

<b>Series</b>	Sermon on the Mount
<b>Study</b>	Study 10
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Welcome back to another edition of Sermon on the Mouth. Today, we'll be dealing with the Lord's Prayer, looking at the first verse, which is chapter 6 verse 9. For us to understand what the Lord's Prayer is all about we need to go back to last week's verses to understand the context in which the verses and this Lord's Prayer is given.

Now if you look back last week verses 7-8.

*7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

So the usual view of prayer can, is either biblical view or the usual view. Usual view is basically a transactional view of prayer, whereas the biblical view is a transformational concept of prayer. The pagans use many words, why, to manipulate god to do their will. As you can see in history there are lots of depictions of Romans who will sacrifice pigs, who will also sacrifice sheep to their gods and they say the right incantations, the right prayer in order to appease the deities to get what they want; safety when they travel, a good harvest for their crops. They're here, you can see them offering incense.

Even Jesus describes two people coming to pray at the temple with somewhat vested interest in one of them. For example, the Pharisee and the tax collector; the tax collector comes in totally helpless because he knows he's got no merit at all, but it is the Pharisee who gets Jesus sharpest criticism because he comes to prayer thinking that he has fulfilled all sorts of righteousness, and so therefore God perhaps owes him a good answer.

Now, a good example of looking at transactional view of prayers among pagans is the story of Elijah. When he challenged the priests of Baal in 1-Kings. As you can see, all the priests of Baal were brought to challenge Elijah on Mount Carmel and then chapter 18 of 1 Kings,

*26 And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. 27 And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." 28 And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.*

You can see pay pagan priests of Baal did a lot of things. They prayed for a long time, they cried,

they cut themselves. Why? Because the pagan prayers are designed to get the attention of the gods; in fact, they had to pronounce the gods names correctly, and in some way, if you knew the gods names correctly and you kept on chanting it, you could perhaps manipulate the power of these gods. Look how Elijah prays Elijah in 1-Kings.

*36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back."*

A simple prayer, not many words, didn't have to cut himself, didn't have to dance around, direct and to the point and God answered and He sent fire and consumed the sacrifice on the altar and Elijah won that battle against the priests of Baal. And so therefore it is not what you say or how often you say it or the way in which you say it, there are a lot of young Christians are worried about, do I have the right things to pray for, the right words to use, they may even be embarrassed by the words they use and basically unsure if God will actually hear them. But if you look in Matthew chapter 6 verse 8, it says do not be like these pagans for your father knows what you need before you ask him, which means if your father already knows what you need before you ask him, it means that the believer does not have to persuade or convince a reluctant God, but instead come to God as a child will come to his father with humility and dependence expressed his desire basically.

Imagine a child going to the father, you know, if he's going to ask his father for an iPad, just like his friends in school, don't you think the father would know before he even ask. If that's the case why bother to ask? In fact, before you open mouth, if the father actually knows he can just say yes or he can say no, what would be the point of that? But when the son goes to the father there is a process that father allows the son to come to him and bring this request even though he already knows what the son actually wants, because there's a process. It is to build up on a relationship. The act of asking and answering builds on that relationship. The more the boy communicates his needs and desires, the more it will allow the father to interact with him and communicate and guide him and in the process the boy grows and the relationship deepens as the father grants the request, the boy is grateful and elated and excited and thinks his father really cool. And then sometimes if Father is going to turn it down, a boy gets upset, but over time the boy gets to learn what the father is like, and he learns to trust the father.

So when we come to the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer emphasizes simplicity over the rhetoric, clarity over repetitions and the Lord's Prayer is an expression of our love to God. In fact, it was St Augustine who actually said that what really makes you who you are is not what you think, what you do is actually what or whom you love. Love is the driving force of all our behavior. You can say in your mind, yeah, I believe in Jesus Christ. I love Jesus Christ but really what gets you up in the morning? What gets you excited? Is making money, having status that captures your imagination, that drives you. So therefore if that that's what drives you, you cannot change to love things of God, unless you actually love God. And it is through prayer, knowing God through prayer that communication that actually fosters that love. Matthew 22,

*37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

So basically prayer is a way in which we love God and we love our fellow men. Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg says,

Prayer is meant to be the door that opens us to the transforming grace of God and feeds our souls. Prayer is never about changing God, but about helping us to cooperate with God's grace so that we are changed by the encounter.

Changes comes through prayer. Knowing God comes through prayer. It's a communication. Instead of us changing God, it is actually God changing us. Prayer is loving God and loving others. If you look at the structure of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9 onwards,

9Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

These first three petitions addresses God's glory, loves God. The second one is,

*11 Give us this day our daily bread 12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

This address our needs. So the structure of the first half of the Lord's Prayer is addressed to our father in heaven and there are three things that specifically come out of this:

- Hallowed be your name. So we're praying for God's glory.
- Your kingdom come; we are praying for God's reign.
- Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are praying for God's will.

So when we pray, what is happening is that we are looking at God's glory, God's reign and God's will. It's going to be on earth as it is in heaven. When we pray it is a future orientation. The believer is future orientated. When you pray, looking forward to the new heavens and a new earth, looking forward to God's glory, God's reign and God's will, will be perfectly implemented in this new world as it is now in heaven where God is. So prayer is a cry in the midst of a troubled broken world where there are the first shoots of God's kingdom be inaugurated through Jesus Christ coming, but this waiting is final consummation. Our prayers are not to be admired or stuck on the priorities of this world and all the problems. They should not be our priority, but we need to hold on to these things lightly, and we prayer ever increasingly hold on to the reality of God's kingdom that's going to come.

That is what prayer is about, it is a future orientation that will return our eyes to Jesus. We look to the future. We crave. That's why he blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. We're looking for God's righteousness in his kingdom to come into this world.

So let's start off with verse nine.

*Our father who art in heaven.*

Now just take a look at that first phrase. It addresses God as father, an intimate use of the term; he is our father. So when you approach him, we approach him as our father, but this is not an ordinary father, this is our father who art in heaven, which implies, implies to sovereignty and great power of the King of the universe. So when we come to God in prayer, we're coming to a father, which implies intimacy and we're coming to God who is basically sovereign over all the universe.

Now look at the word before father. It is the word 'our'. You see our pattern of prayer is actually must be broad. It addresses the father to embrace our needs, our daily bread, our sins, our temptations, so Christianity is inherently a communal affair. It's a matter of life of the body, the church together. Jesus didn't call isolated individuals. He called groups of disciples. When we pray, we pray communally, is our father.

So Jesus tells us to pray our father. Now this is absolutely unusual because the Jews usually address God as sovereign Lord King of the universe, but every time Jesus address God it is as father. The only time he doesn't address God as father is on the cross. When he says my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And that's a time where he took upon himself the great punishment for the sins that we have committed. He took it upon himself, it is only then when his father turned his face away from him and that relationship was for that moment broken because of the sin, which he took upon himself for us. So the word Abba father describes an intimate relationship with God. It describes access. When we come to God, we are sitting on his lap as it were. He will not cut us off. The implies access, we're adopted, it implies identity, inheritance, God's protection and also God's control of the universe for our sakes. Now, when people talk about being children of God, there is this idea of children of God in a general sense. Acts chapter 17,

*26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28 for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."*

Well people describe all the people in the world like they are children of God. They are children of God in a general sense. The same way in which for example Tunku Abdul Rahman. He is Bapa Malaysia, which means he is all our father. He is a father to everybody here. If that's the case then we can go up to Penang and when they sell his house in Penang, we can have a part of it or perhaps we can have a drive of his car, which has left behind in the museum. No, we can't because we are not really related to him. When the Bible says, we are indeed his offspring, people by nature are not God's children rather that we are all created by God and so therefore they are God's creatures.

1 John chapter 3 verse 1,

*See what kind of love the father has given to us that we should be called children of God and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us, is that it does not know him.*

So there's a distinction. There is the children of God who are basically believers in Christ and then there's the rest of the world that does not actually know God and how we are actually children is in Romans chapter 8 verses 14 to 17,

*14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

So here we are actually special adopted sons of God. Now the Roman family in the context of the times in which Paul wrote, adoption was very important and common. It's not unusual. Let me give

you an example. If you look at Julius Caesar, when he died there would have been a controversy of who took over as Emperor of Rome because usually the crown will pass from father to son. He actually had a relationship with Cleopatra and they actually had a son, but that son did not become the emperor. Instead Julius Caesar's grand-nephew actually became the emperor. He had a sister called Julia who married Marcus Atius Balbus. They had a daughter called Atiya who married Gaius Octavius and they produced two children Octavia which is a girl and Augustus, which is the grand-nephew. He actually adopted Augustus and Augustus was the one who actually became the emperor of Rome, not his own biological son by Cleopatra, which then indicates to us how important adoption is. It gives you all rights; even to have the crown passed over to you.

Here's the picture of Nero, the mad emperor who actually martyred Paul. He was also adopted. Galatians chapter 3 verse 25 to 29.

*25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*

So here we assume the same relationship with God in a sense because we are in Christ. In Christ, we are sons of God. So just as Christ who address God as father, we address God as father, simply because we are sons of God. And in those days, the people who actually got adopted were actually males. You don't see females being adopted and now everyone who has come in Christ, we are all called sons of God, which means women and this is revolutionary for the time. Women are also called sons of God. Women who were never adopted, who never got to inherit anything, women now have the same rights. In Christ, you are all so being sons of God is important because it gives us our identity, our purpose.

Now Alain De Botton writes about status anxiety and you see there is a lot of anxiety about what other people think of us and whether we judge a success or not a failure, a winner or loser, we care about us status for a simple reason, because most people tend to be nice to us according to the amount of status we have. You wear a Datu or Tan Sri in front of your name everybody treats you different.

Now there's a difference between Western society and Eastern society. In Eastern societies traditional family is the Be it and end off. Your status is based on your role within the family. So you are a good father, good mother, filial son. So therefore that's a great pressure on the family name and guilt if you cannot live up to your family name. In the West, we are freed from that. Western families or the modern family are free to be, whatever we want to be, but this freedom brings another kind of anxiety. It brings a kind of anxiety about making a name for yourself. In fact, the status, status anxiety is basically more common in today's wealthier Western countries because there's so much more to envy. Here's a picture of a Chen Ming Don, a Chinese migrant to New York city. What he did one day was take a large kitchen knife and he killed his cousin's wife and four children age 9 to as young as 1 with a young one-year-old decapitating his head. When they caught him and asked for his reason why he said that since he has been in the United States, everybody seems to be doing better than him. He'd been in the US since 2014, and he murdered the family in 2013 and it seemed to him that everybody was doing better than him, you know and he lived in Chinatown for a while and then live with his cousin and he killed his cousin's family simply because they were doing better than him.

This status anxiety is something that is so significant, but in Christ we no longer have to worry whether it is pressure for our family for the family's name or pressure on our own status, because

what matters is that we now live for the audience of One. We now live for the audience of our father who loves us, and all our self-esteem is based on what Christ has done for us and no longer have to worry about status and our status anxiety.

So if he is our father, we will so have an inheritance. If you look in Ephesians chapter 1 verses 11 to 12,

*11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.*

See the word, we have already obtained inheritance. What inheritance is? The inheritance is eternal life, new bodies when we get resurrected. The world and all this nations, because one day we will reign with Christ. We are fellow heirs with Christ and not only that we have a share in God's glory, one day when we will bask in this unshielded glory and be with him forever. So that is all great inheritance. Not only we have inheritance, we also have God's protection, you know, in 1739 Great Britain and Spain had a big war, you know, that was called the war of Jenkins Ear, because in 1731 the Spanish coast guard attacked a British ship and boarded it. And the captain was name was Captain Robert Jenkins. During the ensuing fight that occurred they chopped off his ear. And what Jenkins did was he took his ear and he put in the alcohol and brought it to parliament. And because Robert Jenkins was British captain, subject of the crown Britain declared war on Spain, provides protection. In the same way if you remember Paul, the apostle Paul, remember he was met by Lord Jesus Christ on Damascus road, a big light show and he fell from these horse and remember he was a persecutor of the Christian Church and if you look at the words that Jesus says to him.

*3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"*

See Saul was persecuting the church and if you persecute the church, you are persecuting God. Now the last point here is that when we come to God is prayer, he is not only our father but he is our father in heaven that is a big difference.

You remember this young lady called Chloe Kim, world-class snowboarder, basically won multiple gold medals at the last winter Olympics and when she was 4 years old onwards, the father would take her to the hills when it snows every winter and they would teach you how to snowboard and do all the things that athletes do, and there was a great time of struggle. She used to fall down and hurt herself, she battled expectations. There were falls, there were injuries, and the father describes his feelings when he was watching the daughter do the Olympics. She says I was very stressed because everyone was saying Chloe was going to win gold, but no one knows the result that I cannot control.

You see, the father could do everything. He would bring the daughter to the snow fields every winter, stay by her side, give up his job, do everything he can, but like all fathers you only can do a certain amount. Everything else, the ultimate course of your daughter's life you cannot control. We have a father in heaven and he is sovereign. He is in control. If you look in Proverbs 16:33

The lot is cast into the lap but every decision is from the Lord.

Lord is the ultimate cause of everything in our lives, major or minor. Now, if you have that kind of

father who is Lord sovereign all over the world, you could walk around and if you really understood who God is, nothing would actually phase you. And if it does phase you or get you frightened or anxious, all we have to do is come to God in prayer and say, our father who art in heaven.

So let's continue, our father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Let's spend the rest of this lesson, looking at the meaning of hallowed be thy name. When we say hallow, it is to treat something or someone as Holy, set apart and special. So we are basically treating God as infinitely and majestically glorious and beautiful and great.

John Calvin describes this as to have our entire heart captivated by the wonderment of who he is. Now Tim Keller describes five aspects of praise and worship and adoration that we want to look into this under the rubric of hallowed. When we worship God, we need to be thinking about him. Why we worship him, expressing our thoughts and feelings, appraising, what implications of who he is into our lives. Beholding, soaking in what God means to us. And lastly resting.

Now, when we worship, we need to start off with thinking because we are thinking individuals. We need to think deeply on how great God is. You see the psalmist, each of the psalmist will lay out reasons why they worship God. For example, Psalm 19, how he made the heavens and the earth. And you look in a video of the beautiful rolling hills in the countryside and wonderment of the ocean deeps and you are awed and you think and you thank God for that. You thank God for every breath that you take and all the health that you actually have and you are still alive and the wonderment of the human body. You look at the cross and how Jesus left heaven to hang on that instrument of torture for us.

You think about the awfulness of our sins and how God still loves us, unconditionally chose us despite all our past. So that is how linking is involved. John Piper describes worship as putting logs into the fire. And you know what the logs are. The logs are basically all the things that God is, His beauty, His majesty, His benevolence, His grace, His mercy, and you put all that thinking into the log. It's like, they're like logs into the fire and then use that and you ignite that into the fire of worship. That's what thinking does.

Now number two, it is not only when we think through these issues, but we must learn to express them. Psalm 63, verses 3-4,

Because your steadfast love is better than life. He is thinking about that. Because your steadfast love is better than life my lips will praise you. I will bless you as long as I live. In your name, I will lift up my hands.

So therefore, he not only thinks about it when he gets excited about how beautiful God is then he expresses it in his voice, in his hands. He may even dance. C S Lewis actually says,

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy was the praise not only expresses but completes enjoyment. It is its appointed consummation. Which means when you actually sing about God and dance about God, wave their hands and just worship him, you are actually enjoying God doing that. So let's continue our worship. The next section is appraising.

Imagine a jeweler, taking a diamond, and he's got this jeweler's lenses, and he is looking at a diamond and he's rotating the various faces of the diamond, looking at its color, clarity to determine

its value and when we come to praise and worship, it's something like that. The Psalmist says because your steadfast love is better than life my lips will praise you. I will bless you as long as I live. Now, if God is this strong, you're appraise why am I afraid. If you praise him for being a merciful God, why do you still struggle with guilt? If he was really in total control and everything is necessary that he sends and nothing is necessary that he withholds, why am I upset about the fact that I've got my job problems or my fiancé problems or my illness?

You see, the reason why we're affected is because we've got divided hearts. It's what you love. Augustine says, what really makes you who you are is not what you think or do it is actually whom or what you actually love. A friend of mine had two boys also in Melbourne, they are actually men and complained that whatever they did could really teach them Mandarin, Mandarin is so important even in Australia and they couldn't speak it, but one of them actually had a mainland Chinese girlfriend and you know what within six months he's totally fluent in Mandarin, because we need to change what he loves, what he adores, what he worships in order to change behavior.

For example, if you are driven alcoholic you get into destructive relationships, you can't get out of, it is constant anxiety and fear, because the things that drive us because we love alcohol, we love the pleasure, we love the status, we love the jobs, we love the money, but we're so fearful of losing it and we're addicted to alcohol. We're in a vicious cycle because the things that we ultimately love are the cause of our pain.

Now how do you get out of that rut? The only way you can get out of the rut is to change the things that you love and in worship adoration gets you out of that, because it changes what you love, which is a reasonable for what you are. If you change what you love you are released from the old destructive patterns, adoration changes what makes you happy or excites you. You know, we tend to live double lives. We say we love God, but we barely are able to tolerate worship in church. It's all boring. Bible study is boring because it's not what you love. It is what you love that will excite you.

So Psalm 63 continues in verse 2. So I've looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and your glory.

Now this is sensory language. Not only must we be thinking, expressing, praising the beauty of God, we must actually experience it, as beholding, experiencing his power and glory. Something when it gives you a sense of God's reality, you know, I can describe to you how beautiful honey is but unless you have a taste of that honey in the tongue it will convey to you something that's way different in a different dimension from just thinking about it. So opinion of God's holiness and the sensing of his holiness into you is completely different. It's like a father and son walking on the road. The father loves the son, they walk together but then suddenly the father picks up the son and hugs the son and that is also love, but the son experiences in a different manner. The Holy spirit is the one actually comes into our lives, in this part of worship and allows us to behold and experience the glory of God.

You see religious people will pray and confess or petition because they all want something. You see, true Christians will want to praise God for who he is for himself. He's the reality that shapes are heart and only that kind of relationship will changes us.

And lastly, being still, experiencing the grace of God. You see, we need to experience God is not someone who is just useful but someone who is actually beautiful, you experienced his grace. If you look at Psalm 63, this is the Psalm when David was in the wilderness of Judah, everything seems to

have gone wrong. It seemed that God had abandoned him, while he should have abandoned him because he murdered Bathsheba's husband. He had committed adultery. Their son died. One of his sons Amnon, raped his sister, Tamar. Absalom his eldest son was now hunting David. Now David has lost his way and there was a rebellion. Absalom was against him. He had to run into the wilderness. And then when he was in the wilderness, he wrote this psalm.

*I've looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Your steadfast love is better than life.*

Here he is thinking, you know, I've lost everything. I've not been a good person. I've committed all these sins and yet your steadfast love is better than life. That means God still has not abandoned him despite all the evil that David had done. Why do you still love me he asked God? Verse 11 of Psalm 63,

*11 But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped.*

He is thinking, God has still not rejected him. When you sit down and when you behold the beauty of God and you rest in his grace, you will see God is beautiful and not as useful and when you do all that in worship, it changes you. So brothers and sisters, the Lord's Prayer is not just a couple of words to be recited. It's a beautiful time when you come before our heavenly father, who is a sovereign king of all the world and you come before him and you just spend time to just worship, to think, to adore or praise, behold his glory and to sit by his grace. And when we do that, we will slowly have his love change our hearts.

So I hope this part of the prayer will be able to be instituted in our lives and that we too all will slowly change to the glory of God. So next week we will do with the rest of the Lord's Prayer. Thank you.