

Invitation to Participation

Matthew 6:9-15

Intro

As we jump back into the Sermon on the Mount this morning, let's remind ourselves of what we covered in the last part of our study last week...

Matthew 6:5-8 (NKJV)

5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites.

Don't be a pretender — don't be an actor...

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.

Hypocrites are not praying to God, they are seeking the reward of praise from men...

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.

True personal prayer is a secret meeting between you and your ultimate Father — and He desires to reward you...

This reminds us of...

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

[expand — prayer itself is the privilege / gaining an audience with God and growing in relationship with Him is the primary reward...]

Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NKJV)

23 Thus says the LORD:

**“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty man glory in his might,
Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;**

**24 But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and
righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight,” says the LORD.**

Continuing on in Matthew 6 to vs 7-8...

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.”

We are not to use vain repetitions because we are intelligent, thinking beings interacting with the ultimate intelligent, thinking being who loves us and who knows what is best for us...

Now, with this in mind we move on to the next section of the Sermon of the Mount to what is commonly referred to as ***the Lord's Prayer*** but which I will refer to as ***the Model Prayer***...

- And as we look at this familiar prayer this morning, it is my hope that we would see it as an ***Invitation to Participation***...

You see, the Model Prayer is an ***invitation to participation*** in the work that God is doing in this world, *right here — right now*...

- And it is important to understand that this prayer is ***not*** a formula for getting what I want out of the Lord...

This prayer is ***not*** a method of *spiritual judo* by which I find the secret of getting the Father to move in the way that I want Him to move...

- Instead, the Model Prayer is an onramp onto God's highway — it is an ***invitation to participation*** into ***His purposes and plans***...

So, with this as our introduction, would you please follow along as I read our passage...

Matthew 6:9-15 (NKJV)

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.**

**14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly
Father will also forgive you.**

**15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither
will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

Let's move into our first section...

1) Focus on the Father (vs 9-10)

*If this phrase sounds familiar it is because **Focus on the Father**
was the title of our message last week...*

And it fits once again because this is where it all begins...

If we are to live well — if we are to respond to God's **Invitation to
Participation** — we must begin with a **Focus on the Father...**

With this in mind, we move into vs...

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Here the Lord Jesus is giving us a *model* for praying...

And I prefer to call this ***the Model Prayer*** instead of the Lord's Prayer because the Lord would not have been able to pray this prayer — because He never needed to ask for forgiveness...

- Now, when it comes to the Model Prayer, I usually pray this prayer word-for-word in the mornings — but my goal is not vain repetition...

Instead, I pray the model prayer as a way of orienting my day and of reminding me of the proper focus as the Father invites me to participate in what He is doing today...

- So, I seek to pray this prayer thoughtfully and intentionally — but if I am not paying attention I end up just end up repeating it mindlessly...

Now, as we see from the content of *the model prayer* — it seems to be a daily prayer as denoted by the words “give us this day our daily bread”...

- With all this in mind, let's continue in vs 9 as we see the Lord Jesus instructing us to begin the prayer with a ***focus on the Father***...

Our Father in heaven,

Not only is the *focus on the Father*, but ***relationship*** and ***location*** are included in this opening...

- First we notice that believers are to pray to God the Father as **Our Father**...

Now, for the believer, this does not mean that God the Father is not ***your Father*** — *because He is your Father...*

- But it does mean that He is not ***only your Father*** — He is also **Our Father**...

The word **Our** here is a vital relationship word that helps me remember that even as *I* pray this prayer it is not simply about **God and me**...

- It is also about **us** — every believer in Jesus Christ is a member of the family — and we all have God as **our Father**...

This helps us remember where we stand in relationship both with God and with fellow believers...

- God is **our** Father, therefore fellow believers are **our** brothers and sisters in the faith...

So, we see **relationship** in the phrase **Our Father** — and we see **location** in the next phrase — **in heaven**...

*But what does it mean for Our Father to be **in heaven**?...*

Because we know that God is *omnipresent* — *that He is everywhere at all times* — so why focus on Him being **in Heaven**?...

Well, we know that God is omnipresent but we also know that He manifests His presence to a greater extent in different places...

- [ex. with the Israelites in the wilderness — pillar of cloud / pillar of fire / filling the tabernacle of meeting / above the mercy seat...]

So, what I think that the Lord Jesus is pointing out here in the model prayer is that Heaven is God the Father's ultimate dwelling place — it is where the fulness of His presence is manifested...

- As we consider these ideas, I see the opening phrase of the Model Prayer — **Our Father in Heaven** — is an *invitation to participation*...

It moves us from an *inward focus (me)* → *outward focus (us)* → *upward focus (Heaven)*...

- Another way to look at it — moves away from me as the center to a focus on the horizontal (other believers here on earth) and the vertical (God in Heaven)

But however we look at it, we must not miss the fact that the ***Father is the Focus*** — *if we miss this, we miss everything*...

Continuing on to the last part of vs 9, Jesus instructs us to pray...

Hallowed be Your name.

hallowed — *to treat as holy, show reverence for, to set-apart...*

name — *represents all that God is — character, attributes & actions...*

So, when the Lord Jesus instructs us to pray **Hallowed be Your name** this is once again an *invitation to participation*...

- As believers, we are being invited to recognize God the Father for who He is — He is holy — He is set-apart — He is perfectly wise and good and kind...

We are being invited to see reality as it actually is — to let go of our false assumptions and ideas — to see God as He is — to see that He is holy, true and good...

- When we pray **Hallowed be Your name**, we are not *making* His name holy — His name is already holy because He is holy...

Instead, as we pray this part of the prayer we are *simply acknowledging things as they actually are* — we are recognizing reality for what it is...

- You and I cannot *make* God the Father any more holy than He already is — ***He is already perfectly holy***...

But we can *choose to recognize* His absolute and unadulterated holiness — we can choose recognize this truth and affirm it...

Now, before we move into verse 10 please notice again how the Lord Jesus begins the Model Prayer...

**In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.**

*Here we see that the Lord Jesus is instructing us to begin with **recognition** before **petition**...*

You see, verse 9 here is all about **recognition** — recognizing that God is the Father of all believers — that He is in heaven — and that He is holy in all that He is and in all that He does...

- Please notice that there is no **petition** in this verse — *there is no asking for what we would like done...*

And this is an absolutely vital truth to understand...

We cannot properly **petition** the Lord — we cannot properly ask for Him to work in our lives and in the lives of those around us **until we recognize who He is...**

- [ex. citizen gaining an audience with his king — the citizen must properly *recognize* the authority of the king before the *petition* is heard...]

*Let's move on now to vs 10 as the **petitions** begin...*

**10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.**

These three verses are really *three layers* of the same truth — like a three-layered cake — they are simply three parts of the same whole...

And as with all petitions in the Model Prayer — the Lord Jesus is instructing us to ***ask for things that are in accordance with the Father's will...***

- ***REMINDER— Prayer is not about getting God to do what we want — it is about getting us in line with His purposes and plans...[expand]***

With that said, let's consider the first layer of vs 10...

Your kingdom come

Dallas Willard — Renovation of the Heart

“The kingdom of God is the range of God's effective will, where what God wants done is done.”

With this in mind, when I pray for God's kingdom to come I am praying for many things — which may be summed up in 3 categories:

1) That God's will would be done in my life — that my body, soul, heart, spirit, mind — all that is me — would be an outpost of His kingdom — that I would be a forward operating base for His work in this world...

2) That God's will would be done in the life of others — that all people would be submitted to God and that His kingdom would be advanced in them and through them...

3) That the Lord Jesus would return and establish His physical kingdom on the earth — that He would take His rightful place as God the Father’s ruling agent on this planet...

Now we come to the second layer of vs 10...

Your will be done

As we understand, a kingdom is the place where the king’s will is done — and this petition expresses our desire to see our King’s will done — for God our King to have His way in us and through us...

*The Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane — “**Not my will but Your will be done**”...*

Now to the final layer of vs 10...

On earth as it is in heaven

As believers, we are to pray for God’s will be to done just as it is done in heaven — because there God’s will is done perfectly — absolutely — unreservedly...

- God’s will is not resisted in heaven — it is not questioned in heaven — it is simply done in heaven...

The kingdom of heaven is inconceivably wonderful because it is the place where God dwells in His revealed glory and because God’s perfect will is done perfectly there...

Let’s move now to our second section...

2) Focus on Us (vs 11-13a)

*In this section, the petitions shift to our **limitedness** — to our need for help outside of ourselves in order to live...*

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

From this petition it seems suitable to pray the model prayer daily because we will need food everyday...

- And I believe that the Lord Jesus is reminding us that God the Father is ultimately the provider of all of our physical needs (more on this when we get to the end of Matthew 6)...

12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

I believe that this petition has our **sin-debt** in view...

- We sin against God and others daily and as a result we are in spiritual debt (ex. “you **owe** me an apology”)...

Now, when we sin against anyone — we must understand that God is the primary offended party — every sin is ultimately a sin against God...[expand]

- And since all sin is against God, He is the one we are in debt to...

We could never repay our sin-debt so God took care of it Himself through the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ...

But as we see in vs 12, the story doesn't end with God forgiving my sin-debt — I am also instructed to forgive others the sin-debt that they owe me — I am to forgive just as I have been forgiven...

***And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.***

We will see more on this at the end of our study as well as in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in **Matthew 18** (which we should get to sometime in the year 2035...)

But for now let's move into vs...

**13 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.**

This is a petition asking that we would be kept out of trouble...

We are asking the Father to keep us on the straight and narrow — to lead us away from compromising situations — to keep us away from Satan...

- And God is willing to do this — but He is not willing to do it against our will...[expand]

[ex. If you ask God to help you stop spending money wastefully but you have a sports-betting app on your phone then you are not taking the steps required...]

Let's move now to our third section...

3) Focus on Reality (vs 13b)

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.**

*The Model Prayer ends where it began — with the **recognition** of **reality** — and we recognize four aspects of reality related to the words **kingdom, power, glory** and **forever...***

Reality #1 — God is the King and all that exists — whether it is seen or unseen — it all belongs to Him — it is all His kingdom...

Unfortunately, much of that kingdom both in the seen and in the unseen realms remains in rebellion — but we do not have to be part of that rebellion any longer...[expand]

Reality #2 — God has all power — any power (the ability to do anything) comes from Him — any power that we have is a delegated power...

And God allows us to use His power because He wants us to have the ability to make real choices — because only as we have choice can true character be formed...

Reality #3 — God is both incomprehensibly glorious and He is the source of all glory...

And He is willing to reveal that glory **to us** and **in us** — He is willing to share His glory with us that we might be glorious in Him...

Reality #4 — God's kingdom, power and glory are forever...

This lets us know that relationship with God is ***the ultimate investment...***

- As you respond to God's *invitation to participation* you are choosing to become a *full citizen in the only eternal kingdom...*

You are choosing to be invested with God's ***power*** to live a life of *unending goodness...*

- And you can look forward to an eternity in which you share in God's indescribable ***glory*** as you are conformed into the image of His Son...

Now, as we move into our final section, I realize that these two verses are not part of the model prayer but they still connect to it...

4) Focus on Forgiveness (vs 14-15)

14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

I believe that this is very straightforward — if we want to enjoy *relational forgiveness* with our *Father* then we must be willing to forgive our *brothers and sisters*...

- [ex. Child wanting to have unhindered fellowship with parent but unwilling to be in right relationship with siblings...]

The forgiveness that the Lord Jesus is referring to here is not **salvational** — it is **relational**...[expand]

- An unwillingness to forgive others does not rob us of our *salvation* — but it does rob us of *relationship*...

And this is such an important topic because forgiveness is the greatest need of any human being...

- [expand — all other needs can be met but without forgiveness a person will go to Hell...]

And forgiveness remains our greatest need even when we have become believers...

- We need to continually be forgiven by God and by others if relationship is to be maintained...

Without forgiveness relationship is impossible — so we are to forgive others just as we have been forgiven by God...

Conclusion

We will stop here for today and Lord-willing continue on in vs 16 next week...

- And as we close I encourage each of us to take advantage of the ***invitation to participation*** that the Lord Jesus has made possible...

He has opened the way to full and free fellowship with the Father...

- He has given us the model prayer to set our daily course as we move ever closer to the moment when we see God face to face...

And we have been given this ***invitation to participation*** because this life is “*training for reigning*” — we are being prepared to reign with Christ as co-regents in God the Father’s eternal kingdom...

- So, the question is — will you respond to the Lord Jesus’ invitation to participation — no one can make that choice for you...

Let’s pray...