

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Thursday—Evening Session)

Message Three

The Prayer That Is Critical to the Kingdom Life

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:6, 9-13; Luke 11:1-13; 19:46

- I. The King-Savior was a man of prayer (Luke 3:21-22; 5:16; 6:12; 9:16, 23-24, 28-29; 22:31-32, 39-41, 44; 23:34, 46-47; Psa. 102:7; 109:4), who taught His disciples concerning prayer for the church as the Father's house to be a house of prayer (Luke 19:46; cf. 2:49); when the disciples saw the Lord praying, they asked Him to teach them to pray (11:1):**
 - A. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus was always one with God—John 10:30.
 - B. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus lived in the presence of God without ceasing; He told us that He was never alone, but the Father was with Him; every moment He saw His Father's face—Acts 10:38c; John 8:29; 16:32b; cf. Exo. 33:14; 2 Cor. 2:10.
 - C. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus trusted in God and not in Himself, under any kind of suffering and persecution—1 Pet. 2:23b; Luke 23:46.
 - D. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus was a man in whom Satan, the ruler of the world, had nothing (no ground, no chance, no hope, no possibility in anything)—John 14:30b.
- II. The pattern of prayer that the Lord taught the disciples in Matthew 6 is the prayer that expresses God's will:**
 - A. Matthew 6:9-13 is the Lord's instruction to us to "pray in this way" to "our Father who is in the heavens" (v. 9a); this pattern of prayer can be divided into three sections:
 1. The three basic prayers concerning God are related to the Divine Trinity; "Your name be sanctified" is related mainly to the Father; "Your kingdom come," to the Son; and "Your will be done," to the Spirit—vv. 9b-10a:
 - a. This is being fulfilled in this age, and it will be ultimately fulfilled in the kingdom age when the name of God will be excellent in all the earth, the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of Christ, and the will of God will be accomplished—Psa. 8:1; Rev. 11:15.
 - b. After the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man, Christ came to bring the heavenly rule to earth so that the earth could be recovered for God's interest so that the will of God could be done on earth as in heaven (Matt. 6:10b); the kingdom people must pray for this until the earth is fully recovered for God's will in the coming kingdom age.
 2. The three requests concerning our need are protective prayers: "Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"—vv. 11-13a:

- a. *Daily bread* indicates a living that is by faith; we should live, by faith, on the Father's daily supply.
 - b. The kingdom people should ask the Father to forgive their debts, their failures, their trespasses, as they forgive their debtors to maintain peace (by the arbitrating peace of Christ); we have to clear up any separating factors between us and God and between us and others—vv. 14-15; Col. 3:15.
 - c. Because we know our weakness, we should ask the Father not to bring us into temptation but to deliver us from the evil one, the devil, and from the evil that is out of him (by being filled with the Spirit)—John 17:15; Eph. 5:16-18; 6:13.
3. The prayer to the Father concludes with three reverent praises as extolling prayers: "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"—the kingdom is of the Son, which is the realm in which God exercises His power, and the power is of the Spirit, which carries out God's intention so that the Father may have His corporate expression in glory—Matt. 6:13b:
- a. Thus, the pattern of the Lord's prayer begins with the Divine Trinity and ends with the Divine Trinity.
 - b. It also begins with God the Father and ends with God the Father; God the Father is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.
- B. Such a critical prayer increases our seeking of the kingdom of the heavens as the Father's heart's desire and affords us our need of the divine supply of grace to fulfill all the supreme and strict requirements of the kingdom of the heavens for God's good pleasure.

III. If we pray according to the Lord's instructions in Luke 11:1-13, the result will be that we pray ourselves into God:

- A. Often in our experience we are distracted from God; we do not stay in God—we do not remain in Him; this is why we need to pray ourselves into God.
- B. Because we are easily distracted from God, we should spend time every morning with Him, praying ourselves into Him—Psa. 5:3; Isa. 50:4.
- C. If our way of praying distracts us from the Lord and does not bring us into Him, we should change our way of praying so that we pray ourselves into Him.
- D. When we pray ourselves into God, we receive His riches (represented by the loaves, the fish, and the egg) into our being for our supply—Luke 11:5-13:
 - 1. Loaves represent the riches of the land; fish, the riches of the sea; and eggs, the riches of something both in the air and on the earth; the Holy Spirit is the totality of these riches.
 - 2. When we have prayed ourselves into God to remain in Him, we receive the Holy Spirit as our life supply (signified by the loaves, the fish, and the egg) so that we can feed ourselves and all those under our care—1 John 5:16a; 2 Cor. 3:6; Acts 6:4.
 - 3. "If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"; to receive the Holy Spirit with all His riches as our life supply, we need to ask the Father for this—Luke 11:13; cf. John 4:10.

- E. When we pray ourselves into God and receive His rich supply, which is the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit as the reality of the unsearchable riches of Christ, we are filled and occupied with this supply so that there is no room in us for demons, evil spirits, or darkness—Luke 11:14.
- F. Because we are filled with the riches of the divine supply, we become persons whose hearts are full of light, not having any dark part, and we can illumine others—vv. 33-36; Matt. 5:8.
- G. To pray means that we realize that we are nothing and that we can do nothing; this implies that prayer is the real denial of the self—Mark 8:34; 9:29; Col. 4:2; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:3; 4:6-7, 11-13.
- H. To pray is actually to declare, “Not I, but Christ”; our prayer testifies that we do not exercise our self-effort to deal with any situation—Gal. 2:20.
- I. Even such a short prayer of calling upon the name of the Lord—“O Lord Jesus!”—indicates “no longer I, but Christ”—Rom. 10:12-13.

IV. In order for God to listen to our prayers, we need to pray toward God’s interests, signified by the Holy Land, the holy city, and the holy temple—1 Kings 8:48:

- A. The Holy Land typifies Christ as the portion allotted by God to the believers (Col. 1:12; 2:6-7; Deut. 8:7); the holy city signifies the kingdom of God in Christ (Psa. 48:1-2); and the holy temple signifies God’s house, the church, on the earth (Eph. 2:21; 1 Tim. 3:15).
- B. During the Babylonian captivity Daniel prayed three times a day by opening his windows toward Jerusalem; this indicates that God will listen to our prayer when our prayer to God is toward Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God as the goal in God’s eternal economy—Dan. 6:10.
- C. This means that no matter for whom we are praying, our prayers should be aimed at the interests of God, that is, at Christ and the church as God’s interests on earth, for the fulfilling of God’s economy.