

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, August 01, 2010
When You Pray

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5, 6, 7) and chapter 6 Jesus gives three "when you" statements. In two previous messages I highlighted *When you give* and *When you fast*. This morning we are touching on the last one, *When you pray*. We stated that Jesus did not say, "If you." It is definitive. These are activities that are essential for us as Christians.

Jesus taught his disciples not to be like the hypocrites who wanted to pray to be seen by men, nor to be like the pagans who thought that rambling on and on would credit their being heard. Jesus said this is how you should pray and proceeded to give what has been called *The Lord's Prayer*. Many pray this prayer in rote fashion, but as I've been taught and pass on to you, it is more of a recipe of prayer rather than something to be uttered verbatim. Just as you would have ingredients in making a cake, the order of their input is key to the outcome. The cake is just not going to make it if you get things out of order. The right mix and the right timing is everything. To use that analogy we are going to break the Lord's Prayer down in the order that they are given for the right result. Each component in its given order has a rime and a reason to it.

We begin with **OUR FATHER** and are to recognize that we are in relationship with Jesus and that his father is our father. We are his children and he loves us. Secondly, we meditate on the fact that God is **IN HEAVEN**. He is not limited by our earthly realm. He is outside of time and sees the end from the beginning. Thirdly, we praise him: **HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME**. Spend time here worshipping him. The Bible gives many names for God that are descriptive of aspects of his being, e.g. *Jehovah-Jireh* our provider, *Jehovah-Rapha* our healer, *Jehovah-Tsidkenu* our righteousness, and many others that you can find in your studies. As we dwell on his person we stand in awe of who he is. Fourthly, we acknowledge **YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN**. This really helps put things in perspective. It's not all about us. It's about him. Yet he loves us so there is a huge place in his heart revealing that we count. It just needs to be in proper perspective. God has a plan and we are part of it, but it centers on his will. We will only truly be happy when we see ourselves in the light of why we were created. That is to be in relationship with him and participate in his divine plan.

Next we come to our concerns. **GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD**. It is fitting that this first personal request is at this part of the recipe of prayer. If we prayed for our needs at the beginning we might not have the faith required to release the answer we're looking for. However, when we pray in proper order we are meditating on God being our father and that he's in Heaven worthy of all our praise and it's all about him and his kingdom. The result is that our faith is energized because of how great our God is and we can believe him to meet our needs. As our faith is released to receive the answers to our daily needs we are humbled in his presence and gratitude fills our hearts. This humility causes us to see our own sinfulness like Isaiah did in his book and chapter 6, "*I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips for my eyes have seen the king.*" It is only then that we can truly repent because our hearts are opened to our spiritual condition. It also enables us to see others with compassion as sinners just like us who need forgiveness. So we pray, **FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS**. The reality of our personal condition inspires us to ask **AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE**. We want God to direct our steps. We recognize how prone we are to fall into temptation and our need to receive his help.

Then finally we end like we began praising him. **FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY FOREVER, AMEN.**

Matthew 7:7-11

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (NIV) *(God wants to give good gifts to us, but he wants our participation)*

Isaiah 65:24

24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. (NIV) *(notice that God still requires the prayer even though he is answering ahead of time)*

Ephesians 6:10-20

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 **And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.** With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (NIV)

1Thessalonians 5:17

17 pray continually; (NIV)

1Thessalonians 5:16-22

16 Be joyful always; 17 **pray continually**; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not put out the Spirit's fire; 20 do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good. 22 Avoid every kind of evil. (NIV)

5:23-28

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. 25 Brothers, **pray for us**. 26 Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. (NIV)

Jude 1:20

20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and **pray in the Holy Spirit.** (NIV)

2 Pet 1:2-4

2 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. 3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them **you may participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (NIV) *(God want us to participate! He doesn't want passivity.)*