

## **HURC - Mid-week Service (16th Sept 2020) – led by George Barnes**

### **Jesus teaches about prayer – Matt. 6:5-14**

In this whole chapter there are frequent references to God as Father, He is not some sought of doting grandfather. His loving compassion for His children is genuine, but not blind indulgence. The Father's love can be a tough love, a love that withholds blessings that we want, but do not deserve. He will not be manipulated, He is a good Father and has all our best interests at heart.

How do you view God?

Do you draw a contrast between God of the Old Testament and God of the New Testament? Some think of God as Father in the New Testament and God as Lord in the Old Testament, an image of love and an image of stern justice. God not only sees what is said or thought in public, He also sees what is said, done or thought in secret and responds accordingly, He blesses or punishes, as may be appropriate, both in the old and new testaments. God invites the believer into a relationship of intimacy expressed in prayer as we address God as Father.

It is taken for granted that all Disciples of Christ pray. You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe, as a living Christian that does not pray – it is life and breath. If prayerless, then graceless. It is said 7 prayerless days make one weak.

What were the two great faults the “hypocrites” (religious leaders) were guilty of in prayer? Vain-glory and vain-repetitions (vs.5& 7)

Why did they want to pray as they did, so everyone could see? They wanted to be seen as holy, and public prayer in the most prominent places was one way to get attention and impress their neighbours – they were pretending to be what they were not – Jesus called them hypocrites.

In vs.6 why does Jesus ask us when we pray to go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen? We must not be proud and choose public places, (there are of course right and proper times to stand and pray in public in church) but Jesus is looking at the motives of the Pharisees and teachers of the law. It is more humbling to pray kneeling, and public places are not proper for private solemn prayer.

In vs.7 Jesus says “do not keep on babbling like pagans” what do you think He means? Repeating the same words over and over again (tautology), some like to hear themselves talk, is no way to ensure that God will hear your prayer.

Children do not make long speeches to their parents when they want anything, so with us we do not need to make long verbal dialogue to God. He is a Father that know us full well and knows our needs and wants, better than we do ourselves.

Not all repetition in prayer is condemned, but vain repetitions are. Jesus prayed saying the same words (Matt. 26:44) “So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.” As he agonised in Gethsemane.

Not all long prayers are forbidden either, in Luke 6:12 Jesus prayed all night.

Before you start to pray, make sure you mean what you say. It is not so much praying that is condemned but much speaking, we are in danger when we only say our prayers, and not when we pray them.

Vs.9-13 is the prayer that Jesus taught his Disciples and as we know is called “The Lord’s prayer,” it is a model prayer and teaches Christians how to pray.

The prayer concerns God’s holiness and purposes, contains personal requests – in our today’s version we start and end with God’s Kingdom. It starts *Our Father in Heaven* and suggest that we must pray not only alone and for ourselves, but with and for others, - We don’t pray My Father –

We pray only to God our Father in Heaven and not to Saints and Angels or Mary, we must address ourselves to God as Father where this is nothing more pleasing to Him. Jesus always prayed to His Father not His Mother.

It also indicates that God is not only majestic and holy, but personal and loving, how do you understand hallowed? (Being set apart as sacred and holy) If we use God’s name lightly we are not remembering God’s holiness.

Vs.10 what do you think God’s will is? When we are obedient and do what God is saying, and pray for His will be done then then His Kingdom comes. Jesus also prayed *not my will but your will be done*.

Vs.11 “*Give us today our daily bread.*” Where else in the Bible do we hear of daily bread? God is our sustainer and provider – He supplies our daily bread we are not to worry about tomorrow. Matt. 6:34

Vs.12 David in Psalm 51 after committing adultery with Bathsheba says “Against you, you only, have I sinned.” God knows all our sins, nothing is secret from Him, as it might be against human beings. We are also asked to forgive, if we refuse what are the consequences? God will not forgive us, and if our sins are not forgiven we are separated from God, what would this imply?

Vs.13 God doesn’t lead us into temptations but sometimes He allows them to test us, as in everything we have a choice. As Disciples we should pray to be delivered from these trying times and for deliverance from Satan. What promise did God make regarding temptation? See 1Cor. 10:13

Finishing on a reminder from Eph. 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”