Hypocrite Prayer — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 6:5–15 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, May 24, 2026 · *Undivided*

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Alright, thanks to the team for leading us a special time of worship. If you have your Bible, we're going to be in Matthew chapter six, and you can turn there. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you and if you don't own a Bible you can take that one. I don't know what page number it's in, Matthew chapter 6. If somebody knows where that is, you can shout it out. And help those of us who look in the table of contents every now and then.

No shame in that game if that's you. Anyone got it? 859. There it is. 859, Matthew chapter 6. And if you're new to Broadview, we're going through the book of Matthew. We're looking at the life of Jesus. And right now we're in the greatest sermon ever preached. Called the Sermon on the Mount. And it's one of the best sermons ever preached because it's Jesus' blueprint, I think, for what a flourishing life really looks like. One of the things growing up was one of my guilty pleasures was watching movies with Jim Carrey.

I don't know if anybody else had that. As a favorite pastime. Alrighty then. I just liked everything about Jim Carrey. I had every every quote down from every naughty movie I shouldn't have been watching. Sorry mom. I just sneak them in every now and then. I don't recommend Jim Carrey, but there's one movie that I even had to sh I even had to let my son watch this movie. I'm a terrible parent, but it's the movie called the Mask. Has anybody watched the mask? Stanley Ipkiss in the mask finds this little wooden mask in this little river brook and when he puts the mask on he turns into this like outlandish, cartoonish character who is invincible and it releases Stanley Ipkiss from his inhibitions and his cowardly ways and his kind of insecurities and things like that and he becomes unstoppable, invincible.

He can get shot up by guns and did you miss me? You know, he's just he just. And the problem though, of course, is that the longer he wears that mask, the more the mask begins to possess him, and eventually he gets to the point where he it's he almost can't remove the mask. And that's the thing about wearing a mask. The longer you wear a mask, the more that

mask tries to possess you and tries to take you. And it's not just true of the Jim Carrey movies. It's all of the great movies and books.

There is this I'm sorry, in a lot of the great movies and books in Western tradition anyway. This is a theme where the one who dons the mask is often unbeknownst to them possessed by the mask so that it begins to take from them and transform them fundamentally in their true nature. Another good example of this is the Nutty Professor. Has anybody watched the Nutty Professor? Sherman Klump is you know, he's got a lot going for him. He's a very smart and kind man, but there's a lot that's not going for him.

And he's madly in love with miss Purdy. Miss Purdy is not interested, actually she was interested, but he didn't have eyes to see it, and he got all in his in his way. And so he takes this magic potion to become you guys remember who he becomes Buddy Love, that's right, Buddy Love. And Buddy Love is a he's a woman's well he's a womanizer, but he sweeps miss Purdy off her feet and Sherman becomes Buddy Love because he thinks that's the only way that he can get the one thing that he really wants.

But unfortunately Buddy Love was not while he did have good things about him that released a Sherman from his insecurities and ambitions, Buddy Love was not all that good of a man. And eventually the movie basically ends with Sherman fighting Buddy Love just to get himself back from who he was becoming because of the mask. And again it's a it's a story as old as time. You can go Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dorian Gray. Spider-Man 3, you know, when he becomes venom, he has to go up into the church house at the very top of the church house and ring the church bells just to get the venom mask off of him because the mask was transforming him even little Toby wait who which Spider-Man was that?

Toby Maguire? Yes. Even the kind-hearted Toby Maguire was becoming a not a good person. And so that dynamic is as old as the Garden of Eden, the problem with pretending is that it will change who you are. If you pretend long enough something will begin to fundamentally shift in your core character, your core nature. And these movies are so popular and we love them so much, not just because they're funny, but because they get at a core theological truth. That wearing a mask can be dangerous. And Jesus talks about this dynamic in the Sermon on the Mount and talks about it with great wisdom.

Beyond some of what we see in our modern arts and entertainments and books and things like that, because he is rebuking a kind of mask wearing that was prone amongst the religious establishment in his day. It was a mass that would make people look good to other people, look good before God, but the problem was is that there wasn't a real good heart underneath that mask. There was a duplicity between what they were projecting to the world and who they were underneath. And in the Sermon on the Mount, one of the things that Jesus makes clear about a life of true flourishing is that a flourishing life is only possible when there is a sense of purity of heart.

When there is a sincerity and wholeness between the person within and the person without, that there is no duplicity or hypocrisy or disordering of your love both for God and for other people. And that when that love becomes disordered or when there becomes a duplicity between what's in the heart and what's outside the heart, that that is what fractures the person such that they lose the flourishing life. They lose this blessedness that your Heavenly Father desires you to experience. You lose that gift when those things get out of whack. And so Jesus in the Beatitudes says, Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are those who mourn because they can realize when things are out of whack and then bring it to the Lord. Blessed are those who. Are persecuted for righteousness. In other words, they don't cave on what's right just to be accepted by people, but they stand in what's right no matter the cost. We went through Matthew chapter 5 where he talks about the problem of the heart. Being the pr the heart of the matter and that it's not just about murder and adultery and the external rules around divorce but rather the internal heart of loving God and loving people.

And then in Matthew chapter 6, which is where we were at last week, Jesus turns the tables a little bit and he presents the counterfeit of what he's what he's commending. He's commending a heart that is perfect. Matthew 5. 48. Be perfect. Therefore, as your Father in heaven is perfect. Not saying that you should be sinless and never fail, but that there should be a wholeness and integrity to who you are. There should be a absence of duplicity, a purity of heart, and the opposite of that, Jesus says, is the hypocrite.

The hypocrite is someone where there is a doubleness of sorts between what he does with his body and who he is in his heart. That the motives for why he does what he does isn't to please the Lord, but is to be seen a particular way by people. He is the hypocrite in that he dons the mask. And that mask, Jesus says, is transforming who he really is. He's not getting closer to God, but rather further and further away. And that pretense, that duplicity, undermines a flourishing life. And that's what we're going to see this morning when it comes to prayer.

Prayer, if you think about it, should be the one place that duplicity can finally disappear in a person's life. Because when you pray, it's just you and the Lord. And yet these religious leaders had developed a posture of prayer. Where that sincerity and purity had been replaced by hypocrisy. And so he says in chapter 6, starting in verse 5 Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. Why? Because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners and the motive for why they love doing it is so that they can be seen by people.

And so according to Jesus, the big thesis for this morning is that when it comes to prayer pretense is going to poison a flourishing life. It poisons a flourishing life because it divides you in your person. You're one person out in public, but there's another thing in the heart.

And again, with prayer, that should be the one safe harbor for sincerity. But these religious people had taken that safe harbor and filled it with public applause and reputation. And so Jesus rebukes it. But he's not rebuking prayer in general. He's not, I don't think, even rebuking public prayer necessarily.

He's rebuking a specific kind. Of public prayer that is motivated by a particular thing and that is to be seen by people and the prayer that loves to be standing. Now, you don't know this, but if m unless you do, but in first century Judaism, there were allotted or appointed hours at which a religious person would pray. Kind of like today Muslims have the call to prayer in particular times of day. Wherever they are, they get down on their knees and they face Mecca and they pray. There was a similar type dynamic in the first century Judaism.

And they would wherever they were, once the prayer hour hit, they would stop what they were doing and they would just stand and they would pray. And so it was it would not be uncommon for you to be out in the street corner or for you to be in the synagogue and to see someone just standing with their eyes closed and their hands out and murmuring to God. And that was it was a very common occurrence, but that's not what Jesus rebukes. Jesus seems to be rebuking the kind of person who knows.

But if I go out in public and I do this errand and that errand at that time, then people will catch me praying and they'll think a good deal about me. And so they would organize their schedules such that when the prayer hour hit, they would be in the synagogue or they would be at that busy intersection. And that people would see them praying out in public and think to themselves, oh wow, that person is just so holy. He is praying and everyone can see him and I heard what he was saying and he's so theological, he's so sophisticated, he's so smart.

And they would just soak in that applause and that recognition and that was the motive for why they were praying instead of actually seeking the presence of their father. And I'm going to call this performative prayer. Or performance prayer and it is the first big counterfeit that Jesus rebukes because performative prayer is seeking after public reputation, public praise. And again, Jesus is not against praying in public. What Jesus is against is prayer staged for public praise. In other words, you craft your day or you craft your words or you craft your prayer such that the person you're trying to impress is the people who are overhearing it.

It's not that you're seeking communion with God or even conversation with God. You're rather seeking to impress the people who are going to listen in on that conversation. And Jesus says, don't be like them. Don't be like those hypocrites. And today we don't have scheduled hours to pray, although I think that should make a comeback. I think it's wonderful for people to pray on certain hours, set a little timer on your phone. Because you can habituate your heart into spiritual disciplines. And if you don't do it's kind of like working out.

If you don't go to the gym, you're never going to get in shape or lose weight or whatever. And if you don't just start praying, you're never going to get good at praying. So I'm not against praying on the hour, I'm not even against praying in public, I don't think Jesus is against those things, but he's against it done for a certain motive the way that this looks today, I think, is pretty innoculous in that you can begin in your small group, if you have a church small group and you know that someone's going to have to pray.

For the food or someone's going to have to pray for the prayer request at the end of the small group. You can some people can get so wrapped up in the opinion of the people who are going to listen to them pray. That they sit there and replay the tapes in their head of what they're going to say and how they're going to say it and how they can sound sophisticated such that they're not even listening to the people who are offering up their prayer requests because they're in their own head polishing up their speech.

Or maybe that's just me. I don't know. Anybody else ever do that? I think that's pretty common for church people because of the fear of what people are going to think. I got to pray a certain way. It's got to sound really sophisticated, it's got to sound important and that I think Jesus would say is performative prayer. It's not sincere, it's not pleasing. To the Lord and it is a version or it's an expression of this hypocrisy of heart that will divide you spiritually and prevent you from a flourishing life.

Or maybe the Facebook, here I go with Facebook again. Let's the whatever's cool now. And I don't e I really don't know what it is. Social media posting. People don't normally post their prayers on social media, but it is pretty common for people to post a spiritual moment. And man, God was so faithful in this season. And instead of highlighting the faithfulness of God, He can kind of highlight your own perseverance through it. I was so we survived this storm. We just really dedicated to God. We really prayed hard and look at me, look at me, look at me.

And instead of God getting the glory, it's a it's a kind of a it's all about you. And that can be a temptation of this type of spirit. This hypocritical, performative, would you look at how I've done? Would you look at how sincere I am? Would you look at how spiritual I am? And Jesus would say to that, that's not the point of prayer. And that is going to divide you and create a spirit of duplicity. That mask that you're donning is not good for your soul. And so don't seek prayer for public praise.

Seek it for the Father's presence. And that's what he says in verse, I believe it's in verse 7, when you pray, I'm for verse 6, when you pray, go into your private room, shut the door, and pray to your father who is in secret. And your father who sees in secret will reward you. Notice he's comparing the two types of reward. Public prayer gets the reward of public praise. The thing that motivated the prayer is the reward in which it's received. The currency of the reward is the thing that motivated it.

But in private prayer that is in your prayer closet. He uses the Greek word tamayon. It's in an ancient Palestinian home, it was the room that would have a lock on it. It was the room where you could finally get some privacy. You might think of your bathroom if your bathroom has a lock on it. Or maybe a closet if it has a lock on it. The idea is that you can shut out the world. And that the only people in that place are you and your Heavenly Father. It is the death of performance because no one can see you.

And that's where a true kind of sincere prayer can happen. Not that sincere prayer can't happen out in public, but Sincer prayer is much more likely to happen in the closet because you can't perform for people who are not watching you pray. That's not to say that the closet is somehow magical. Like you can imagine going into your prayer closet and rehearsing your prayer for small group. Like I'm going to really impress 'em and I'm going to like memorize them like super prayer and so then you're not really doing what Jesus is talking about.

But when you go it's I think about it this way, it's not the closet that makes your prayer holy. It's the presence of your heavenly father that makes the closet holy. And when you're in the presence of your heavenly father, all of a sudden the motivation for your prayer shifts. Fundamentally, such that it's not even about people or what they say or think, but it's about this Communion with your Father in heaven. This rich satisfying Difficult to describe dynamic where the Spirit of God testifies to your spirit, God is in this place.

And when you pray in that place, that is secret prayer. That is closet prayer. It's prayer for no one else. And when you seek the Father's presence fundamentally in your prayer times, whether it's in public or in private, then you're less prone to hypocrisy. You're less prone to committing this egregious counterfeit vision of prayer. And so avoid the one and pursue the other. That's the first. Avoid avoid performative prayer and pursue the presence of God. The second version of the counterfeit is in verse 7. He says, when you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles.

Because they babble because they think that they're going to be heard for their many words. They don't mean heard like God will hear them audibly. They mean hear and God will respond with what I want him to do. This Greek word for babel is what's called onomonopoetic word, which is fun to say, but it just means it sounds like what it means like. Means like what it sounds like. And so this word bata logue if you say it out loud it sounds like what it represents, which is just babbling. Battalogeō, battalogeō, battalogeō.

If you were praying like that, it would just be battalogeō, you'd be heaping up words, heaping up phrases, all for the sake that God would hear you. Now again, first century is lost on us to some degree, but in the first century it was very common for pagan people to have these long preambles to their prayer times. So in the Greco Pantheon you would have Zeus or Apollo or any other number of Greek gods from Ares to you know the line is long. But every god had

their own little preamble, their own story of glory and reputation in the Greek myths and epics.

And so you would have these priests stand up and just kind of butter up their God. They would warm 'em up by praising and heaping, Lo, how glorious you are, Zeus, God of thunder, you know, defeated Kronos, the greatest God there is. And the idea was that in buttering up the God, then the God would do what you wanted. Because he'd be like, oh, I kind of like this guy. He's he gets it. So I'm going to help him out because we're on the same team and it was just very very common for people to pray in that way and Jesus rebukes that prayer.

It reminds me of Elijah, if you remember in 1 Kings chapter 18, you can put that in your notes. In 1 Kings 18, Elisha and the prophets of Baal, they go toe-to-toe, head-to-head, to see whose God was the real God And the prophets of Baal are shouting all night long and working themselves up. And Elijah mocks them and says, maybe he's on the toilet. You know, maybe, maybe he's asleep. Maybe your God's on a trip. Maybe you need to shout a little louder so that you can wake him up. And Jesus and I think Jesus would say something similar here.

He's like, if you really believe that God needs to be woken up should you really be praying to a God like that? Is that really an omnipotent, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good God? It doesn't sound like that. It sounds like a human with super strength. It sounds like a fickle person who's in a mood and you got to kind of w warm him up before he'll do what you want. What kind of person praised to a God like that, Gentiles, that's who. Which for Jewish audience were pagans. Unbelievers, people who don't know the real true God of the Bible The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is a covenant-keeping God, who is a God who knows the number of hairs on your head, who desires covenant relationship for generations upon generations.

The Gentiles pray like that, so don't don't babble. Don't heap up empty phrases. Now, Jesus is not against repetition in prayer necessarily. He's not even against long prayers. Because Jesus prayed very long prayers, if you've ever read John What is it, John fifth fourteen? Almost yeah, John 17 for sure. From fourteen to seventeen is a very extended prayer. The Psalms are full of long prayers. The Bible's full of long prayers. So Jesus is not anti-length. And I don't even think he's anti-lots of words, but he's anti-the spirit that motivates those kind of words.

The kind of spirit that says, maybe if I say the magic words, God will have to do what I want. I'm going to call this pragmatic prayer because it uses God to get what you want. Maybe if I can like pull the levers just right, then God's got to He's got to obey me or He's got to answer my prayers. Because God is a means to an end. It's pragmatic in that God is not a worthy end in and of Himself. But rather God is a useful means to get what I really want.

What I really want is reputation. What I really want is money. What I really want is power. What I really want is a spouse. And so God Would you please give me what I want and I'll do whatever you need me to do so that you'll do what I want. And that's how it looks in our life today. We don't batalagéo probably all that much, but we will bargain with God I hear this all the time. God, if you'll just let her forgive me, I will become a preacher, you know, or something like that.

I wouldn't recommend praying that, by the way. Or you'll say, God, if you'll just give us this house. We'll host a small group in it. Or if you'll give me this car, I'll finally start tithing. Or I've heard that one a lot. Or if well you know what you know what you do. You bargain with the Lord. Or sometimes you it's repetition God I really really really really really really and you use these emotive phrases. Or sometimes people will think that my prayer technique matters. Like I got to say the right words, I got to speak in King James for God to hear it.

Beseeching thee for art thou, O Lord, as if he's like, oh now I'm listening. No, no. Don't don't do that, Jesus would say. He says true prayer understands that your father Already knows what you need before you even ask him. Verse 8, don't be like them because your father knows the things that you need before you even ask him. In your notes, I'm just describing this as trusting God in his person. In other words, you understand that God is not Zeus, and he's not fickle or moody. He's he's not like limited in his knowledge, nor is he kind of human in his way.

He is holy. He's God. He knows everything. He can do anything. He knows the end from the beginning. Now notice Jesus doesn't say your father knows, so don't ask. He could have said that, but he didn't say that. He doesn't say your father knows, so don't even pray. He says ask, but do so like a child. A child not like childish, but childlike in your faith, childlike in your confidence that your father is good, that your father knows what you need. Like I think about my kids. My kids, you know, they know that I know what they're going to ask me for, especially if it's Briggs and it's first thing in the morning while I'm still trying to sleep.

I know what he's wanting glass of chocolate milk. But it doesn't stop him from asking. He still asks. And it's in the asking that there's actually an invitation into communion. Intimacy with his earthly dad because his dad takes care of his needs. When I'm in the mood for but your heavenly father's so much better. He's so much better than that. He doesn't need to sleep in, right? He doesn't he's not like that. He's he's so eager to care for you and he knows everything about you and knows what's good for you and what's bad for you and so you ask him like a child you ask like a child that says dad I trust you Dad, I know you know this, but man, I'm struggling here.

I'm not trying to twist you. I'm not trying to pressure you. Kids can do that too. I'm not trying to leverage you for what I really want. I just need I need you dad. I need you to help me with this deal. And that is seeking and trusting in God's person. And so counterfeit

prayer, performance-based, stages the prayer for the sake of public praise. Jesus says, no, no, seek the Father's presence. Don't use God as a genie in a bottle, as a means to an end to get what you really want.

But rather trust in the Father's person. Orient your mind to who God really is. And then Jesus gives the Lord's Prayer, which is very, very famous, and most of you could probably quote it from memory. And in the Lord's Prayer, I think Jesus models what true prayer really is. It resists both of these counterfeits. And presents something so much better. And so let's let's read this together. You don't have to quote it out loud, but Jesus says therefore you should pray like this. Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us of our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive others, your Father in heaven will not forgive your offenses. Now there's so much in the Lord's Prayer that we simply don't have time to unpack it all.

But I do want to give you this bird's eye view so that you can have a positive vision for true prayer. Because these of six imperatives is what it is in the Greek. These are not like things to be memorized and just quoted from memory. A lot of people pray the Lord's Prayer in that way, and I'm not necessarily against that. But these are invitations into deep pools of intimacy and communion with God. And if you'll treat them more like that, then it will really enrich your prayer life. And the first idea is this idea of our Father in heaven.

Our Father, you notice that both counterfeit prayers were contrasted with the language of Father. Don't be like them. Your father knows what you need. Don't be like them, but pray to your father who is in secret, who sees in secret. So if you want to have a name for this prayer, the Greek word for fathers, the pater. Or I like to say padre, that's Spanish. But it's prayer that trusts in the Father, prayer that knows the personality of the Father. And the priorities of the father and the goals of the father and the agenda of the father and the goodness of the father and as we sang this morning he's a good good Father, and that orients you towards that reality.

When that reality is your fundamental reality, then you'll actually learn how to pray. Because you'll be rightly oriented to reality. And the reality is God exists and God has created everything. He created you and He's Got a plan for this world, a big, great redemptive plan. And your flourishing is in some degree dependent on you being aligned with that. And so it is it is paternal prayer it is it is oriented toward the Father and the first thing this prayer does is it makes God the Father the priority. Your name be hallowed, your name be honored as holy.

This is the same word for sanctify when Jesus in John 17 says, Father, sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. The idea of sanctification means that you are set apart. I've always used the analogy of the special dishes that are only used at Christmas. Or Thanksgiving or the special China that's just for that one thing. The same idea is that God is set apart. He is unlike any other. He is special. He is wholly other. And this prayer is basically saying, God, would you do that in me? Would you hallow your name, not just in my heart, but in the world.

Would you be seen as God who is unlike any other? Would you be glorified? Would you be high and lifted up? Would you be. Would you shine? These kinds of ideas. And when you pray that prayer, what you're really trying to pray is, God, would you help me to see the world as it truly is? Help me to see the world in which you are God and your name is hallowed and my eyes are or my understanding of reality is properly shaped by that truth. And it's not just in your heart that this sanctification takes place.

You can pray this in our country. God, hallow your name. You can pray this for our church. God, would you hallow your name? Would you help Broadview Baptist church to be a church that glorifies the name of God? That is God word in our orientation and not man-centered. But that we would seek for the name of God to be set apart in our city. Hallowed be your name. Then the second is your kingdom come. The sincere prayer is centered in the Father's plan. Again, God from the very beginning of the book of Genesis has had a plan in motion.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, he said he made a promise, he said, to Eve. And Adam from the seed of the woman will come a child who will crush the head of the serpent. You will he will bruise he will you will strike his heel, but he will bruise your this idea that a Messiah would reverse the curse and restore the Garden of Eden, that is God's big plan. And it has been unfolding since the Garden of Eden. And so what you're praying is, Father, would you keep doing that plan?

Would your kingdom come? Would would this promise that you started in Genesis materialize more fully in my life and in my world? Would your kingdom come in our church? Would your kingdom come in our city? Would your kingdom come in our country? Would your kingdom come in my family? Let the kingdom of God be made manifest here and now. That is to basically say, God, I want what you want. You don't have to bless my plans. You don't have to make me happy. Because my happiness I now discover is in your plan I've reoriented what I really care about most, and it's not me getting what I want, but you getting what you want.

And once you do that, you can pray your kingdom come and finally your will be done. This idea of submitting to the Father's purpose. I think of a of a child going in for surgery and little kids that go into surgery, that's a really big deal. And especially if they're not going to be unconscious for the surgery. So imagine a kid going into surgery and he has two decisions.

He can either focus on the scalpel, that is causing him pain, or he can focus on the hands of his mother or father.

And the child who focuses on the hand of his mother or father is much more inclined to submit to the doctor's purpose. Because he knows the purpose of the doctor can be trusted because I'm in the hands, the safe hands of my mother and my father. And I may not understand I may not like the pain. And I may not get the whole picture and I certainly have my questions and tensions in tow. But I am going to submit myself to the purposes of God because I know He's good, even when I can't understand.

And so you center yourself in the plan of God and submit yourself to the purposes of God. Sincere prayer submits itself to the Father's purpose. The next thing, if you go to two slides down, it shifts from the father's glory and reputation to asking for regular provision. Here's the way I think about it in my personal prayer life. Before you talk to God about what you want to talk about, first you want to spend time talking to God about what he wants to talk about. And when you're the greatest maximal being, guess what?

You like to talk about yourself. And that's great because you're the greatest maximal being, so why wouldn't you talk about yourself when you're the greatest being in the universe? And so God, first I want to pray, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. So God is my priority. I am centered in the Father's plan, and I am submitted to the Father's purpose. Once you have spent time in prayer centering yourself in God, now you're ready to ask God for your needs, to provide for you.

Physically, financially, and spiritually. And that's exactly where Jesus goes in this prayer. First, he says, would you give us this day our daily bread? This is a focus on the Father's provision. This is a throwback, of course, to the book of Genesis. I'm sorry, the book of Exodus, where God provided manna in the wilderness for Israel. And God said if you take too much manna and you try to keep it for the next day, the manna is only going to spoil. And so it's just you're basically wasting your time. He was teaching them to rely on every word that came from the mouth of God in that they would be reliant on the Father's daily provision and not on their own flesh.

So what happens is when you start to treat the Lord like he owes you a vault of money. So that you're properly prepared for eight months, ten months, ten years down the road. What can happen in your heart is you subtly stop trusting him and you start to trust in the vault of financial assets or you know personal resources and your father in heaven would spare you that arrogance he would spare you that idolatry. And so often his requ his desire is that we would lean on him for our daily needs.

Jesus talks about this later in the Sermon on the Mount where he says, don't worry about your life, what you're going to eat, and what you're going to wear. Look at the lilies of the

field, look at the birds of the air. Does your father not care for them? Does he not clothe them? Then in the same way he'll take care of you. O ye of little faith, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and let all the other things be taken care of by your Father. So learn to even if you're wealthy, which is a blessing from God.

Learn even as a wealthy man or a wealthy woman to live from a place of need, to live from a place of dependence to live from a place of gratitude. That God, these things are not owed me. I don't deserve them in any kind of way. You have promised to take care of my daily needs, and it is for my daily needs that I on it is on you for which I rely on my daily needs and my daily needs alone, not letting your heart slip into this presumptive or dangerous place of greed.

Learn to rest in the Father's provision. And then the second is the Father's pardon. Forgive us of our debts as we forgive those who trespass against us. Notice he links them together. Not only are you carrying your ledger of sin into the Father's throne room, you're carrying the ledger of sins that people have committed against you. And the idea is that as you seek the Father for forgiveness for where you know you have failed him, and he says, I forgive you, and he tears up that ledger. That as he's tearing up your ledger of sin against him, you refuse to not simultaneously tear up the ledger of those who sin against you.

So the idea, and notice it's past tense, as we have forgiven our debtors. It's not God, when you forgive my debt, then I'll release them. No, it's knowing that you're a God who is merciful and abounding in steadfast love, knowing that you have forgiven me in Christ. I refuse, even before I come to you and confess I refuse to bring the baggage of bitterness and unforgiveness. I proactively decide to tear up the ledger that they owe me. So that as I approach your throne of grace, I am demonstrating my understanding of grace.

I demonstrate someone who's received the grace of God and that I'm able to give mercy just like the God who's extended mercy to me. And so I refuse to preclude from others what I've received from the Lord. And then finally a prayer for protection. Which is similar to the first thing. I don't pretend to have strength that I don't actually possess. When you're in relationship with the God who created the universe You may be pretty wise and you may be pretty strong, but you don't want to project that when you're before that kind of a God.

That would be like me projecting my guitar skills to Led Zeppelin like, hey, check this out. And he'd be like, whoopty do. You know, that where's the humility? Where's the recognition that you're standing before the God who created everything, how much better would it be for you to say, Father, would you protect me? Protect me from that website that I'm not telling anybody about? Protect me from that inclination that I have towards grumbling and complaining and anger and things like that. Protect me from you know me God. You know where my struggles are.

Would you protect me from my inclination to sin in these arenas. And it's also a recognition that the battle isn't against flesh and blood, but it's against the principalities and powers of this dark age. I'm not fighting her. I'm not fighting him. I'm not fighting that situation. I'm fighting an enemy. And that enemy is satanic, it is demonic, it is evil. And so I'm not unaware of those schemes that are at work in the world today. And so I refuse to in prayer, make my enemy my spouse, or to make my enemy my co-worker, who is just a real piece of work no, I love them.

I forgive them, I show Christ-like mercy to them, and I channel my attention on the enemy who has taken them captive. Taking them captive to do his will. I show gentleness to the victim of that spiritual warfare. Not only am I being victimized, but they're being victimized as well. And so you learn to pray true prayer because you're attuned to the true war, that there's a real God in heaven and a real spiritual enemy who seeks after your destruction. And when you can pray in that way, you have really mastered one of the most important spiritual disciplines.

Because that kind of prayer is the most liberating, satisfying prayer that you will ever pray. Prayer that is liberated from the opinions of other people and prayer that no longer treats God like a genie in a bottle where you've got to be just so that God will give you what you want. You've learned to kind of get over yourself. You're not the most important person in the world anymore. God and his kingdom and his righteousness are what matter most to you and there is a freedom of self-forgetfulness when you pray in that way.

And while you would think maybe you would be less satisfied because it's less about you, it's actually in giving yourself away that you become more satisfied. It's in dying to yourself that you find true life. It's in giving your life away that you come to possess life worth truly possessing. And so that's the invitation that Jesus would give us. And then he gives us a test at the very end. He says in verse 14, and with this we're done. If you don't forgive others their trespasses, then your Father in heaven, I'm sorry, for if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly father will forgive you as well.

But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses. As we enter into this time of response, I want you to think on these words. And to consider the fact that Jesus was the model of this prayer. Jesus would often go away to the lonely places to pray. He was not just praying in front of his disciples to be seen by people. In fact, I think the reason his disciples came to Jesus and asked, would you teach us to pray? Because they saw something very special. Jesus, unlike any other human, had a relationship with God as a father and a son.

A relationship of rich and true intimacy. And Jesus is telling his disciples, you can have this too You can draw near to God's throne of grace as a father and a son. As a father and his daughter can be your relationship with the God of creation. But the only reason that that's

possible is because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Jesus from the cross prayed the Lord's Prayer. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But one of the things that Jesus prayed is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And he cried out he was God forsaken because he was bearing your sins and mine. And in a very real way, you and I can call God Father. Because our Lord Jesus Christ cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? We can be invited to the throne of God's grace and Him see us as a beloved son or daughter in the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus paid the penalty for your sin and for mine. And three days later, God raised him from the dead, as if to say the debt has been paid in full.

Your sins are forgiven. You can have life in Jesus' name. So if you've never come to a point in your life where you've received that forgiveness, then the warning from Jesus is your prayers will never be like this. The only way that you can pray a sincere prayer. Is for you to extend the forgiveness that you've first received from the Lord. And so if there's never been a time in your life where you've received that gift of grace and you've humbled yourself to recognize it's not about you. That your life is about God.

He created you for a purpose. And that at the center of his purpose is this redemptive plan in Jesus Christ. And if you've never come to a point where you've repented of your sins and trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation, then the invitation would be open for you this morning to do that. And for you having received great grace and forgiveness from God to now extend that grace to those who have sinned against you. And for you who have now become awakened to the reality that is the kingdom of God, that matters most in this world to orient your prayers and your desires and your dreams around that same redemptive agenda from this point forward.

And so the altar is open if you want to make that decision you can use your connect card if you would like to indicate it that way as well. But as Cheryl leads us in this time of response I want to challenge you to seek after sincere prayer. And if there's been a sin in your life because you've been praying for what people think or using God like a genie in a bottle instead of a father who loves you and desires relationship with you, would you confess that this morning? And ask the help of the Holy Spirit to recapture and recover prayer as your Father intends it to be.

And so, Father, we thank you for this time and your word. We thank you, Jesus, for this wisdom that you have given us in the Sermon on the Mount. And how all of it is really made possible because of your life and your death and your resurrection. Father, what an amazing privilege to refer to you as Abba. As a dad and not a divine judge, as a loving, perfect father who will never leave us and never forsake us. For the people in this room. Who have had their vision of fatherhood ruined because of the faithlessness of an earthly dad?

Would you, in your great love and through your Holy Spirit, would you reveal that you are the perfection? Of fatherhood, not a reflection of that earthly experience. And that you would heal us of our inclination towards performance and worldliness and materialism, and you would satisfy us in that place of rich communion and intimacy with you, the lover of our souls, the Father. Father, who loved us so much, you sent your Son into the world to pay the penalty for our sins so that we could be forgiven and reconciled. Would you move now as we respond?

And we pray that in Jesus′ name, Amen.