
RELATED SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 6:1–13 | 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 | Philippians 4:6

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 4.7.24

SUMMARY

Christians of all ages often ask, “How are we supposed to pray?” In this short section of scripture, we get our answer, but first, Jesus tells us how *not* to pray. Prior to this passage, Jesus talks about giving gifts in secret to honor God rather than openly to receive the praise of men. Jesus continues this theme in the context of prayer, explaining that ostentatious prayers are a similar display when done to seek man’s attention. As Jesus continues, he provides the antidote to prayers designed to please man, and that solution doesn’t involve not praying. Instead, he tells us to seek intimacy in our prayers with the Father. It’s not magic incantations that please God; instead, he seeks an open and contrite heart that acknowledges our utter dependence upon him. If God knows our needs before we ask him (v. 8), prayer can only be for our benefit, not his; he meets our needs as he conforms our will to his. So, Jesus provides us a framework to pray in such a way that reflects this reality. The Lord begins by telling us to acknowledge who God is, whose name is “hallowed” (v.9). The word *hallowed* is synonymous with the word *holy* or *consecrated*—to be set apart. So Jesus tells us that God’s name (and therefore, God himself) is to be treated as sacred—that he is infinitely good, righteous, and pure. Understanding God’s goodness reveals our sinfulness—we are not good, righteous, and pure. Once again, understanding this and confessing it to God is yet another means of acknowledging our dependence upon him. If he is infinitely good, and we are not, what recourse do we have other than praying for his mercy? God is good and merciful to us even when we are far from deserving of his favor.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Matthew 6:5–13.

How often do you find yourself in prayer? Is it consistent or sporadic? In what ways does the Lord’s Prayer challenge your prayer habits, whether you are consistent or sporadic?

In your own words, how would you define the word “hallowed”? Does your definition align with who you understand God to be? Does knowing God is hallowed give you comfort? How does the remainder of the Lord’s Prayer help us understand God’s hallowedness?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.