



The Gospel of Matthew

Outline 17

The Prayer Principle

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name... Matthew 6:10

Just before we delve into this study, let us deal with one or two matters that arose in form of questions from Matthew 6:1-18.

Q&A

One of the questions that arose from our last study titled Religion versus Kingdom was; how can I be sure I am serving God and not religion? This was opened to discussion and again the insightful comments were profound:

- Church teaches you doctrine and not necessarily a relationship with Christ.
- Believers need to get into the Word themselves and not rely on church teaching
- Many Christians need to be mind delivered from the wrong world view they have
- The leading of the Holy Spirit is key in helping discern the difference
- Pure religion is about looking after others and keeping oneself holy –James 1:27

The Lord's Prayer is a model for us about how to pray according to God's prescription and instruction. It is not necessarily something to memorise religiously but to apply the principles. When we have a good look at these passages we see some amazing patterns emerging.

Our Father...

The modern church has emphasised the ME notion so much that we have a whole generation of believers who are selfish and caught up in their own matters to the exclusion of others. The popular books and conferences are testament to the fact that the Body of Christ is full of converts and not disciples. Self absorbed church goers who are focussed on their own success, promotion and blessings without any healthy concern for the state of others.

The prayer begins on the corporate level; it is Our Father not My Father. Once you bow your knees in prayer you immediately join the masses of saints across the world and ages that have prayed or are praying too. It is like logging on to God's divine conference call or chat room.

Hallowed be your Name...

Many Christians have been taught to pray from a primary position of their Need rather than seeking God's Lead. Jesus emphasises God and others through this model of prayer which takes the focus off from us and unto Him.



Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him and bless His name. Psalm 100:4

The first section of the prayer places our attention on God; Our Father, Your Name, Your Kingdom, Your will... There is no mention of me, my, I or mine.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves...2 Timothy 3:1

We live in an age of YOU-Tube, My Space, Face-Book which are just indicators of a global emphasis the individual even though there seems to be greater electronic networking. Family structures and community cohesiveness are in conflict with values and norms that uphold individual rights above social and moral boundaries. The general social ethos now is, "If it feels good to you then go ahead and do it..."

Your Kingdom Come, your will be done...

Underscoring the God focus, we are admonished to pray for the things on God's Heart before downloading our burdens. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be ADDED unto you

Give us this day our daily bread...

This aspect of the Lord's Prayer teaches us corporate responsibility. Even when we pray for our needs, we should be carrying into God's presence the needs of others within our sphere of responsibility. So it isn't give me but give us.

You represent a whole community of God's people some of whom are in the Kingdom while others aren't. It is part of your assignment on Earth to pray and take spiritual responsibility for those whom the Lord has linked with your life.

This represents a new paradigm for many of us who have been taught and fed on doctrines of individual achievement, personal development and goals to the exclusion of others. Many churches do not come before God carrying the weight, sins and problems of their community. This leads many into a warped theology that is laced with greed and selfishness.

⁴Let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others.

⁴If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care— then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand Philippians 2:1-4(Message)

To be continued....