

The Mystery, Meaning and Power of Prayer

Teaching Notes

James 5:16 ... The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results

Prayer is Not to be Mysterious:

Prayer is not to be a mystery to man as the world defines mystery; meaning that it is something impossible or difficult to understand.

In the Bible, a "mystery" ([3466](#) / *mystērion*) is *not something that is unknowable*. "Mystery" comes from a Greek word which means "to initiate into", i.e. to make known special secrets to those who are initiated or on the "inside" of a group.

A Bible mystery means secrets or teachings that are now "revealed"; revealed to the born again believer. We can know these secrets through the Word of God (Bible) and by revelation of the Holy Spirit. .

So we do not need to be in the dark concerning how to pray, why pray, when to pray, etc. nor in how to have prayer answered.

Quotes about Importance of Prayer:

Andrew Murray: "We must begin to believe that God, in the mystery (revelation) of prayer, has entrusted us with a force that can move the heavenly world, and can bring its power down to earth."

John Wesley: "God does nothing except in response to believing prayer."

Martin Luther: "Prayer is the most important thing in my life. If I should neglect prayer for a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith."

Prayer is to the spiritual life of a Christian what breathing is to the natural physical life. A life of no prayer will wind up in a spiritual disaster - weak, fretful, fruitless and no joy. Prayer is absolutely essential to our spiritual life and well being.

We are to Maintain a "Prayer Life" and a "Life of Prayer."

A "prayer life" would mean we have special times alone with the Lord in order to "pray."

A "life of prayer" means that we throughout the day are continually conversing with the LORD.

Luke 18:1 Men ought always to pray and not lose heart.

1 Thessalonians 5: 17 Pray without ceasing.

So what is prayer? Simply put, prayer is talking to God; communication with God Himself. It is the soul reaching out to God through faith in Christ.

Prayer is God's chosen means of releasing His blessings; bringing about help; bringing about His promises, and also having His will come to pass upon the earth.

John 15:7-8 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

To "abide in Christ" is to continue to remain in a close relationship with the LORD. We abide as we continue to stay close to the LORD 7 days a week morning, noon and night; not just on Sunday! He is the One we live for and the One we desire to please at all times. Abiding in Christ requires obedience to Him and it also requires a close fellowship with Him through a "life of prayer"; meaning we are always in tune with the LORD and never leave Him out of anything in our life, whether we are making decisions or planning our day. Abiding in Christ bears much fruit! Much fruit here refers to answers to prayer; this brings great glory to the Father! And great joy to us!

Jesus had a "Prayer Life" as well as a "Life of Prayer" Which Was a Constant Communion With the Father.

Matt. 14:22, 23 and straightway Jesus constrained (forcefully directed) his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, He went up unto a mountain apart to pray and when the evening was come, He was there alone. (With God the Father)

Jesus had to force people away from Him and make the time to be alone with the Father. He had to force the disciples to leave and sent the multitudes away; then He remained there a good while. I believe he received peace, strength, direction, wisdom, God's will, etc. when alone with the Father. We also must make time to be alone with the Father and many times push other things even though they may be good things to the side.

Luke 5:16 ... great crowds kept coming to Him to hear Him and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. But Jesus (often) "withdrew" (to go back to) to "Lonely Places" and Prayed. He required much alone time with the Father. The daily demands of ministry

for Jesus were very great. Jesus knew He could do nothing apart from the Father.
(John 5:19)

Mark 1:35 And in the morning, a great while before day, He rose and went out to a
“Lonely Place”, and there He Prayed.

Being alone with God (A Prayer Life): Jesus shows us through example that an important aspect of our relationship with the Father is retiring to a place where we can be all alone with Him. We must practice this as Jesus did - Being shut in with God and shutting out the distractions (other people and things) of this world; allowing ourselves to be totally God conscious. Speaking in secret to God what is on your heart; bringing to Him in faith your most urgent concerns; crying out on behalf of others, thanking and praising Him in solitude is especially important to the Father.

Times of Prayer For You and Me:

Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

There is a promise of reward when you take time to be alone with God. You can leave your prayer closet with confidence knowing that God has seen, God has heard and God has promised to reward you. You can expect God’s blessing and answer to your prayers. God does not lie. He promised a reward!

Remember: Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Even in “prayer,” your words produce either death or life. God knows your problem before you say a word. Don’t major on the problem! Praise Him for His love and Greatness. With God all things are possible! Magnify His name; thank Him for what He has done in your life. Thank Him He promises to help. He is our very present help in time of trouble.

Pray the solution.... Say, I pray and know God that you are my Healer, my Deliverer, my Strength, etc. I pray and know that no problem or disease is more powerful than you. Father, I trust for you to take this situation and to bring me deliverance. IN Jesus Name I Pray.

Praying what the Word (Bible) says releases life, but praying negatively and focusing on all the problems only energizes and strengthens them - whether you realize it or not!

Matt 6:6-7 and when you pray, do not use “vain repetitions” as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their “many words”.

It is not our long prayers or repetition of memorized prayers that touches God's heart, but our sincere faith and trust in Him. Useless repetitions means repeated mechanical, memorized, mouthing of prayers, instead of thoughtful, heartfelt, sincere communication with God.

Matthew 6:8 ... Don't be like the heathens for "your Father knows exactly what you need" even before you ask him! Or, "your Father has knowledge of your needs" even before you make your requests to him.

Because of this simple truth (the Father knowing your needs) we are instructed not to make our needs a priority in prayer.

Instead Jesus teaches the disciples to use the "Our Father" prayer as a model and inspiration for praying.

Jesus Teaches His disciples to Pray: We can use this as a framework for praying for ourselves or others although as NT believers we pray "In the Name of Jesus" as Jesus said to pray before His crucifixion. John 14: 16 That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my Name, He may give it to you. John 16:24 Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask (in my name) and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

Matt 6:9-13 therefore, "In This Manner" pray.....

*Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.*

Notice Jesus' priority here in prayer is about God's Name being glorified, God's Kingdom being advanced and God's will being done. God... God.... God... While we ordinarily bring our own needs to God in prayer first before thinking of what belongs to God and His interests, Jesus reverses the order here.

First, Thy name be honored! Thy Kingdom! Thy will! And then second He goes on to say ... give us, forgive us, lead us, and deliver us. What an important lesson to follow. God first! In the beginning God! Then comes you and me....

Our Father who art in heaven: He is the "Father" as the originator of all mankind. But also, Jesus teaches us to view God as our personal heavenly Father as the One who has adopted us personally through our faith in Jesus Christ. We belong to God our Father. We are His children. He is the one who unconditionally loves and cares for us.

Matthew 6:25, 26 Therefore I tell you, stop being perpetually uneasy (anxious and worried) about your life...Look at the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father keeps feeding them. Are you not worth much more than they?

We are to have a childlike love and trust in our Father. My Father knows, my Father sees, my Father loves and will care for me.

Jesus ends His teaching with: Matthew 6:30 If God so clothes the grasses of the field... will He not much more surely clothe you, O you of little faith?

Can it be that we have faith, but use it so little? Let's not be of "little faith" but have that faith of a "little child" in our heavenly Father's promise to care for us.

Hallowed be thy name: The word "hallowed" means to honor as holy or declare sacred. Jesus teaches us the utmost importance of the name of God (Father God) to be honored and revered and held in the highest esteem. Let's take this seriously. The meaning of this petition is, "Let thy name be celebrated, venerated, and esteemed as holy everywhere, and receive from all people proper honor." It is the expression of a desire, on our part that the name of God, and that God himself, should be held everywhere in proper respect and honor, especially that through our lips and through our lives we will honor His name. What a beautiful prayer to offer.

Your Kingdom Come: Your Father is also a King who has a kingdom. The word "kingdom" here means "reign" or "rule." The word "king-dom" of heaven is where the King has dominion. He is sovereign, exercising supremacy in power and rank and authority. This petition is the expression of a desire that God may exercise "His power", "reign" or "rule" upon the earth everywhere; in our hearts, in our families, in our marriages, in our land, in the nations, in our churches, in our situations, etc. and ultimately in the end time kingdom here on earth. Therefore, we are also praying for Jesus second return which will result in the establishment of His end time kingdom rule on earth. "Come, Lord Jesus, Come"!

Rom 14:17 For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of Righteousness (living a life of goodness) and Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit.

When praying "your kingdom come" we are praying for righteousness, peace and joy to abound. We are praying that right living with the Father will be established in peoples' lives. We are praying that peace will abide in peoples' hearts and in our world. We are asking that the joy of the Lord will replace all misery. What greater request could we have for our loved one? Kingdom come... righteousness, peace and joy be established now and forever through Jesus Christ our King!

Your Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven: Isn't it interesting that we must pray for "God's will to be done." God's perfect will does not automatically happen. We know that there is much resistance to the will of God in the earth. All that is happening on the earth is not God's perfect will. Man is rebellious at heart and Satan is called the god of this present world. He works through the children of disobedience and tempts everyone to do wrong!

The will of man and the will of Satan are at war against the will of God; therefore, we are given the "responsibility to pray for God's will to be accomplished" here on earth.

God moves through the believing prayers of his children.

John Wesley - "God does nothing except in response to believing prayer."

Let your perfect will be done here on earth just as it is being done in heaven. In heaven there is adoration, worship, perfect love and obedience to God; a place of peace and harmony. We are to pray that we increase in our love and worship for God day by day, and obey His Word and commands as sure as they are obeyed and accomplished in heaven.

God's will: God's will and His Holy Word are one and the same. We discover God's known will through His Word.

The Bible teaches the highest will of God is that people should believe in His son, Jesus Christ and receive eternal life. We are to make this a priority in our prayers. We are to pray for and intercede for the salvation of others. We are to bring them before the throne of mercy, and bring down through our faith and prayer the blessing of God upon their lives.

- ❖ 1 Tim 2:1-5 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Matt 6:33 "But let your first care be for his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these other things will be given to you in addition."

- ✓ But let your first care even when praying be for His Kingdom and right living to be established in people's lives before we are concerned for any other need.
- ✓ Spiritual priorities need to take precedence over temporal needs when praying for others and ourselves. What a lesson in prayer we need to practice!

- ✓ Col 3:1-3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Then, Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us this day ... The word "bread," here, implies everything necessary to support and sustain life. We must depend on Him daily. This petition implies our dependence on God for the supply of all our spiritual, temporal and physical needs.

Asking shows that we acknowledge our dependency and our faith are in God who is the giver of all good things.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: (As we have let go the debts and given up resentment against our debtors)

Matthew 6: 14 ... For if you forgive people their trespasses (their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment), your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses (their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment), neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.

Receiving forgiveness from the Father and giving forgiveness to others is foundational to the Gospel message; forgiving others is essential for answered prayer; not eternal salvation.

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

The thought is that God may preserve us from temptations that might overcome us and cause us to fall into sin; even deliver us from those trials where we may be tempted to lose a measure of our faith.

It seems pretty clear that this was exactly what our Lord meant His disciples to pray against when He said in the garden, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41

But "Deliver us" from the evil one: "Deliver us" is a very expressive word: It means break our chains, and loose our bands; snatch and pluck us from every form of evil, and its calamity.

This final petition, then, is rightly understood when regarded as a prayer for deliverance from all evil of whatever kind - not only from sin, but safely deliver us out of all of Satan's schemes and wiles.

The “Our Father” or “The Lord’s Prayer” is in essence the holiest of all manner of praying. In it we see Jesus instruct us in what the Father first desires from us and then what we may petition from him. Seven petitions in all; beginning with what is on the heart of God first: His glory, His Kingdom, His Will. And then we are in a position to ask and receive what He has already promised and desires to give us...provision for all our needs (bread); forgiveness of all our sin; spiritual strength in times of testing; rescuing from evil (Satan’s plans, including sickness) . May we meditate on the priority of petitions set forth for us and the beauty of Jesus’ teaching. May we practice what we have been taught that the Father may be glorified in our lives.

S. D. Gordon - The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing; but it is the chief thing. The great people of earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer, nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray.”

