

BIBLE STUDIES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6 vs 9 to 13

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Part 2.

'OUR FATHER'

The Lord's Prayer has been put to music and rhyme over a period of many years, and is similar to the 23rd Psalm which has also been put to music and rhyme. It is the rich quality and depth of meaning in the words of this prayer that has inspired so many people.

When Jesus said, "After this manner therefore pray. Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name". He was introducing the disciples to the Fatherhood of God. The Fatherhood of God embraces the fullness of God as Deity, so that in the words 'Our Father' we are acknowledging the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit because they are one in nature. Therefore, when we pray we are in fact referring to God, but in order, we use Father, because He is the first in the sequence whenever referring to the Godhead. Paul uses this same principle of order in relation to the Jews and Gentiles in Romans 1 v 16 where he writes: **"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile"**.

Let us now see what kind of a being our Father is because we need to be aware of His greatness.

- **Our Father is a Powerful being**
- **Our Father is a Moral being**
- **Our Father is a Unique being**
- **Our Father is a Holy being**
- **Our Father is a Righteous being**
- **Our Father is a Just being**

For us to know the Father and have knowledge of these things, we have to be in personal relationship with Him, otherwise there is no possibility of being conscious of or even knowing Him. The question to be asked is. How does an individual come into a personal relationship with the Father? The answer to this lies in the understanding we have of what it means to be a Son of God. We observed in our Bible study last week that Jesus was the only begotten Son. Our relationship with the Father therefore is a relationship through the Son. We have received the spirit of adoption, and so we enter into our relationship with the Father through adoption. There are many that don't know Him as a Father because they are only in a creation based relationship, and not an adoption one. There is a vast difference between being

related by creation and related by adoption. One is removed and remote, the other is close, having affinity, communion and fellowship with the Father. It is far more personal to address God as 'Our Father' rather than 'Our Creator', which appears to lack that touch of affinity a Father has with his children. 1 John 2 v 13: is a further confirmation of our relationship with the Father. "I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father". Let us now consider here what Jesus says: **"This, then, is how you should pray, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name"**. It is clear from what Jesus said and did that.

1. THE FATHER CAN BE PRAYED TO

In the gospels and in John particularly, we have a record of the times and occasions Jesus prayed to the Father:

Matt 11 v 25 "At that time Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth". Matt 26 vs 39 to 42. Going a little farther, He fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Then He returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" He asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into

temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done". Luke 10 v 21. At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth". John 11 v 41. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me".

The most classical of all the prayers of Jesus to His Father is to be read in John 17, where the whole of the chapter contains only the words of Jesus to the Father. It is clear that Jesus prayed to the Father. Further the Father is not only prayed to by His only begotten Son, He is also prayed to by His adopted children.

John 16 v 24. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you". Matt 7 v 7. & Luke 11 v 9. "Ask,

and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you".

Paul says in Col 1 v 12: 'Give thanks unto the Father'. In 1 Peter 1 v 3 we have: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". A further truth that is expressed in the scriptures in Ephesians 2 v 18: is that we also have "Access by one Spirit unto the Father".

1 John 2:1: also proves the point. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous". The Father can therefore be prayed to. Then we have the thought:

2. THE FATHER CAN BE PLEASED

There are a number of scriptures, which clearly confirm that the Father can be pleased.

Matt 3 v 17. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased". Matt 17 v 5. While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love;

with him I am well pleased. Listen to him". John 12 v 28. "Father, glorify your name" "Then a voice came from heaven, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again". Col 2 v 19. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.

Heb 11 v 5. tell us that: "By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God".

Heb 13 v 16 says: "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased".

Paul also has something to say on this issue. When writing to the Colossians he says in chapter 1 v 1: "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God".

The Father can be pleased and it is important therefore, for each one of us to live a life that is pleasing unto Him. By looking at the life of Jesus we can see that in everything He pleased the Father. His life pleased Him, His words pleased Him, and there was nothing about Jesus that the Father did not approve of. Jesus is the pattern for us to live by. He is the perfect model, if we do as He did and always do those things that please the Father, we too shall receive the same approval as Jesus did.

It is easy to know what pleases the Father because once we have come to faith in Christ our conscience is quickened by the Holy Spirit, and He convicts us when we step out of line with the Father's will. As Christians the closer to the Father we are, the more sensitive to moral good we become, and this is because the Holy Spirit imparts the moral good of God into us, and there is no higher moral good than God. We can Pray to the Father, we can Please the Father.

3. THE FATHER CAN KEEP HIS PROMISE

In Acts 2 v 4 Jesus, when speaking to His followers immediately prior to His ascension, told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father. It is worth noting that John chapters 14 to 16 say so much about the Holy Spirit as the one promised. Then, following the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter says in Acts 2 vs 16 to 18: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions; your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy".

Our Father can keep His word, His promises. The O.T. has many promises which were sometimes to individuals, such as Abraham, David, and many others. Sometimes to a nation, like Israel, which related to their captivity in Egypt and the length of time they would be there. Then to the Gentile nations - that a light would shine - Isaiah 60 vs 1 to 3: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising". We know that light to be Christ. It is impossible to detail here the many Messianic prophecies, which contain these promises, relating to Jesus.

It has to be concluded that the promises made, which have already been fulfilled, are sufficient evidence to confirm to us the unchanging nature of our Father's word.

When a promise was made to Abraham, God confirmed it by His own oath. Hebrews 6 vs 13 to 19 says:.

“When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, Saying, I will surely bless you and give you many descendants. And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make

the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie; we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain”.

We must not question the ability of the Father to keep His promise; all we have to do is trust in His word totally and implicitly. Do what Jesus says and pray to the Father, and then see what He has promised happen. Matt 7 v 7 to 11 says:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 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”.

4. THE FATHER IS PERFECT

Deut. 32:4: He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgement: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Psalm 18:30: As for God, his way is perfect.

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

As the perfect one, our Father requires no additions, changes or alteration whatever to His being.

The hymn writer says: "No change Jehovah knows". He is the same and the years do not change Him. The Father is perfect.

As Father we can pray to Him knowing full well that He hears us. He has perfect hearing and eyesight. He never slumbers and never sleeps. He is our Father, which is in Heaven, and this is what we shall consider in our next look at the 'Lord's Prayer'.