

# BIBLE STUDIES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6 vs 9 to 13

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## Part 1.

## INTRODUCTION

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdoms come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us

our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

There was a time when almost everyone was familiar with the Lord's Prayer. The morning assembly in schools regularly recited it; churches used it as part of their liturgy. Sunday school children were taught it. It is noticeable however that the decline in church attendance, and the lack of interest by schools to have a morning assembly has resulted in a reduction in the number of people knowing, or being able to recite it.

The reason for this study on the Lord's Prayer is to highlight its importance, significance and relevance. I believe that by taking a fresh look at what Jesus said, we shall have a clearer understanding of prayer, and what to pray for, which will help us to approach our heavenly Father with a better attitude.

In considering this prayer it is necessary to take a look at what Jesus was speaking about previously to His statement concerning how we should pray. The Lord's Prayer comes in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, and is placed within the context of what Jesus was dealing with at the time. If we take a look at the verses prior to the Lord's Prayer we shall notice that they relate to the way people pray. Matthew 6 vs 5 to 8 says:

“And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and

your Father who sees in secret will repay you. And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him”.

In these words of Jesus there is some very good and sound advice relating to prayer. It is obvious from what Jesus says that there was a problem at the time, which is pinpointed by Him. There were people who prayed, but they were more interested in others hearing their prayer than our heavenly Father hearing it - Jesus refers to them as hypocrites. A hypocrite is an actor (a stage-player), someone who is assuming to be someone they are not, acting out a part. Jesus is inferring that some of the people are only playing at prayer, their words are only a performance and are not related to what real prayer is. Jesus is concerned about truth and reality, and speaks out very clearly against falsehood, this is why He so often clashed with the Scribes, the Pharisees and Sadducees. The warning Jesus gives to His disciples is, don't be like the hypocrites who only want to be heard and thought of as being holy men of God.

From verse 9 Jesus then gives specific guidance to the disciples and tells them how they are to pray. His instructions are clear and very precise; each line of the Lord's Prayer contains so much, and is based on a true relationship with our Father in heaven.

Before considering the prayer in detail I will give here an analysis of it. What Jesus teaches is how to gain access to the Father and what to confess, request, and expect. He tells us how to:

1. **APPROACH THE FATHER** "After this manner pray, Our Father which art in heaven".
2. **ADDRESS THE FATHER** "Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdoms come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven".
3. **APPEAL TO THE FATHER** "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil".
4. **ATTRIBUTE TO THE FATHER** "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen".

The word Father, used by Jesus as it related to Himself and His disciples, is important for us to look at, because Jesus has so much to say concerning the Father. It is also interesting to note that the Father, in making reference to His Son Jesus, always directs us to focus our attention on Him. At this point let us look at some of the scriptures relating to what Jesus says, about His relationship to the Father and also to us. Then, I will refer to the instances in

the Epistles where the different writers mention the word, 'Father' in regard to the Lord Jesus, and ourselves.

There are approximately 62 references to '**MY Father**' from Matthew to Revelation. Then Jesus makes reference to '**OUR Father**' in Matthew 6 v 9 & Luke 11 v 2. The words '**OUR Father**' are mentioned 17 times in the epistles, and the words '**YOUR Father**' are referred to 20 times. Let us observe these, and look at them in turn.

### **MY FATHER.**

It is clear from the scriptures that the Lord Jesus is referred to as 'The Son of God'. At the centre of Jesus' identity in the Gospel of John is His divine Sonship (John 10:36). Jesus indicated this by such assertions as "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30 NIV) and the "Father is in me and I am in the Father" (John 10:38 NRSV). Elsewhere, He frequently referred to God as "**MY Father**" (John 5:17; 6:32; 8:54; 10:18; 15:15. Matt. 7:21; 10:32-33; 20:23; 26:29,53. Mark 8:38. Luke 2:49; 10:21-22).

At the baptism, and transfiguration of Jesus. God the Father identified Jesus as His Son. (Matt 3 v 17 & 17 v 5). He was identified as Son of God by an angel prior to His birth: (Luke 1:32,35), by Satan at His temptation: (Matt. 4:3,6), by John the Baptist: (John 1:34), by the centurion at the crucifixion: (Matt. 27:54). Several of His followers ascribed to Him this title in various contexts (Matt. 14:33; 16:16; John 1:49; 11:27).

The term Son of God reveals Jesus' divine Sonship and is closely associated with His position as Messiah. Gabriel told Mary that her Son would not only be called the Son of God, but would also reign: (Luke 1:32-33). Primarily, the title Son of God affirms Jesus' deity evidenced by His person and His life and His work. Paul stressed the salvation that Jesus provided: (Rom. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:10), and the author of Hebrews focused on His priesthood (5:5). All of these are vitally related to His position as Son of God. There is ample evidence in scripture to prove the validity of Jesus' words '**MY Father**'. The prophets also declared it, the angels proclaimed it, the Father announced it, and the writers of the epistles confirmed it. The words in John 1 v 14 are quite amazing, the gospel writer says: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth".

Perhaps the heresy of Gnosticism, which claimed that Jesus only seemed to be human, is what John attacks here. John insists that the Lord Jesus Christ is truly human - He was tired and thirsty: (4:6, 7). He wept: (11:35). He was troubled in spirit: (12:27; 13:21), and He died (19:30). Without becoming less than God: (Phil. 2:5-11), Jesus took upon Himself complete

human nature. At His incarnation, God did not become just man; He became God-Man. Note here the word translated “dwelt among us” (eskenosen, Gk.) means literally “pitched His tent” or “tabernacled among us”. John could therefore speak of hearing, seeing, and touching Him (1 John 1:1). The writer to the Hebrews says in chapter 1 v 1 to 6.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him.

Jesus could say legitimately **MY Father**. Jesus also uses words that link us to the Father when He says: when you pray say:

### **OUR FATHER.**

Jesus indicates that the disciples also have a relationship with the Father. We need to identify what this relationship with the Father is, and how it came about. I think it important to point out that we are related to God in two ways. We are related to Him creatively, and we are related through redemption. Because we have gone through the door of redemption we have the right to say ‘**OUR Father**’. This is why in the epistles the writers emphasise so much ‘Our Father’. He is also ‘Our Creator’ and we do not doubt this fact, whatever others may say. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Heb 11 v 3). The Father is the one says Paul who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us in to the Kingdom of the Son of His love.: (Col 1 v 13). Without the intervention of God the Father, and the redemptive work of Jesus, who shed His precious blood at Calvary, we would still be living without the knowledge of the Fathers love, and would still be estranged from Him. Furthermore we would not know Him as ‘**OUR Father**’ either. Jesus also uses the words:

## **YOUR FATHER.**

Here are some of the verses that contain the words 'Your Father'

Mt. 5:16: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Mt. 5:45: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Mt. 5:48: Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.

Mt. 6:1: Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Mt. 6:8: Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Mt. 6:15: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Mt. 7:11: If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

You will notice that all of these verses are from the 'Sermon on the Mount'. There is so much in every one of these verses that to analyse each one would take too long, this is why I have made a list of them for you to see and read through.

There are other references to the 'Father' to consider before we look into each of the statements in the Lord's Prayer. Jesus highlights for us the importance of the Father's name when commissioning His apostles to go and make disciples. Matt 28 vs 18 to 20

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you always, even to the end of the age."

In the synoptic gospels Jesus speaks of the: 'Glory of His Father' Matt 16 v 27: Mark 8 v 38: Luke 9 v 26. Paul also refers to it in Romans 6 v 4. In Eph. 4 v 6. He is called: 'The Father of All'. In 2 Cor 1 v 13.: 'The Father of Mercies'. Eph. 1 v 17.: 'The Father of Glory'. Other scriptural references concerning the Father are as follows.

Romans 8 v 15. 'Abba Father'. 1 Cor 8 v 6. 'One God and Father'.

In our next study we will begin looking at the actual words of the Lord's prayer.