lives of His people.

Turn over from chapter 6, turn over a page in your Bible, and I want you to see this in the Sermon on the Mount, this connection that Jesus makes between the will of God and the kingdom of God.

Chapter 7, verse 21. It's a scary verse that we sometimes quote for other purposes, but this, I just want you to see the connection. Jesus says, 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.

[27 : 24] You see the connection? There is a connection between entering the kingdom and doing the will of the Father. Those things are intimately related. So when Jesus entreats us to pray, Your kingdom come, your will be done, He's saying we ought to pray not only for God to make manifest His kingdom on the earth, but also to make sure and transform us into the kind of people who are fit for that kingdom.

That's what He's telling us to pray for. Pray that God's name would be sanctified among you. Pray that His kingdom would be manifest. And that means praying that His will would be done in you and through you.

Now, don't be confused by the language of God's will, because we need to recognize that the Bible uses the language of God's will in more than one way. Many times the Bible speaks of God's will in terms of His sovereign will, in terms of His plan for human history.

And that's going to happen whether we ask for it to happen or not. That's going to happen regardless of what we do or how we live. That's God's sovereign plan for history. So Paul is able to say that God works all things according to the counsel of His will.

The psalmist is able to say that nothing, God's will, God's desires, God's plan, can never be stopped. Even King Nebuchadnezzar confesses that God's will cannot be thwarted.

[28 : 41] So we know that His sovereign will is always accomplished, and that's not what Jesus is speaking of here. Jesus is speaking of the will of God in terms of His moral standards for us. This is what He expects of us.

And that is God's will in that sense. And so now He says, we ought to pray that God's will would be done, and that means that we would be changed into the kinds of people who live the kinds of lives that sanctify God's names and that manifest the kingdom among us.

So everything in these first three petitions is aiming at showing us what are the expectations for new covenant people, for already but not yet people, and what should we want God to do in and through us as new covenant people.

And we ought to be praying for those things regularly. Our prayer life ought to be characterized by these kinds of pleas. Let this be true, God. Let this happen. Let this happen in and through me even.

But then we need to pause and recognize that those very general, broad sorts of prayers for God to do big things in and through us entail some very practical needs that we will have.

[29:53] And Jesus encourages us to pray even for those things. So the four petitions that follow these three petitions are much more specific and they are much more related to what we sense and feel as our on-the-surface practical needs.

But they're not disconnected from what Jesus has said. Because if we are going to be the kinds of people in whom and through whom God's name is hallowed, His kingdom manifest, and His will done, we're going to need certain things.

We're going to need God to do certain things for us and to us. And Jesus, again, doesn't give an exhaustive list, but He lists some of the more important things that need to be a part of our regular prayer life.

So you notice, you'll see very quickly that He begins with something that seems to be the most practical thing, the thing that's going to be on everybody's mind. He says, Give us this day our daily bread.

Literally, it's give us today the bread for tomorrow. It's moment by moment. I need it. We're about to need it. Please give it to us. Now, we don't oftentimes relate to that as people who live in the modern, industrialized Western world.

[31:07] We don't always immediately relate to this. In fact, at our fellowship group the other day, I don't even know how we started talking about kinds of bread. But I was saying, you know, I've been eating the honey wheat bread lately.

I like the honey wheat bread. And Doug likes the honey wheat bread, but he really likes the butter bread. And I don't know how those conversations arise, but somehow they did. I mean, those are our choices.

We go to the bread aisle and we try to decide what kind of bread do I want to buy right now. And the bread aisle is right next to all the Twinkies and the cupcakes and all the other really good stuff.

And then there's 50 other aisles that are full of all kinds of food. So when Jesus tells us, ask for the bread, the basic necessities of life that you need for tomorrow, we don't immediately relate to that, do we?

I mean, we don't. I don't know any of the farmers through whom the daily bread comes. But Jesus' audience would have had to go to the market, buy their bread, most likely from the farmer or from the baker who got the bread from them.

[32:09] It wasn't a long chain the way that we have. We can't even really fathom what it would be like to not have tomorrow's bread readily available for us some way.

I mean, when hurricanes come through, the shelves get empty, but we know within three or four days they're going to be full again, right? I mean, we really don't relate to this if we only see it as a prayer for the provision of physical necessities that we're going to need in the next moment or on the next day.

But Jesus intends this to be received by us I think as more than that. I think to pray in this way is to pray acknowledging that regardless of the mechanisms that might be in place and the processes that might exist that cause us to have all the things that we need on a daily basis and abundantly above that for us, regardless of the causes of all of that, behind all of those stands God as the ultimate cause of all of those things.

You may never meet the farmer who planted the seeds who makes the grain to grow and then sells it so that it can be transformed into bread but trust me God is making it rain on somebody's land today so that grain will grow.

He's doing that. He's doing it all over the world. God is the ultimate source of everything that we have all of the needs that we have that we need to be met and then everything else on top of that.

- [33 : 35] And we as people who live in the tension between the already but not yet ought to acknowledge that more than anyone else because the truth of the matter is if any of the first three petitions, if any of those are going to be accomplished in us and through us, we have to be the kind of people who know and acknowledge that everything good that we have comes from God and from God alone.

Whatever other means He might use to supply us. He stands at the head of it all. He is the great supplier and in all of our prayers as we petition God for whatever it might be, maybe it's for healing or maybe it's for a better job, it could be any one of a thousand things, we stand in recognition that He is the source of all of those things.

and we stand as those who know and recognize that in this world, in the already but not yet, sometimes He supplies with abundance and sometimes He withholds and He has that right and we live as a people grateful, thankful, glad, acknowledging that regardless of the amount that He measures out to us, He's the ultimate source.

And then Jesus moves on. You're going to be the kinds of people who pray these kinds of prayers and mean these things and through whom God does this stuff. You're going to be those kinds of people. Of course you need to be people who are rightly related to God.

It's not just we need these things, it's also we need a certain kind of relationship established between you and us. Forgive us our debts, He says, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

- [35 : 19] We don't have time this morning to go into the second half of that phrase, as we have forgiven our debtors. But notice the importance of praying for forgiveness. Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.

You'll notice in the various translations that some of them take a more literal approach like the ESV and translate it as debts and debtors. Others take a less literal approach, say translate it as sins or transgressions or trespasses, depending upon which translation you're reading.

But I think I think the main point here, regardless of how it's translated, is that unless God forgives us, unless He takes away from us the debt that we owe Him, then we are hopeless.

We're hopeless. And as kingdom people, we have to recognize that all of our hope is rooted in the reality that God is a God who forgives His people.

We know that that forgiveness comes through the blood of Christ. We know that our only hope for forgiveness is because Christ has paid the debt that we, in fact, owe.

- [36 : 34] But we don't ask for that once. We don't acknowledge that at the beginning of our Christian lives and then move on to that. The person who calls upon God as Father, who cries out for His name to be hallowed in their lives, the person who lives that way is a person who also regularly is saying, I am a sinner.

I am indebted to you. Forgive me. Come and do the miraculous because we do live in a fallen world.

And while the law may be written on our hearts and the Spirit may live within us, we are still pulled and we still stumble. That's the not yet. That's the not yet of our own sinful natures.

They're not yet fully eradicated. And so there's never going to be a time in this life when we don't need to cry out to God to forgive us. If we're going to be a people in whom His will is done, through whom His kingdom is made manifest, we have to constantly be petitioning Him, forgive me, forgive my debts.

And then immediately following that, Jesus tells us to pray for something that is so closely connected. Forgiving our death is asking God to forgive us because we've given in.

[37 : 52] We have stumbled and fallen when temptation has come. And then the last petition, two petitions tied together really, is lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Some translations say the evil one. Some simply say evil. It doesn't matter which way you take it. Ultimately, the point is that we need God to come in and we need Him to protect us.

We're not just praying for provision and for pardon. We're also praying for protection here. We need His protection on a regular, daily basis because, because of the not yet.

Right? Because we're tempted and we face trials. The word here can be translated either way. It can be temptation or it can be trials. And there's no need to get involved in a huge debate over which it is because the fact of the matter is we're going to face both.

We're going to confront temptation. Satan, just as he tempted Christ, will constantly tempt us. We'll be confronted by evil in the world. We will face trials ordered by God's providence that come our way.

[38 : 59] Those things will happen. And yet, we ought to be praying on a regular basis, God, guard me and protect me. I don't want to fall. I don't want to stumble and fall when temptation comes my way.

I don't want to give up whenever trials come. I don't want, I don't want evil to hold sway in my life and in my heart.

I need to be protected. I need your guidance. I need you to come in and deliver me. At all times, we live as a people in a fallen, difficult world at all times.

There's not a moment of the day that you go by that there's not some temptation waiting, crouching nearby ready to leap upon you. There's not a moment of the day. And if you experience any relief throughout your day from that pressure, it's not because they're not there waiting in the bushes for you.

It's because God is protecting you. And our prayers ought to constantly be, God, I want to be the kind of person through whom you make yourself known and in whom you are glorified and sanctified.

[40 : 15] And for that to happen, I need you to protect me because my heart is vulnerable. My mind is easily dragged away. and my hands become dirty far, far too easily.

So I desperately need you to protect me. People living in the already but not yet. Citizens of a heavenly kingdom yet situated in the midst of earthly kingdoms.

We're going to have to be people who recognize the reality of the world that we live in. We need, we need God to continue to supply us regardless of the abundance that we experience now.

He stands behind it all and we need Him to continue to stand behind it and supply us with all of our needs and we need desperately continual, ongoing forgiveness of our sins. One yes, once and for all at the cross of Christ yet we need the reality of our forgiveness to soak in and we need every time we stumble and fall to cry out and say, forgive us.

Pay my debts. Let them be erased. And we need to be protected. We need these things. We've been saying all of this in the context of a series that aims to be about spiritual disciplines.

[41 : 36] Things that we have to do, things that God uses in our lives to help us to persevere, to help us to endure, but to help us, we've said ultimately, to help us to be the kind of people who endure in being satisfied satisfied in Christ, who endure in having Christ as our ultimate treasure.

And everything in this prayer, everything here, is aimed to shape your heart, to transform you into the kind of person who treasures Christ more fully.

the goal of all your prayers, the sanctification of God's name, the kingdom coming more fully and manifested more fully, the will of God being done, the needs that you have for daily provision and pardon and protection, all of those things reveal not only the aim and goal of your life for the future, but also everything you need in the present.

But the aim and goal of your life is not simply to escape hell, nor is it simply to enter into heaven. The aim of your life is to be the kind of person who enjoys worshiping, praising, and delighting in Christ for all of eternity.

And in the not yet of this world, what we want is to be the kind of people who pray in such a way, who commune with God in such a way that even now our hearts are transformed to treasure Christ more fully.

[43:17] Let's pray.