

This Is How You Should Pray (Matthew 6:5-15)

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- [0 : 00] Cool. So Eden has read verse 1 to 4 for us. Thank you, Eden. And let's read verse 5.
- When you pray, don't babble on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask Him.
- Pray like this. Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need and forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
- And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.
- And when you fast, don't make it obvious as the hypocrites do. For they will try to look miserable and disheveled so people would admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth.
- [1 : 25] That is the only reward that they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting except your Father who knows what you do in private.
- And your Father who sees everything will reward you. Moxie! Thank you.
- Okay. Hi. How are you guys? So given the title of, from Matthew chapter 6, 1 to 18, and given the title, this is how we should pray.
- When we were in groups, who do you reckon who prayed the most godly prayer just then? Who prayed the prayer that actually most acceptable to God?
- We need to be humble. We need to be humble. No, of course it's not me. It was a conversation in church, all right? Talking about prayers.
- [2 : 32] So there were pastors, deacons, elders, and professors in the seminary. It was in church, right? And the deacons said, oh, the proper way to pray is down on your knees.
- Well, that's pretty appropriate. Well, that's pretty appropriate. But pastor said, no, we should be praying standing with our outstretched arms and our upturned eyes, you know, anticipating.
- And the elder says, no, I think we should be praying with eyes closed and head bowed. What do you reckon? And professor says, no, I think we should be praying with, I mean, our hands, our palms in front of us with two, both our thumbs pointing downwards.
- I don't know why downwards. But there was this, somebody came along, a young person came along. He said, look, look, they overheard the prayers.
- He said, I remember that I fell off my bike last year, middle of nowhere. It was winter night, and I kind of broke my leg. And that part of the, there was no coverage.
- [3 : 43] I couldn't reach anyone with my mobile phone. And I tell you what, that hour or two, it was the best prayer in my whole life.

So what do you reckon? How we should pray? Should we end up in that sort of misery before we can actually offer a godly prayer? And maybe sometimes, you know, we are praying to God with the most earnestly and honesty in those difficult times when nothing we can depend on.

Now, I think the passage that we have just read, either both Eden and Francesca has read to us, has really shown us that Jesus has taught his disciples to pray in a way that is pleasing to God, the Father in heaven.

And this passage is showing us today here in New Zealand, here in PCBC. We should be praying according to what Jesus' instruction.

In order that our prayers to be acceptable in God's sight. The Lord's Prayer, I think we're all very familiar.

[5 : 06] Okay? It's recorded in two accounts in the Gospels. One is in Matthew, we've just read. And the other was in Luke. Okay? And why the liberal differences there?

And I believe, it might not be exactly true, but I believe, because Luke said he was writing that in an orderly account.

So he was writing so that the guy who received, or the people who received the Gospel, Theophilus, to know and believe that what he actually heard was true.

So Luke was recording things in a very logical, in a very timely way. And so that, I believe that what Luke had written was more kind of accurate in a sense.

And for Matthew, it was kind of, he wrote the Gospel later than Luke. Okay? And at that time, there was the church, he was actually writing to the people in the church, and the Christians, and the disciples in the early church.

[6 : 20] And it was more like applying what Jesus' teaching so that they can apply it in their daily lives. Okay? So in a way, it's more application from Jesus' teaching.

Okay? So you see maybe a little bit more explanation in how, the way you should pray. But nevertheless, I believe that those, the content of what was really from the will of Jesus.

Okay? And by now, I think you've known with, you know, both Pastor William and others have shared from Matthew. And you all know that the Sermon on the Mount, they are kingdom ethics.

Okay? It's not something that we do in order to get into kingdom. All right? It's something because we have entered the kingdom. We have believed in Jesus. We are following Jesus.

And we receive this new life in us. And this, these, the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount ought to be the ethics, the kingdom ethics.

[7 : 32] Okay? And we will never be perfect. We will never do it. We could never fulfill it perfectly. But, but as last time what Pastor William has said, not perfection, but wholeness.

You know, this is something that we ought to, by the grace of Jesus, by the power of God, we ought to practice. Okay? This is how we should pray.

And in the context of, and Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray, I believe there's something very striking, very clear. And in verse 2, it says, it was giving the instruction to the give to the needy.

And in verse 5, it taught the disciples how to pray. And in verse 16, it was instructions about fasting. You know, all three verses there, it was something like, when you give, do not be like the hypocrites.

When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. And when you fast, do not do as what the hypocrites do. That means, when we pray, when we give, when we fast, be genuine.

- [8 : 43] So when we pray, we should be praying with genuineness, sincerity, honesty. And that's why, from the beginning, we said, you know, maybe at the times when we're really down to, you know, in this helplessness, we are the most genuine at that time.
- Often, you know, when we come to church, you know, we think we're doing pretty good. And sometimes, you know, because there's something we can depend on, there's something we can lean on, and we don't lean on God.
- And we don't have that honesty and sincerity that God looks for. So let us learn from Jesus, okay?
- And Jesus, just interesting how Jesus taught his disciples to address God, okay?
- Our Father, who is in heaven. You know, how you address someone, it really shows what your intention and your heart, okay?
- [9 : 59] I don't know about you, but in my days, and I went away, I had to write letters to my father, because I was separate from my father between three, three years old to about 20, because he was a National Army officer.
- So when the communists came, he got arrested and deported out in the war, okay? So I left China when I was about three. And then, and I went back to China to see him when I was about 20, okay?
- And when I was about 13, when I came to New Zealand, my mom asked me to write letters to him. I didn't know who my dad was, you see.
- But I was instructed to write letters to address him like this. Wow, if you could recognize some of these Chinese characters, you know?
- I wasn't instructed to address him like Papa or Daddy, but, you know, a very formal, formal, Fuchan, you know?
- [11 : 09] It's not even Baba, it's Fuchan. How many of you call your dad Fuchan? Come on! And I was told to address Fuchan, Dairan.
- What's Dairan? The big guy, you know? And what's that? Sat Ha. Sat Ha, that's on my knees. So this is the translation. When you write, when I was supposed to write my letter to my father, who I never sang, I couldn't remember, my father was respect on my knees.
- And what could you write after that? You know? Got to be very formal. Just look at the title you're addressing someone, and it really, you know, dictates what you're going to say.
- Okay. But Jesus taught us to address God as our father in heaven.
- What does it mean? What kind of significance we have? How does it direct our prayers to him? Let's look at it. Our father, who art in heaven.
- [12 : 20] Father. Father. Okay. When Jesus was speaking to the disciples, he was speaking Aramaic. Okay. It's kind of like Hebrew, but it's a little different.
- A little bit different. Okay. And this, this is, the Aramaic is Ab, actually, A-B, A-B.
- Okay. But they put a vowel in there as Abba. Okay. It's very Chinese, isn't it? Abba. How many would call your daddy Abba? No.
- That's, that's, these two Chinese. We just call daddy or some, you even call them the names? Anyone? I think we should have some sort of respect. Yeah. You don't need to call Fuchan, but you can say daddy, you know, Papa.
- Okay. And, and this is the Greek word, Pata. It's, but for the Jewish understanding, the father figure is, is quite, it's a little bit like Chinese.

[13 : 22] You know, he's kind of higher up. He's the head of the family. I mean, he, he has a certain authority. Okay. So in, in, in, in, in, in the Jewish understanding, when Jesus was addressing God as the father, they, they would have no, it's, it's not the way that Jesus was meaning.

So because in, in, in the, in the Jewish literature, what they call the rabbinic literature, the rabbis, you know, Jewish teachers, they, they, they realized, they, they thought that, you know, God, yes, somehow Israel was called sons of God.

Okay. In Exodus 22, um, uh, Exodus 4, 22 to 23, Israel is my firstborn. Okay. Okay. And in, in, in other prophetic books, and Israel and Judah was called God's sons.

Okay. But in a way, their understanding of God, the fatherhood, it was more like a filial kind of obligation. And what Jesus has presented, our father in heaven, is something was quite new to the, to the people, to his disciples.

And was this one, one, this biblical scholar called Joachim Jeremias, um, quite famous, uh, scholar. And he's, and he said that, um, Jesus has discovered a new sense of intimacy in the presence of the father, one previously unknown in Judaism.

[14 : 56] And Jesus' Abba prayer echoes the language of children, thus expressing the familiarity and the intimacy of the intimacy of a child trusting in his or her father.

So, in a way, it says, Jesus has put a whole new meaning to the Jews who never knew that kind of intimacy for the fatherhood of God.

That's why, in the Lord's prayer, Jesus was teaching his disciples in verse 11, God is your daddy.

He provides. So, you can go and ask him for your daily needs. And in verse 12, he pardons you, he forgives you. So, no matter what sort of sin, debts, you can go and ask for forgiveness.

And in verse 13, even in the temptations, in the evil, he protects us. This is what daddies do. Now, I think our understandings of daddy can actually affect our understandings to our God.

[16 : 15] Okay? If we have harsh daddies, and it might just, you know, cause us to think, oh, God is the God who actually punished, just like my daddy did.

As I shared, I never had a daddy, so I had no understanding of fatherhood of God. You know? I, you know, I came to Christ, and I only knew Jesus, you know?

And somehow, father was too, too far. This father was too far. And it's just unknown. And I never knew about this intimacy.

All these times, I was trying to do my best, just to please him, just like a good son should do. It took me a long time to kind of get a taste of this intimacy of coming to daddy.

But for those who have daddies, normal daddies, you're very blessed. And you, somehow, you could see, you catch those moments with the intimacy with daddies.

[17 : 27] You know? Sometimes, daddy will take you out for supper. And sometimes, when you're sick, daddy come embrace you. And those are the experiences we could learn and appreciate our daddy in heaven.

So we can come to him asking for provision. We can come to him asking to, ask him to forgive. And we can come to him, ask him for protection.

And he's our daddy. And not just that. He is not just an ordinary daddy. He's a daddy in heaven.

What does it mean? That means he is out of this world. All right? Our daddy is in heaven.

So his name is not, is holy. And his kingdom is in heaven. And his will is already obeyed in heaven.

[18 : 43] So it's this heavenly and this earthly thing. It's a direct contrast. All right? So in heaven, his name is hallowed.

In heaven, he reigns. In heaven, his will being done by the hosts, the angels, and the heavenly hosts. But here on earth, his name is not hallowed, reverent.

His name, his will is not being done. His kingdom is not reigning in this world. And our prayer is that we are to hallow his name.

We are to honor his name. We are to pray that his kingdom will arrive in this world. And his will be done in amongst us.

And this is our prayer. Okay? So how do we, how do we, what does it mean when we pray to our father who are in heaven?

[19 : 52] I believe it means that we should trust and we should obey. Because he is a most loving father.

He's not most, he's not only most loving, but he is most powerful, almighty. Because he, his name is hallowed, his name is holy. And his kingdom is reigning all over.

And his will is being honored and done in his heavenly realms. And we have the responsibility to allow his will be done here on earth.

And we have the responsibility to proclaim his kingdom here on earth. And we have the responsibility to, yeah, to honor his name.

So we should trust that all, he takes care of all our needs. And he, our lives are in his hands. And we should obey what he has done, what he has commanded us to do.

[21 : 04] So this very old hymn is called Trust and Obey. I don't know how many of us know that hymn. Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

It's a very, very, yeah, I mean, we grew up with that. And somehow, yeah, I think it's a very good reminder. If we pray this prayer, your hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

It really means that we can trust in him because he is the father in heaven. And he, and we can lay all our cares onto him.

And that's why later on in chapter 6, Jesus said, commanded his disciples, do not worry. Look at the lily in the field.

Look at the birds in the air. You know, we need to trust in him. If we call him the father in heaven, we need to trust. We need not worry.

[22 : 11] And please remember, do not worry is a command. It's not something like, oh, Julian, are you worrying? Oh, look at you, how poor, poor little girl. Oh, come on, just cheer up.

It's not that, you know. When Jesus said, do not worry. I mean, if I tell you, Julian, do not worry, that's, I mean, pastor, you're okay.

You had many years of experiences, but you don't understand my situation. But if Jesus said, Julian, do not worry, that means he has authority and he has the power and he understands you.

And I can truly learn to trust and I cast all my cares unto him. So we will pray to God. Remember that he is our father.

He knows our needs. But yet, he is a heavenly father. He is all-powerful. He is all-knowing. So we can trust and we are to obey.

[23 : 19] And thirdly, he's our father. He's not just my father. Okay?

So all the teachings when Jesus was, you know, instructing about the prayer in verse 12, he said, forgive our trespasses, not just our trespasses, but forgive our, not just mine, so that we forgive others.

We all do wrong. We can sin against each other. And Jesus knew that. Okay? And that's why when we pray this prayer, when we pray to our father who art in heaven, we are to recognize that we are fellow disciples, followers of Christ.

And we are fallible. We are sinful. And we need to forgive. And this is something that we need to forgive and forgive and forgive until Jesus comes.

Seventy times seven. All right? In verse 14 to 15, if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you.

[24 : 42] If you don't forgive, your heavenly father will not. So when we call Jesus our father, we recognize that we are the body of Christ.

Christ. And in the gospel, there was lots and lots of records of, you know, his disciples was competing one another, who wanted to be greater than one another, and who, you know, have conflicts between themselves.

And they're very exclusive in a sense for those who would not, you know, gather with them, and they just felt that they were not with them, and they just asked Jesus, you know, they're not with us.

And they're very, very exclusive. And I think we all ought to learn we are one in Christ. Christ. Even though in English service, I mean, there are some who speak Cantonese better than English.

We realize that even though this is English service, okay? And there are some who speak different, you know, come from various places. And not all of us are like one another.

[26 : 07] You know, we are very, we can be very different. And in PCBC, we have Saturday and Sunday services. And, you know, I think we ought to realize that even though we have our own span of time and here we worship and fellowship together, but we got to realize that, you know, this family of PCBC, we are very, we're different, you know, but we're one.

And we strive, you know, we have opportunities that we can communicate, we can fellowship with others in this family of God.

It's okay to be different. I mean, God is a God who, you know, creates the rainbow with seven colors. It shows its diversity.

You know, imagine the rainbow is all red. Or all purple. It scares you, right? Yeah. There was this report from this American Psychological Association.

In this meeting, there was two. One was a journalist and one was a professor in a university. They presented a finding. There was a survey about 11 major symphony orchestras in the US.

[27 : 33] They interviewed various sections of the musicians. They asked about each other's comments. Okay. So there was, in this, these orchestras, there were the percussionists, you know, the one who hits the drums, you know, or the gongs and things like that.

And the other musicians commented about these guys were insensitive, unintelligent. All they could do is just hit, hit, hit, hit. Okay.

The hard of hearing stuff, you know. So noisy. Okay. So, and then they presented the other comments about these string players.

The cellos, the violinists. They are arrogant people. Stuffy. Okay. They are unathletic. Most of them have fat tummies. Tummies. Okay.

And those bass players, they're loud. Just, yeah, they're just loud. Okay. And for those playing the trombones, oboes and all these, and flutes.

- [28 : 45] Okay. They were a little bit better. Okay. But somehow they described as fuzzy, quiet, a bit egoistic. Okay.
- Now imagine, with all these different comments against one another, how could orchestras play music and let alone great music?
- Or you can ask Raymond Chang. It focuses onto this guy. In the midst of all the diversities and different opinions and different expectations, they have to look upon this conductor.
- They have to put their own opinions and their expertise down just to look at him and listen to his instruction.
- And then they could play great music. And church, surely we have differences. But we are to look up onto Christ, the head of the church.
- [29 : 59] Yes, we have differences. We have different ways of doing things. I mean, guys born in New Zealand, very different from guys even come from overseas, even when we were teenagers.
- Very different. But we have the same Lord. So let's learn. Let's learn. To put our differences aside.
- Not saying that we are to neglect ourselves. I am me. And you are you. But in Christ, we can. We can learn to accept.
- We can forgive. We can work along. All right? Just like the early church. Okay? So learn from the disciples. Go sell your car.
- Go buy a Japanese car. A Honda, actually. And every time, try to do your best. All right? Do your best to carpool. Because Acts 2 says they were all together in one accord.
- [31 : 08] So learn. And, you know, different people. Different ways of doing things. But, yeah, even a civic is not good enough. All right? Odyssey, get away. Accord, accord.
- All right? Yeah, this is how God has saved his people and put us together in a church.
- Imagine, you know, this is where we can learn to forgive. If I'm by myself, how on earth am I going to learn how to forgive?
- This is where I'm to learn how to accept one another. To work with people different from me. To listen to different opinions.
- All right? To learn to bear with people that are different from me. Annoying people. This is where God has placed us.
- [32 : 11] In 1 Corinthians 12, 13 to 14. For we were all baptized by one spirit. So as to form one body. Whether Jews or Gentiles.
- Slave or free. And we were all given the one spirit to drink. Even so, the body is not made up of one part, but of many. This is how we should relate to one another.
- Our Father who art in heaven. I mean, it's good to have kids. Yes. Right? If there's no kids around. I mean, we all, you know, we all, we all have this, our perspective as young adults.
- I'm so glad you see, I see a lot of young people was actually engaging with Eden and Harmony and Rowan. You know? It's good.
- It's good, eh? Yeah. We're all one in Christ. So when we pray, our Father who art in heaven. Let's come to him with genuine heart.
- [33 : 15] And just come. Daddy, I have my needs today. But at the same time, we know he is our heavenly Father. And as we pray, we realize that there are brothers and sisters who are different from me who pray the same prayer.
- Yeah. To finish, there is, I like to quote a story from the Jewish rabbis. You know how the Jewish history was pretty difficult, all right?

Many of the times they were actually being attacked. They had the nation, you know, invaded and the temple demolished and people deported.

Okay? But the rabbis, they had some literature was recording there was a prayer, about a prayer. It says that, how is it with a lily?

When she's placed among the thorns, a north wind goes forth and bends her towards the south, and a thorn pricks her. And a south wind goes forth and bends her towards the north, and a thorn pricks her.

[34 : 28] Yet, for all that, her core is directed upwards. It's the same with Israel. I think it's the same with us, right?

Our core is upwards. No matter what, those things are analyzed.

How do you pronounce it? I don't even know how to pronounce it. They were like taxes imposed on them by foreigners, Roman kings.

And some of the laws they had to obey, all right? And their hearts are directed towards their father who is in heaven.

No matter what we are facing, our core are upwards. We're in call, our father, who art in heaven.

[35 : 33] So in your groups, if you have time, and there is something you can share, how is our attitude and pattern of prayers compared to the Lord's prayer?

And maybe you want to share some intimate moments in our prayer experiences? The moments that you really felt that daddy was embracing you?

And maybe some convictions and transformation from our prayer experiences that really changed my life?

Let's pray. Daddy. Daddy. Heavenly Daddy. Our Heavenly Daddy.

Thank you that we can call you Daddy. Even no one in this world understands us. Even no one in this world can help us.

[36 : 35] Daddy, you're here. Thank you for knowing me. Thank you for accepting me. And thank you, Lord, not just me, but my brothers and sisters here in this church, in this service, and in other services, and in our brothers and sisters all over in this city, and different nations.

We can all call you Daddy. Thank you for this assurance of our sins being washed away through our faith in Jesus by his grace.

Lord, help us to continue to pray according to your will. In your name. In your precious name. Amen.