

## Lord, Teach Us to Pray

Matthew 6:9

14 Mar 10

I invite you to take your Bibles this morning and let's open to Matthew chapter six. Matthew chapter six, and this morning we are going to be looking at a very familiar passage, verses nine through thirteen. Matthew six, verses nine through thirteen. As we continue our study through the gospel of Matthew, this is where we are today. And let me read these words for us starting in Matthew chapter six verse nine.

It's Jesus speaking and He says, "Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. You 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 do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Well as you know Matthew chapters five through seven is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. The greatest sermon ever delivered by the greatest preacher ever. Now as we come to this passage that I just read, we come to the most well known part of this well known sermon. We know this section, verses nine through 13, as the Lord's Prayer. And it's been referred to by that title since as early as AD 250. The Lord's Prayer, the prayer that He taught His disciples. You could say that this is the greatest of the church. It's certainly has received unparalleled attention in terms of how much has been written about this particular prayer and how often this particular prayer has been repeated and even songs have been written to this particular prayer.

So let's look at it and notice that Jesus says, "Pray, then, in this way." When He says that He is saying school is in session and He the master teacher is beginning His course on the art of praying. And this is a school you want to enroll in. This is a course we want to take. And we're going to linger on this subject for a good while and let this instruction really sink in. Sometimes when you come to a passage that is so familiar you think, yeah yeah yeah, the Lord's Prayer, I got it, I know it, I've heard it, I've sung it. But, there's usually a lot more there that we haven't ever really thought about so we want to make sure that we take our time with it.

Now notice the first work there, pray, is a command. Jesus is calling His disciples to habitual prayer. Jesus is calling us to a life that's to be characterized by prayer. And a definition of prayer would simply be that it is the heart of the believing person in communion with the heart of their heavenly Father. It's really just that simple. It's talking to God.

It is an encounter with a Holy God because He is in heaven and hallowed is His name. But it is coming into His presence, prayer is, it's fellowshiping with Him, it's enjoying a relationship with Him as the one who is your Father.

And without daily communion with Him it is impossible to serve Him effectively. And in fact you try to live the Christian life without waiting on the Lord in prayer is to embrace humanism and try to just wrap it up in some Christian trappings.

One writer said it this way: "Prayer is the pulse of life. By it the doctor can tell what is the condition of the heart. The sin of prayerlessness is a proof for the ordinary Christian or minister that the life of God and the soul is in deadly sickness and weakness."

And that's right since Jesus calls us to a life of habitual prayer it is accurate to say that prayer is the pulse that displays where your spiritual life is at. And all through the Bible you read of God's people being those who were marked by a commitment to prayer. Whether it's Abraham or Jacob, who wrestled all night with the Lord one time, or Moses, or Hannah, the mother of Samuel, or Isaiah, or Hezekiah, or Elijah, or Daniel. They are all marked by commitment to prayer and the supreme example is our master teacher the Lord Jesus Himself.

In fact, keep your place here in Matthew six and turn over to Luke chapter 11 for just a minute. Luke chapter 11 verse one. It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught His disciples.' And He said to them, 'When you pray, say:' And we have basically the same prayer that He gives in Matthew chapter six. I believe this is a different occasion, but it's a very similar prayer. But the thing to take note of here is that the disciples noticed Jesus' praying. And they must have been greatly impacted by the example of Jesus' prayer, so much so that they ask Him, Lord teach us to pray. And that's interesting that they ask that question. You'll never see where they ask Him, Lord, teach us how to preach, or Lord, teach us how to do anything else really. They wanted to learn this because they saw His commitment to prayer. They wanted to learn from Him what it was to pray. He is the master teacher, the master example of prayer.

Now go back to Matthew six. And it's real easy for us as Christians to feel guilty about our lack of prayer. Anybody feeling any guilt yet? Real easy when we come to the subject of prayer to feel guilty about, well yeah, I really should be praying more. And most Christian would say that for them to improve their prayer life would mean that they should give more time to it. But notice here as you look at this prayer, Jesus doesn't address the length of time for prayer, He deals with the manner in which we pray. And that's an important point to consider. If you and I are praying badly then praying longer isn't the answer. Longer bad praying doesn't accomplish anything. It's just like for or anybody else, for example, who plays golf. If I'm swinging badly I can practice as long as I want. It's not going to do me any good. I need to change the manner of the way I am swinging the golf club if I want to get better.

Praying longer isn't the answer. Praying better is the answer. And that's what Jesus addresses here. He says, "Pray, then, in this way." Or, according to this manner. Here's a pattern for you. Here's a model for you to follow. He's not instituting a ritual of words to be repeated. But He's saying, pray along these lines. And as you study through this prayer, we'll see a very definite, very clear pattern for prayer.

But before we dive into the pattern and look at what Jesus gives us here, we need to examine this instruction provided by our Lord in its context. We need to take a step back and think about what Jesus is talking about and how this fits in to this Sermon on the Mount. Too often the prayer is just yanked out

and considered as kind of a stand-alone passage. And the context in which it's given is usually completely overlooked. And therefore this pattern of prayer can't be fully appreciated and it can't be rightly implemented because we haven't really understood it in its context. Why is Jesus saying this? How does this fit in to this sermon?

So as we enter into this school and we too say, Lord, teach us to pray, I believe there are two preliminary questions that we have to ask and have answered. Questions that will put this instruction in its proper context so that we can understand it to the fullest degree. So two questions I want us to consider today.

The first one is what kind of life can pray this kind of prayer? What kind of life can pray this prayer? And this immediately forces us to backup and reconsider the whole context. In fact turn back a couple of chapter to chapter four verse seventeen. Chapter four verse seventeen where it says, "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" That's obviously a summary statement, but it tells us that this was the nature of Jesus' ministry. He went around in the area of Galilee preaching and the essence of His message was repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Now in chapters five through seven we have a particular sermon that He preached during that time. And repentance and the kingdom are key features of this sermon. Notice chapter five verse three, He starts off with what we call the beatitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the," what? "kingdom of heaven." Well, what did he do? He went around saying repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And he's saying now these are the people who are in the kingdom of heaven, the poor in spirit. Verse 10 He says, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is," what? "the kingdom of heaven." The first beatitude and the last beatitude mention the kingdom of heaven which forms them as a unit. They're bookends for those beatitudes describing those who are in the kingdom of heaven.

So this sermon describes what a life of repentance looks like. You need to repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand and this is the description of the people who are in the kingdom so this must be a description of the people who have repented. This is what repentance looks like. And the key word in this sermon is righteousness. Chapter five verse six, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Verse 20 which is the key verse to the whole sermon says, "For if I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." And His whole sermon, He's contrasting the life of true righteousness with the life of the scribes and Pharisees who developed an artificial, superficial righteousness.

It's all about righteous living. Chapter six verse one He says, "Beware of practicing your righteousness." Again, that's the subject. Verse 33 of chapter six, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

So what we're seeing in the Sermon on the Mount is what a life of repentance looks like. And the sermon provides a definition of righteous living. Therefore, the Lord's Prayer is an example of righteous praying. So what kind of life can pray this prayer? A life where there's been real repentance. A life where

by faith you have entered into the kingdom of heaven. This is a prayer for those who have been born again. For people who have new life in Christ. And as we saw in our study of the beatitudes, the inner life of a person who has been saved, the real mark of repentance, is a brokenness and humility. Those first four beatitudes really spell out what a broken heart looks like. It's poor in spirit. Poor in spirit. It recognizes its spiritual bankruptcy. Poor in spirit. It's mourning. A life that is mourning over its sinfulness. Mourning over the fact that I've lived in disobedience to God, I've dishonored God. It's a life that is gentle Lord, meek, or you can use the word humble. It's a person who has been humbled. They now recognize they are not as big as they thought they were and God is not as small as they thought He was. And they are desperately hungering and thirsting after a righteousness that they know they don't have what they have to have. They are broken in spirit. They are humble. They are casting themselves completely on God's grace. It's this kind of life as it's lived out that is the key to a lifestyle of prayer that's going to follow the pattern that Jesus gives us here in this text. And it's a pattern that focuses on God supremely.

So we could say that genuine prayer, the kind of prayer that Jesus describes here, this kind of prayer is the manifestation of a humble heart. It's the manifestation of a humble heart. The heart that's broken. The heart that knows true repentance. The heart that longs for genuine righteousness. It's the heart of a truly saved person who's living out and growing in the new life that they have in Christ.

So as you evaluate your prayer life you have to begin by evaluating your spiritual condition. It's not just the mechanics of your prayer life, it's the condition of your heart that you have to look at. The first question you have to ask yourself is, are you truly saved? Anybody can repeat these words. But are you following this pattern out of a heart that's truly been saved? E.M. Bounds has written so many helpful things on this subject of prayer. He said this: "Prayer is loyalty to God. Non-praying is to reject Christ and abandon heaven. A life of prayer is the only life which heaven counts."

There's much more to it than just the mechanics of my prayer life. Am I really a saved person? Am I really loyal to God? And what he says makes sense. A person who is poor in spirit, a person who is mourning over their sinfulness, a person who is truly humble, a person who is hungering and thirsting over righteousness, who has a true recognition of their desperate condition and that their only hope is in God, that is the kind of heart that is going to pray like this. And our prayer life just grows stronger as we feed this new life that we have in Christ. The hungering and thirsting doesn't stop when you get saved.

This prayer, the kind of prayer described by Jesus, flows from a heart that is submitted to the will of God. This prayer comes from a heart that is full of loving affection for a gracious Savior who would save a desperate sinner like me. This prayer comes from a will that is yielded to God. Again, listen to E.M. Bounds. He said, "Humility is an indispensable requisite of true prayer. It must be an attribute or characteristic of prayer. Humility must be in the praying character as light is in this sun. Prayer has no beginning, no ending, no being without humility. As a ship is made for the sea, so prayer is made of humility and so humility is made for prayer."

It's the brokenhearted person. The person who is poor in spirit, who is mourning, who is humble, who is hungry and thirsting after righteousness, who knows real repentance and is seeking after righteousness. That's the person who can pray this kind of prayer. That's the person Jesus is talking to when He gives this pattern for prayer.

So, what kind of life can pray this prayer? A life of true repentance. A life of true righteousness. The life of one who has been broken by their sinfulness and they've cast themselves completely on the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the life of someone who can legitimately call God, Father. That sets this prayer in its context. Jesus is teaching this to His true disciples. In this sermon He's making a contrast between those who are truly saved and those who are trapped in the empty religious system of the scribes and Pharisees and one way that difference shows up is in prayer.

So having answered the first question- what kind of life can pray this prayer?- let's move to a second question which also must be answered in this context. The second question is, what are hindrances to praying this kind of prayer? What are some hindrances to praying this kind of prayer?

Having established the context, Jesus contrasting true righteousness with a false system common in that day, it comes easier to identify the hindrances to this kind of praying. So let me have you consider some with me, some hindrances to praying this kind of prayer.

One hindrance would be religion without true righteousness. Religion without true righteousness. That describes the scribes and Pharisees. They had religion, plenty of religion. They did not have true righteousness. But those men, those scribes and Pharisees, they prayed. In fact, they were known for their prayers. They prayed lengthy prayers. They prayed very public prayers. Their prayer life was impressive. Jesus talked about it in verses five through eight. It says, "When you pray you are not to be like the hypocrites;" that's the scribes and Pharisees, "for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him."

We looked at this in detail last time and that's the prayer life of the scribes and Pharisees. They were praying people. They prayed a lot, but their prayers were built upon a faulty foundation. Their prayers weren't built on true righteousness. Their prayers were the product of their self-righteousness. They knew absolutely nothing of repentance and grace. They did what they did to be seen and honored by men as Jesus points out. And that was all the reward that they received. It was whatever honor they got from other people. Their prayers weren't about glorifying God, they were all about glorifying themselves. They were trusting in themselves that they were righteous as Jesus says in Luke 18:9. They were trusting in themselves that they were righteous. In other words, to them it wasn't I'm a desperate sinner who needs grace, it was I'm a capable sinner who can do what needs to be done to get into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus' words here are a really important warning to religious people. Prayer isn't just some religious exercise that Christians perform. Prayer is seeking to know God. It's seeking Him with our whole hearts. I'm afraid that there are a lot of church goers who only pray with part of their heart. They may have an adequate knowledge of the Bible. They know their way around the Bible. You can say turn to Zephaniah and they can probably turn right there. And they may have a workable adequate knowledge of the attributes of God and understand what it means when we say He's omniscient and omnipotent or immutable. But their prayers don't flow from a humble heart that loves and yields to God. So they are praying with only part of their heart. Those practicing religion without true righteousness, they aren't going to pray like what Jesus is talking about here. That's one hindrance; being religious without being truly righteous.

Here's the second hindrance. We'll just call it flat out sin. Sin. Listen to what the Lord said to the nation of Israel through the prophet Isaiah. It's in Isaiah chapter 59 the first two verses. It says, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities (or your sins) have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." So what's a hindrance to prayer? Sin. He's telling the nation of Israel, I'm not hearing you because your sin has created a barrier between us and it's actually hidden My face from you.

I think that's important to think about because it seems like to me that there are an awful lot of people today who want God and their sin. They want God and their sin. They want heaven and the world. So they will pray because that is the part of them that wants God and heaven, but their sin keeps them from really praying. What kind of sins in particular? Well, how about pride. Let's turn over to that passage in Luke 18 and look at what Jesus teaches there.

Luke 18:9 says, "He told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt." So He's directly addressing the people who have the pride problem, okay. And this is what He tells them. Verse 10. "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector." The Pharisee is the religious guy and the tax collector, everybody hates. And you can understand that. You couldn't have a bigger contrast between a Pharisee and a tax collector. Verse 11, "The Pharisee stood up and was praying this to himself." Because nobody else was listening. He said, "God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get." He's just highlighting, rehearsing his self-righteousness incase God didn't know. But in contrast, verse 13, "The tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

So there again you see Jesus highlighting that a feature of true prayer is a humble heart and not a sinful self-righteous heart. Now you have to notice, this Pharisee is really religious. Admirably so. I mean, how many of you are fasting twice a week? How many of you are giving a tithe of everything you have? This guy has got us all beat in the self-righteous game. He's quite a guy. And he hasn't committed any of

these sins. He's not a swindler, he's not unjust, he's not an adulterer, I mean he's faithful to his wife, he's honest in his business, treats everybody fairly. He's a good guy. He's an admirable guy. And he was a praying man as well. But, he was a proud, self-righteous hypocrite who was not justified before God. That's the scary conclusion to this thing. There is this super-religious guy who is not justified before God. He's not justified, what is he? Condemned. Judged. Even though he was very religious. This is scary to me because, how many of you can stand up and say, God I thank you that I'm not like, and then fill in the blank. How many of you look down with contempt towards other people, like you are better than they are? This is scary stuff.

God is opposed to the proud. He gives grace to the humble. Who are the humble? The poor in spirit. Those who mourn over their sinfulness. Those who are humble in heart. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. The Lord's Prayer is a prayer that can only be truly prayed by the Lord's true disciples. Not that His disciples never sin. They do. But they have turned from their proud, self-sufficiency. They have humbled themselves before God.

So, pride would be one example of sin that is a hindrance to praying the way Jesus is talking about. How about another sin? How about selfishness? James chapter four. James says some powerful things regarding prayer. The end of verse two in James four, it says, "You don't have because you don't ask." And then in verse three he says, "You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives so that you may spend it on your pleasures." I don't know, that sounds like selfishness to me. Selfish praying. Lord, I want this because it would be for my pleasure. And that's what it's all about.

And that describes the Pharisees in Luke 16:14. Jesus said the Pharisees were lovers of money. Lovers of money. They loved the chief seats, we know that. They loved to be honored, that's why they did all this public praying, to be honored. These guys, it was all about them, it was all about what they wanted. And it was reflected in their prayers. And I see this as a real challenge for us, a real problem in our time. To pray with a will that's surrendered to God is to say, I'm willing to risk my life for God. Lord, I am totally surrendered to You. I am totally yielded to You. Lord, I love You, I trust You, I want whatever You want in my life. Whatever that means, whatever that's going to cost me, Lord, this is what I want in my life. Whatever You want. That's a pretty risky prayer. Because Jesus said, you follow, guess what's going to happen to you? Persecution. Suffering. Rejection. In fact, He says you'll be blessed when you are persecuted. Really? So, that's what I want to pray for? Yeah, because I trust Him and I believe that where He wants me, that's the very best place in the whole wide world to be no matter how bad it seems to be. Because that's the place of blessing.

But too many in our generation, the number one goal is personal comfort. Personal comfort. And our prayers often focus around our physical, financial, and relational comfort. Listen to your prayers. Listen to your prayers next time you pray with a group of people. My guess is they all focus around either physical, financial, or relational comfort. Lord, take away this pain. Lord, help me with my financial need. Lord, help this person who's giving me a hard time to stop it. Because it's all about me being comfortable, physically, financially, and relationally. That's what we want. And so we kind of use prayer as an escape hatch from everything that's difficult. Lord, I really don't like this so take it away. I'm not saying that we shouldn't cast all our cares on the Lord. We should. We're commanded to. But what is it

we're looking for from the Lord? What is it we're expecting Him to do when we pray? In this prayer that we're about to look at verse 11 says, "Give us this day our daily bread." Hey, we want a whole lot more than that. Am I right? And we have a skewed view of true righteousness. That righteousness is kind of a buffer to all the problems of life. Lord, if I live for You, if I do what You want me to do, You are going to take care of me and You are going to make everything comfortable, physically, financially, and relationally. Because that is my deal with You, Lord. I do what You want, You take care of me the way I want to be taken care of.

But the Bible tells us that the truly righteous suffer. In fact the Bible tells us that Jesus was murdered. Think of Job. I was thinking about his recently because Steve Lawson is coming to speak here. He spoke at the Shepherd's Conference. He preached from Job chapter one. That night I couldn't go to sleep without thinking through Job chapter one. Job on one day in just a matter of minutes, because the one messenger showed up before the previous one had even finished talking. He got messenger after messenger that told him that in that one day he lost everything. All of his possessions and his children. His children died. He lost everything. And then shortly after that he lost his health as well. And all of that happened to Job, all of those things happened to Job because he was the most righteous man on the planet at that time. Those things happened to him directly and exactly because he was the most righteous man living at that time. So how does that affect your prayer life? You want to be the most righteous person alive today and have Satan's target on your back bigger? Think about that. His children died because he was the most righteous man around. Are you ready to accept that? But, how did Job pray when all of that happened? He prayed like a humble man, didn't he? He said, the Lord gave, the Lord took away, blessed be the name of the Lord, and he worshipped. Now there's a humble man.

Sin, whether it's pride or selfishness, is going to be a big time hindrance to praying the way Jesus is going to teach us how to pray. Well, let me give you one more example. We have talked about how religion without true righteousness is a hindrance to prayer. We've talked about how sin is a hindrance to prayer. Let me give you one more and this one is because this is the most common that we hear. I don't pray like I should because of business. It's not that I don't want to pray, not that I don't mean to pray, but it just seems like it gets crowded out by everything else. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? Yeah.

So we're all in this together. So let's talk about this. Let's think about it for a minute. I can see how circumstances could keep you from getting to a Bible study or to a church service, because those things happen at a particular time and a particular place. Your child is sick and you need to take care of your child and you can't make it to that certain place at that certain time. Or you have to go on a business trip, it's unavoidable, you have to go, so you are not going to be at the Bible study that week. I understand that because those are certain things that happen at a particular time and a particular place. And the circumstances of our life make it so we can't attend one of those meetings. But how can any of those things keep us from prayer? Because prayer can be done anytime, anyplace.

I think a lack of prayer is a display of a self-sufficient mindset. Well, what it's really saying is I think I can handle all these circumstances without praying. It's trusting in our own abilities. It's a lack of God-dependency. That's what it is. Do any of us want to say that our lives are busier than Jesus' was? He

didn't even have time to eat, it says. Things were so busy. And yet prayer was a prominent part of His life. You can't read the Gospels without seeing the fact that Jesus spent a significant amount of time praying. His life was busy. When you can heal anybody, you're busy.

Daniel was the Prime Minister of Babylon, the greatest kingdom on the face of the earth. You think he was busy? Putting in long hours? And he also worked under intense pressure and scrutiny. Everybody's looking for Daniel to goof up. And yet his life was marked by a commitment to prayer. So how does the Prime Minister of Babylon do that?

Mary is commended by Jesus because she was always at His feet as opposed to her sister Martha who was always on her feet. Very busy. Mary's the one who's commended by Jesus. So, here's what I'm getting at. Here's what strikes me and this may be a little bit of a rambling message this morning but there is just so much that I think about as I come to this text. As we enter into this school of prayer, and I look through the syllabus, and I examine the requirements, I realize that this is really significant what we're being told here. Coming to this passage involves a lot more than just once again feeling guilty about my prayer life and working to set aside some more time and restructuring the pattern of my prayer life so that it lines up more with this prayer. What we're talking about here goes way beyond that. Way beyond just feeling guilty, and yeah, I have to find more time to pray and yeah, I should pray, I'll have a little outline for my prayer time. This is going way beyond that. Entering into this school and sitting down before this teacher demands that I examine my heart.

First I have to examine whether or not I am even a true believer as Jesus defines what it means to be a true follower of Him. Because I recognize I can't come to Him in prayer and play games. I can play games in front of other people but I can't play games in front of Him. So am I for real? Am I a true believer as Jesus defines it? Is my life marked by repentance and righteousness? That's one thing I need to examine.

And then I need to think about walking in humility. You just don't humble yourself when you become a Christian and that's it. It's a call to a life of humility. In First Peter five it says, clothe yourself with humility. That's the kind of person who's going to be able to pray this prayer. It's too easy to come to prayer and look at this prayer in particular and think it's just a matter of time management and organization. That's not so. It's way more than that. That's why we need to begin to examine the context. That's why I wanted to take step back and look at where this fits in with what Jesus is talking about as He's making this contrast between what's true spirituality, following Him according to what the Bible really says, and the false spirituality or empty righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees who developed a system which was entirely external, superficial, artificial, and it was all about them getting honor for themselves for how spiritual they were. You have to see this in its context.

So the call there is to examine our hearts. You and I need to use this as we come to this passage and as we think about coming to this prayer. We need to use this as an opportunity to do some real evaluation in our own hearts and our own lives. Not the person sitting next to you. That's what the scribe did. He said, well I'm a lot better than this person sitting next to me. You should see what they do. The Lord wants to know, what are you doing? It's time for you to evaluate yourself. If we are to pray in this way, as Jesus says, we have to have hearts that are characterized by true repentance. You have truly turned

from your sin. You have recognized that you are a sinner and that you sin. And that that is a violation of God's Word, and that is an act of rebellion against a Holy God. You need to repent of that, turn from that. Say I don't want anything to do with that anymore. I recognize where that's going. I recognize that that is my life. I don't want that. It's a true repentance. A true turning away from sin. It's not thinking I can have God and my sin. It's not thinking I can go to heaven and have the world. It's truly turning from sin. And it's turning to righteousness. Hungering for righteousness. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness, recognizing, I don't have any of that. I don't have any righteousness. I desperately need righteousness. And that is going to lead me to running as fast as I can to Jesus Christ. Not trusting in my own righteousness, but rejoicing in His righteousness, which is given to my account because of what He's done on my behalf. And I receive that by faith.

It's a total distrust of myself. It's a total trusting in Him. Hungering after something I don't have. I need to have true repentance. I need to have a hunger for righteousness and I need to have real humility. Not this phony boloney humility, but a real humility. A real broken heart. If I'm understanding this Sermon the Mount correctly and I am understanding how this prayer fits into the overall sermon, I understand that if I am really going to pray the way Jesus wants me to pray, this has got to be my life. True repentance, hungering after righteousness, walking in humility; two out of three isn't going to cut it. So will you do what I'm doing? Will you join me in this? Will you ask the Lord to help you examine your own heart?

Prayer is just the symptom. If you feel like your prayer life isn't what it ought to be, that's just a symptom of something else. Ask the Lord to help you see what the something else is. Ask the Lord to help you examine your own heart. The Lord is piercing. He's not afraid to confront, is He? He walks up to some people who are trusting in themselves that they were righteous and He says, let me tell you what you guys are all about. Ok. And that's what He's saying to you and me. I know what you're all about. So let's examine our hearts and let's meditate sincerely on our need for grace. For God's grace to forgive us. For God's grace to change us. For God's grace to help us live the kind of life that prays this kind of prayer. It's not about self-sufficiency. It's not about self-righteousness. It's not about self-effort. It's about a humble heart that wants to know God more than anything else. That's the kind of person who can pray like this. That's the kind of person we need to be. Amen? That's what He's calling us to. We believe that His grace is sufficient to make us those kinds of people. So let's ask Him to examine our hearts so that we might be the kind of people who can pray this kind of prayer. Let's pray.

Father, it's so easy for us to make excuses for ourselves. Lord, help us to humble ourselves. We might even think this morning that because of the culture in which we live in, the business of life, and the worldliness and materialism that's all around us that forces itself upon us, that we would have an easier time praying like this if we lived in some place like Uganda. Lord, but that is just another way of us trying to fool ourselves because it's not a matter of where we are but who we are. It's a matter of what's going on inside of us. It's a matter of our own hearts. So Lord, as we come to this familiar prayer and we begin to think it through, I pray that you help us to start by examining our own hearts that we'll have heard everything that Jesus has said leading up to this instruction on prayer so that we can be in the place where we can hear what He says and put into practice. Lord, help each one of us to examine our own hearts. And Lord, as we say all this we're just once again overwhelmed by your grace. We recognize

we're sinners, we recognize we're helpless and hopeless but we recognize that there is absolutely nothing we can do. There's no way we can trust in ourselves. There's no way we can generate enough self-righteousness. We need a Savior. And we're thankful again for Your incredible grace You've demonstrated towards us by sending Your Son to be our substitute to take what we deserve upon Himself so that His righteousness can be given to us. Help us Lord to be thankful. Help us Lord to be humble. Help us Lord to examine our own hearts. We pray this in our Savior's name. Amen.