

Sunday July 7th 2013
Lord Teach Us To Pray....
Part One

1). Lu 11:1 ¶ *Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." 2 So He said to them,*

a). It seems that the request the disciple makes of the Lord is one that is close to our own heart. As with so many other things our past religious practices muddy the waters when it comes to prayer and quite rightly we are concerned that we do it correctly as we may have a degree of uncertainty as to its form and function and content within the context of our race of the faith.

b). And so we will echo this morning the cry of the disciple's heart, 'Lord teach us to pray.'

2). Ge 20:7 *"Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."*

a). This verse records part of Abraham's encounter with Abimelech concerning Sarah and is the first time the word 'pray' is found in scripture and to use the first mention principle we can see that it is used with regards to one praying for another in order that his life may be saved.

b). Pray = Hebrew - palal, *paw-lal'* = a primitive root; to judge (officially or mentally); by extension, to intercede, pray:--intreat, judge(-ment), (make) pray(-er, -ing), make supplication.

c). Mt 5:44 *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*

Within the context of the NT we first see the word 'pray' recorded from the lips of our Savior with respect to praying for 'those who spitefully use you and persecute you'.

d). Pray = Greek - proseuchomai, *pros-yoo'-khom-ahee* = to pray to God, i.e. supplicate, worship:--pray (X earnestly, for), make prayer.

e). And the word 'pray' as we see it used in this context in Matthew would be perfectly consistent with that which we found at our first mention.

3). Mt 5:1 ¶ *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 ¶ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

a). That which we have come to know as 'The Lord's Prayer' or 'The Model Prayer' is recorded in two places in scripture – In Matthew Chapter 6:6-13 and in Luke Chapter 11:1-4 – and in order to understand what the Lord teaches us about prayer 'The Lord's Prayer' will be a good place to start.

b). Needless to say the context in which we find the Lord teaching His disciples concerning this in Matthew and Luke is very important and what we will discover is that both occasions present the same teaching, but from a slightly different perspective in each case.

c). In the Book of Matthew 'the Lord's prayer' is found within the Sermon on the Mount – a sermon that begins in Matthew Chapter 5 with the verses we have just read.

d). So, to begin, let's note the obvious with regards to the context provided through these opening verses – The Lord having seen the multitudes 'went up on a mountain' – once up on the mountain He sat down and His disciples came to Him at which point 'He opened His mouth and taught them' – He taught His disciples.

e). What then follows throughout the rest of the 'sermon' are instructions to His disciples concerning what is necessary in order to find entrance into His coming Kingdom - Mt 5:20 *"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

f). From one perspective we would see this event on the mountain teaching His disciples about entrance into His Kingdom as prefiguring the Lord's ascension into heaven where He has sat down at the right hand of the Father and as a result of doing so sent the Holy Spirit to guide us, those who in this dispensation would be His disciples, into 'all truth' – to teach us what is necessary in order for us to find entrance into His coming Kingdom – Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

2Pe 1:10 *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

g). And then from another perspective the Lord teaching on the mountain takes us back to another time when God sat on the top of a mountain and gave instruction to those who would be the recipients of the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – the Theocratic Kingdom upon the earth - Ex 19:20 *Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up -20:1 ¶ And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;*

h). And as we can clearly see these 3 occasions have rulership over the earth in the 7th Day as their exclusive focus.

i). To repeat that which we already know one more time – the Lord's dealings with His servants, whether Israel in the previous dispensation or Christians today, is always on the basis of the servant receiving a position of rulership within the Kingdom or not based upon the servant's faithfulness - Mt 25:23 *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things..... 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.*

j). And so, it is within this context of being a 'good and faithful servant' so as to attain a position as a co-heir with Christ that the Lord teaches His disciples concerning how to pray in Matthew. And we must take along with this teaching in Matthew that which we saw at the beginning of our study today – prayer associated with the saving of a life – which within the context of the coming Kingdom would have to be life for the age to come, the saving of the soul.

4). Mt 6:1 ¶ *"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. 5 ¶ "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have*

their reward. 6 "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

a). Within verses 1-6 we see that there is a contrast given between the practice of the 'hypocrites' who will have their reward from men now and the practice of those who would seek reward from their heavenly Father in the future.

b). The contrast is quite an obvious one between doing something for the express purpose of receiving commendation from others for the purpose of self-elevation through others' approbation and the humility of doing something without needing anyone else to know, except of course our heavenly Father.

c). And what we can clearly see here in this are actions governed by the flesh, specifically pride in this instance, and actions governed by the Spirit – 1Ti 6:17 *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

d). The verses here in 1 Timothy show this very thing – the actions of being 'ready to give, willing to share' are to be done by faith, by believing that by so doing we can store up 'a good foundation for the time to come' in order to lay hold on age lasting life – the motivation here is not wanting to be seen doing good, but to be faithful to the command of scripture in order to receive a reward from our Father in heaven.

e). This same truth is then carried over into the action of prayer – again we see the 'hypocrites' who - *love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men*, and as a result the 'hypocrites' 'have their reward'. The approval they receive from others in response to the feigned piety is all they get. However, for those who follow the Lord's instructions there is the promise of reward yet future, which we must see being received at the Judgment Seat - *your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

f). Prayer then, as with the example of giving and sharing, must be seen as an act of faith to the saving of the soul. Prayer then must emanate out of

believing that which God has said and will be a facet of our progress to maturity through the metamorphosis.

g). So, from our verses in Matthew are we to conclude that only the prayers offered locked away in our prayer closet that no one else knows about count for anything? Clearly that is not the case - Col 1:3 ¶ *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,* Paul tells the Colossians that he is 'praying always for you' – so does he have his reward? If not, what makes Paul's making known that he is praying different from the 'hypocrites'? Simply this – The 'hypocrites' pray for the sake of praying, it is to be seen in the action of prayer that is important to them; what they are praying is of little to no consequence; it is no more than empty religious performance – This is not what we find with regards to Paul – look at the verses that follow on from v3 in Colossians Chapter 1 - Col 1:3 ¶ *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;*

h). Paul's 'praying always' for the Colossians is inextricably connected to their 'faith in Christ Jesus' and their 'love for all the saints, because of the hope' that is laid up for them in heaven – all of which has come through 'the word of truth of the gospel' which is 'bringing forth fruit'.

i). This is prayer then that has their entrance into the Kingdom as its focus, prayer with regards to the saving of their souls – the prayer of a spiritual father for the spiritual success of his spiritual children – Ga 4:19 ¶ *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

j). Let's just remember for a moment what the Lord has to say about those 'hypocrites' elsewhere - Mt 23:27 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.*

5). 7 *"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.*

a). The words 'vain repetitions' are a translation of one Greek word –

battologeo, *bat-tol-og-eh'-o* = from Battos (a proverbial stammerer) and 3056; to stutter, i.e. (by implication) to prate tediously:--use vain repetitions.

b). I think we can understand this in terms of loving the sound of our own voice – so, do not make long winded prayers because you like to hear yourself talk – the reason being that ‘your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him’.

c). And this very subject the Lord deals with a little later in Chapter 6 – Mt 6:25 ¶ *"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

d). And again here, where does the Lord place the emphasis? ‘Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness’; and in so doing ‘all these things’, food, drink and clothing will be added to us.

e). ‘Vain repetition’ then does not mean we can’t pray about the same thing more than once, or that we can’t repeat the same prayer on many occasions because this is something the Lord encourages within the context of His teaching on prayer in Luke - Lu 11:5 *And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 'for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 "and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? 8 "I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. 9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*

f). We will deal with this in detail another time.

6). So then having told the disciples not to make prayer a self-aggrandizing religious performance and not to make long prayers about things that God already has in hand because of liking the sound of their own voice, He then tells them what they should do - Mt 6:9 ¶ *"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

a). This then is the manner in which to pray – we may encourage our children just to pray the words, and there is nothing wrong in that, but for ourselves we will see these verses as providing for us a template if you will for the structure and purpose of our prayers.

b). And so we will look at this in some detail.

c). 'Our Father in heaven' – these 4 simple words are packed with significance – These words are not just a mere statement of fact and saying the words does not of itself make the statement true for us in the way that it needs to be, rather it is our actions that determine its validity in the eyes of the Lord - Mal 1:6 ¶ *"A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' 7 "You offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'*

d). Here in Malachi we see the Lord's words to the priests in Israel who claim God as their Father, but show Him no honor – a state of affairs that existed even to the time of the Lord's first advent - Mt 15:8 *"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*

In fact their actions are such that they demonstrate the antithesis of honor by despising His name and the way they have done this is 'By saying, "the table of the Lord is contemptible"'.

e). This is an attitude of heart and mind that takes us right back to the wilderness days of the first generation of Israel - Nu 11:5 *"We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 "but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"*

f). In other words the priests of the Lord were bored, fed up with the spiritual food that their Father had provided – Mal 1:13 *You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer at it," Says the LORD of hosts.*

It is a father's responsibility to provide for his family and this is exactly what our Father is doing for us - 2Pe 1:3 *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*

g). It is our responsibility to receive what He provides with rejoicing and thanksgiving – to do anything else is to say, 'the table of the Lord is contemptible', and if we view His table in this fashion then we say exactly the same thing about Him.

h). What we are seeing then is that there is a direct correlation between the reality of God as our Father and our attitude to His Word – and how could it be any other way?

i). Joh 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

j). Ps 138:2 *I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*

k). 'Our Father in heaven' – this must be first and foremost for the making of any prayer – not in the saying of the words, but in the reality of our right relationship with God – this is the foundation upon which all spiritual communication must be built, because if this is not in place, why should we think that God would hear us?

l). This was true for Israel - Isa 1:15 *When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.*

And it must also be true for us - 1Pe 3:10 *For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."*

Jas 5:16b... *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

m). Lu 11:11 *"If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 "If you then,*

being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

7). So as we draw to a close for today let us just consider for a moment – Is God our Father in more than name only? If so where is His honor?

a). Ex 20:12 ¶ *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*