

Simplicity In Prayer

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” (Matthew 6:7-9)

Introduction

1. In Jesus, we find our pattern for a life of prayer.
2. We also learn that God hears those who:
 - a. Do His will (1 John 3:22)
 - b. Abide in Jesus’ words (John 15:7).
 - c. Ask in faith, with no doubting.
3. Priority in prayer: seeking God and His will over our own.
4. From our Text: it’s tempting to feel like we need to say our prayers “just right,” in a certain way, or using certain words.
5. Jesus teaches a better way

Discussion

I. Elaborate or Wordy Prayer do not make Better Prayers

- A. Matt. 6:7: Do not use “vain repetitions”
 1. GK: *battalogeo*. “to stammer. To use many idle words, to babble, prate.” (*Outline of Biblical Usage*)
 2. In other words, don’t fill our prayers with babble or useless words.
 3. The emphasis here is not in the “repetition”, but on the senselessness of multiplying words uselessly for the sake of lengthening our prayers.
- B. Repeating the same prayers is good and acceptable.
 1. Matt. 26:36-46: Jesus repeated His prayer in the garden three times over the course of about three hours.
 2. Luke 18:1-8: In the Parable of the Persistent Widow, Jesus taught to always prayer and not lose heart. In the Parable, the widow repeatedly pleaded her case before the judge ad nauseum.
 3. 2 Cor. 12:7-10: Lastly, Paul prayed three times for the same thing.
 4. In each of these accounts, the prayers or requests were repeated until one significant thing happened – their prayer was answered or responded to.
 5. Therefore, let us not think Jesus was teaching against the repetition of prayers. Rather, when we pray, say what we’re asking without addle idle gibberish.
- C. Matthew 23:14: “For a pretense make long prayers.”
 1. Jesus references the practice among the scribes and pharisees to stand praying in the temple for hours on end.
 2. They used this as a show to feign righteousness while engaging in unscrupulous behavior in their personal lives.
 3. Long prayers do not make better prayers. And they do not undo continued sin.

II. Don't Overthink It

- A. God looks for earnestness in prayer as we express the desire and intent of our heart.
- B. Matthew 6:9-13: Observe how Jesus taught us make our requests in prayer:
 - 1. "Hallowed be Your name," or better expressed, "Your name be Hallowed."
 - 2. "Your will be done."
 - 3. "Your kingdom come."
 - 4. "Gives us this day our daily bread."
 - 5. "Forgive us our sins as we forgive others."
 - 6. "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one."
 - 7. The point? Each request or supplication was simple, to the point and without frivolity.
- C. Notice the similarity between this model prayer and Jesus' recorded prayers.
 - 1. Matt. 26:39: "Let this cup pass from Me."
 - 2. Luke 23:24: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."
 - 3. John 17:17: "Sanctify them by Your truth."
- D. It's not about brevity, but earnestness and simplicity.
 - 1. If, in laying our burdens on God, we pour out our hearts, expressing fears, needs, and requests in many words, that is good (read Jesus' prayer in John 17).
 - 2. Don't feel as though you can't use words that are meaningful.
 - 3. But make them meaningful and don't over think it.

Conclusion

- 1. God wants to hear from us.
- 2. 1 Peter 5:7: He teaches us to lay our cares upon Him because He cares for us.
- 3. When do kneel before Him and open our hearts to Him, let us do so in simplicity and sincerity.