

02.08.26: Kingdom Prayer: Described

Title: Kingdom Standard: Perfection

Scripture: Matt 6:5-8

Main Idea: The prayers of God's people reflect the God of their prayers.

Intro:

- Reality tv and someone plucked out of the year 1800 and placed in a modern home without any explanation of electricity...
- Reading through Acts, one cannot help but notice the gap between the excitement and progress of the early church and our experience of church today
- We have had a great couple of weekends here
 - Youth DNow last weekend
 - Radiant Women's Conf this weekend
- A question and a hard statement to start us out
 - What if God wanted to do more...?
 - We don't believe in prayer. Know how I know that? It's really simple - because we don't pray. Schedule a time of prayer and see how many show up.
- How important is prayer?
 - As important as electricity to our homes
 - ... as a network to our phones
 - ... as fuel to our automobiles
 - Consider all of the unrealized potential in these
 - It is impossible to overstate the importance of prayer

READ Matt 6:5-8

- Central location of the subject of prayer and specifically the model prayer
 - This week prayer described
 - Next week prayer demonstrated
- Sermon on the Mount
- Review Acts of Righteousness
- Assumption / Temptation / Nullification / Prescription

Main Idea: The prayers of God's people reflect the God of their prayers.

Seven descriptions of the prayers of God's people:

1. Regular-

- The assumption again – “whenever”
- Expectation of consistent prayers; God's desire for a personal continuous relationship

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- Assumption would pray; “For Jesus, a prayerless disciple was inconceivable. True disciples prayed.” Quarles SM
- But also possibly against the fixed times of prayer in Jewish tradition that had reduced prayer to an empty ritual
 - 1st tractate of Mishnah translation of title - *Benedictions*
 - Shemah x2 daily; standing before sunrise and reclining before midnight with specific benedictions recited before and after the shemah in a prescribed order
 - Prayers at the beginning and end of every meal and different prayers were prescribed depending on the menu
 - Three prayers recited at the end of the Sabbath
 - Prayers for special occasions included
 - Approaching the site of a miracle
 - Seeing a shooting star
 - Experiencing an earthquake
 - Clap of thunder or bolt of lightning
 - When one saw mountains, hills, rivers, seas, deserts
 - One prayer for reception of good news; another for bad news
 - Special prayers for building a home or purchasing new kitchen/cooking vessels
 - Two prayers for when one entered a town and another two for when one left the town
 - The *Tefilah* or “Eighteen Benedictions” were to be recited x3 a day: before noon; in the afternoon (usually at the time of evening sacrifice); and in the evening. Some rabbis claimed these were to be recited verbatim and by rote, others that must be freer in supplication. Prayers were to be offered facing Jerusalem with heart focused on the Holy of Holies with nothing allowed to interrupt – not even if the king entered or a snake coiled around one’s leg!
- On the one hand, we could take something from the integral nature of prayer in the life of the Jews
- But on the other, prayer is not about responding to the clock, but about communion with the living God.
- Jesus’ prayer life is both exemplary and instructive for us – his prayers were not rote recitations given because of tradition and the time of day. His prayers “were intensely personal, often spontaneous, and an expression of His deep communion with His Father.” Quarles SM

Jesus prayed-

Luke 3:21 ²¹When all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. As he was praying, heaven opened,

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Luke 5:16 ¹⁶ Yet he often withdrew to deserted places and prayed.

Luke 6:12 ¹² During those days he went out to the mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer to God.

Luke 9:18 ¹⁸ While he was praying in private and his disciples were with him,

Luke 9:28 he took along Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

Luke 9:29 ²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white.

Matt 14:23 ²³ After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone.

Mark 1:35-37 ³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying. ³⁶ Simon and his companions searched for him, ³⁷ and when they found him they said, “Everyone is looking for you.”

Notice how in most of these instances, the statement of Jesus praying is almost matter of fact interwoven into the episodes of Jesus' ministry

If prayer was such an integral part of Jesus' ministry that the gospel writers were not able to write about him without writing about his consistent times of prayer, what about you? Would we be able to recollect your time on this earth without noting how you prayed? An example many of you at FBCW can affirm - Mr. Woodrow Hudson, at whose memorial service and in conversations about him after his recent going to be with the Lord was mentioned numerous times

Jesus on the Temple as a place of prayer for all nations

Luke 19:45-46 ⁴⁵ He went into the temple and began to throw out those who were selling, ⁴⁶ and he said, “It is written, **my house will be a house of prayer**, but you have made it a **den of thieves!**”

Quoting Is 56:7 and Jer 7:11

Is 56:6-8

⁶ As for the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to become his servants— all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold firmly to my covenant— ⁷ I will bring them to my holy mountain and let them rejoice in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer

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for all nations."

⁸This is the declaration of the Lord GOD,
who gathers the dispersed of Israel:
"I will gather to them still others
besides those already gathered."

Jer 7:9-11

⁹" 'Do you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and follow other gods that you have not known? ¹⁰Then do you come and stand before me in this house that bears my name and say, "We are rescued, so we can continue doing all these detestable acts"? ¹¹Has this house, which bears my name, become a den of robbers in your view? Yes, I too have seen it.

- Once again, as with giving, our solution to doing something with the wrong motives is to just not do it at all
- We don't believe in prayer. Know how I know that? It's really simple - because we don't pray. Schedule a time of prayer and see how many show up.

2.Humble –

- Positioning
- with the right posture (both physical and spiritual)

3.Sincere –

- "to be seen by others"
- Hypocrites – wearers of masks, actors
- for the right audience

4.Private/Secret –

- Our presence with him and his omnipresence
- Not a prohibition against public prayer; Jesus and his disciples prayed publicly; but our public prayers are to be an expression of our private devotion to God; our model prayer addresses "our father"
- OC – "Prayer is an effort of will. After we have entered our secret place and have shut the door, the most difficult thing to do is to pray. We cannot get our minds into working order, and the first thing that conflicts is wandering thoughts. The great battle in private prayer is the overcoming of mental wool-gathering. We must discipline our minds and concentrate on willful prayer."

5.Plain

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- “Babble” -
- language
- Superstitious in practice
- Babbling – (*battalogeo*) difficult word; only here in NT and very rare outside;
 - several possibilities but most fitting seems to be an onomatopoeic word – one that sounds like the thing it describes ie “buzz” “bang” “crack” “pow” etc.
 - “it may refer to meaningless magical gibberish” the prayer equivalent of “abracadabra”
- Their babbling was probably gibberish (like the familiar “abracadabra”) that they believed had special power to manipulate their deity and force him to act.¹³⁴

6. Confident

- “Many words”
- “many words” – Gentiles/pagans were concerned not that their prayers might not be heard, but that they might be ignored;
- thus their prayers must not only include various magical phrases, but they must be long, drawn out, verbose petitions in hopes of being able to manipulate the gods to act/respond.
- The pagans wrongly assumed that they could make their prayers effective by piling up one flattering title of deity on top of another in hopes of manipulating their deity to act.
- One ancient writer, Seneca, wrote of these Gentile prayers that they were “fatiguing the gods”

7. Aware [Informed / conformed / corresponding]

- ??? expectant
- Verbose prayers implied that the deity had to be informed of the supplicant’s needs and badgered into action. But the true God already knew the needs of the person praying even before he prayed and he is a loving Father who is eager to give good gifts to his children without their attempts to manipulate him

Conclusion:

- Just as God knows what we need, he knows everything, every deed, every word, every thought, every motive, every sin – He knows every one of them
- Progression of sin and the provision of salvation