

Wednesdays in the Word
May 6, 2020
Digging Deeper into Matthew 6:9-13
Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

We understand today's passage to be a simple and direct instruction for prayer as dictated by Jesus Himself. Let's list the basics He covers and see how they line up as an accurate teaching directly from our Lord. Starting in verse 9 we see that He does not give us an actual prayer that we are to recite but a framework or outline for our prayer. It must begin with the recognition that God is our Heavenly Father and that His Name is to be kept Holy. In verse 10 we find that we ought to be praying for the coming and the development of His Kingdom here on Earth so that it may reflect what already exists in Heaven. In verse 11 Jesus makes it clear that we are to bring our needs daily before him because he cares for us on a moment-to-moment level and as we understand from last week, He desires for each of us to reach out in communication with Him. Verse 12 tells us very clearly that we are to forgive others as we ask God to forgive us. Finally in verse 13 an accurate reading will tell us that Jesus is instructing us to ask God to lead us toward Himself and to bring us away from temptation. He then glorifies God by recognizing His Kingdom or Kingship over us and His Power over all. Note in verses 14 and 15 He elaborates on forgiveness, a major theme and sticking point in our lives. While God's Word has much to say on prayer through various authors we find that Jesus Himself gave us many other direct instructions and today we will focus on those. Please turn to Matthew 7:7-11. In these few verses He directs us to ask, seek and knock and He tells us that we will be rewarded with proper answers to proper prayers. He also compares the Perfection of God to the evil of man. Even if we attempt to do good things for our children, how much more will God do for us! Let's stay in Matthew for a while. Turn now to chapter 9 verses 37-38. One of the biggest things on the heart of Christ ought to be one of the biggest things for us as well, that there are so many unsaved and often they are but a few short insights away from salvation. Jesus calls this a harvest because there are so many that are ready to accept the Lord if we would just work towards that goal with Him. This was mentioned in one of our past studies as being the yoke and burden of Christ; one He invites us to share. (Matthew 11:28-30) Let's move now to chapter 17:14-21. We hear so much in common culture, movies and entertainment today about exorcisms. The Bible does not allow it to be that complicated. Casting a demon out of a child and explaining to His disciples why they could not, Jesus said it is because their faith was weak and that if they could only have faith as a grain of a mustard seed they would move mountains, adding carefully that prayer should often be assisted by fasting. Very simply, fasting is when we put away our physical needs and desires to focus on our spiritual needs and desires. Move on now to Matthew 21:18-22. Jesus curses the fig tree and His disciples marvel at that. He again reminds all His students we can move mountains both literal and spiritual but our problem is that we are weak in faith. And that is not to say we must muster up some great faith. It is simply to say our faith must rest solely in Jesus Christ, His Power and His absolute control over all situations. Read Chapter 26:41. Without prayer we suffer temptation and failure. He's telling us that our prayer must be constant and consistent once again denying our flesh. Let's move into Luke 18:1. Jesus states our need to be in constant prayer and to never give up.

And even focuses in verse 7 that we must cry out day and night unto Him for our needs. We are sometimes admonished to spend an hour in prayer. A whole night can seem impossible for us but 5 minutes can even be too much. Turn to John now. Chapter 14 verses 13 and 14. Some misquote or misunderstand these verses and think that anything we ask for should be expected. When He speaks of praying in His Name, He's actually talking about praying for the things that honor and glorify His Name; praying in the Power and true value of His Name; Praying within His Will and all that His Name encompasses. Jesus is not a genie or a mindless servant to our desires but rather wishes to say yes and amen to us when our requests are Godly and within His predetermined plans. John 15:7 notes a deepening in the requirements for having our prayers answered. We must abide (live, dwell, find our sustenance) in Him. You all know what happens when you cut a branch off of a bush or a tree. It dies. We must live in God; in Christ; in the power of His Holy Spirit who is our Power Source. We must allow His Words to abide in us. We must stay in His Word and live His Word in our lives. Then we can see His Father (and ours also thanks to Him) glorified in verse 8 and His fruit produced in and through our lives and not our own selfish fruit. Slide down to verse 16 and notice that we have been chosen; ordained to bring forth fruit unto righteousness and to glorify God in the things we do. These requirements allow us to ask of the Father. Everything must be done in accordance with verse 17; based on the love of God and directed toward others. Finally, look to chapter 16 in the book of John. Reading verses 16-27. Jesus plays with words a little bit here but references the fact that He will be going to the cross and will cause great sorrow because of His leaving but that He will then return and cause great joy. A greater joy than even the disciples could understand at that time because in His resurrection and, as the formation of the church follows into the book of Acts, we see that He breathes into them His Holy Spirit. The very God of the Universe living within us Who is desirous to give us good things. He speaks of asking for nothing in verse 23 and yet seems to confuse that by saying whatever we ask the Father in His Name we will receive. His willing sacrifice on the cross for our sin brings us into a union with God the Father and elevates Christ to a position of Intercessor and Representative; A High Priest before the Lord Whose Name now contains Power effective for His new family; Us! We can now understand and utilize the Power of the Name of Christ and the Honor given His Name that moves the very Heart of Our Father which art in Heaven. We now come full circle back to Matthew 6:9 and following. Please know the exceeding honor bestowed on us who bear His Name and the Great Price paid for such a privilege to ask, seek and knock on Heaven's Door.