

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

(Matthew 6:9-13)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Sometimes prayer is seen as the Christian version of the Walt Disney Company's iconic song: "When You Wish Upon a Star." Instead of wishing on a star, we pray to the Father and add the tag "in Jesus' name" at the end. Often, we think we've prayed when we've asked God for things. There is a place for that, but prayer is so much more. (Eph. 6:18)
- B. Prayer is an expression of our relationship and inner-life with God.
- C. In Matt 6:9-13 and Luke 11, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. The themes of the Lord's Prayer should become the main themes of our personal prayer life.

II. OUR FATHER (WHO WE ARE PRAYING TO)

- A. The starting point of prayer is turning our attention to our Father.
- B. The greater your need or sense of guilt and need for forgiveness, temptation and trials, the greater revelation you need of Father, God, heaven. What we need is not more clarity about the expression of our need to God, but the greater need is revelation of Him – who God really is. (Eph. 1:17; 3:16)
- C. The starting point is not my need/lack, my sense of sin and guilt, or the temptation and trials that are around me. Those things do matter and it's a part of prayer, later, but the starting place is our Father.
 - 1. The first part of the Lord's prayer turns our attention to heaven. The latter part deals with our needs on earth.
- D. Identity, Proximity & Access
 - 1. Identity: We're relating to God as our Father, we as His children.
 - 2. Proximity: God is our Father in heaven, but He is as close to us as our turning our attention to Him.
 - 3. Access: Through Jesus, we have access to our Father, the Holy One. (Heb. 10;19-20)

III. IN HEAVEN

- A. Prayer starts with where the Father is, in Heaven. (Rev. 4, Eze. 1, Dan. 7)

- B. The starting point is heaven, not earth. The way Jesus teaches us to pray doesn't start with earth: our daily bread, forgiveness, and deliverance. It starts with gazing on our Father in heaven: His holiness, His Kingdom, His will. Then and only then, do we move our attention to earth. (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:1-4)

IV. HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME (WORSHIP HIM – HE IS HOLY)

- A. Hallowed means "holy." It makes you pause. Your mindset, your perspective, and your priorities change in light of God.
- B. When we begin to look up, to see where our help comes from, when we hallow His name, His name causes us to pause. It causes us to take a breath, take a step back, gaze upon His beauty and be fascinated once again and fall on our knees in worship.
- C. As we worship God, we become aware of
 1. Where He is (Revelation). King of kings, the judge. Take time to gaze upon the Father seated upon the throne.
 2. Who He is (attributes, character – knowledge, wisdom, purity, holiness). Holy is His name.
 3. What He does, His actions, redeeming us, restoring us. His redemptive actions and leadership in history, among the nations: His choice of Israel as His land, and His people, how the nations (Gentiles) have been grafted in through Jesus Christ. His plans for Israel.
- D. Prayer without ceasing (1 Thes. 5:17). There is place of continual Kingdom-of-God awareness, a life-style of living always before God. (John 5:19; 8:28)

V. CONCLUSION

- A. OBEDIENCE: Our aim is to pray like Jesus taught us, not just understand it better. You don't need to understand how something works in order to use it well. (James 1:22)
- B. Prayer is not about trying to get God to hear you and answer you. People who don't know God pray that way. Prayer is not a religious act to try to get God to hear.
⁸ "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. ⁹ "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. (Matt. 6:8-9)