

“Pray Like a Child”
Matthew 6:5-15

Introduction: Pg. ____

{P} John 17:13 “These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” Every word infused with joy. Every word is aimed at our joy. WOW!
Children of the Holy Father.

Introduction:

{P} The New Normal - Christmas Edition. The truths of Jesus are relevant for every season, but the themes cut into so many of our experiences (joys & struggles) in the Christmas season. (Though Advent did not start last week, the wisdom of Jesus for this season was on full display last week as we considered money and possession, and we can think about how that relates to our spending and gift giving and wanting and wanting more... Someone walked out - this sermon just messed up my Christmas. Thank you, GOD!). Now, as we look at the topics of prayer and fasting and worry, we are going to see how really living the truth of Jesus speaks into how we operate in this festive season (both from the Christian perspective of Advent and from the cultural practices and traditions that we often enjoy in our culture).

As we think about prayer this morning...

The Point: Pray like a child.

Children and Christmas:

- Awe. Wonder.
- Excitement and Anticipation.
- Unfiltered joy.
- Laughter. Singing.
- And maybe some whining and complaining and bickering and disobedience, but let’s not focus on the flaws of children. Catch them at their best.

For every person who has received the greatest gift of God’s salvation through Jesus, he has adopted us into his family and made us his children.

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” (1 John 3:1)

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” (Roman 8:15)

{P} Here’s an assignment... watch children during the Christmas season. And learn from them, bring what you see back into your relationship with God, our Heavenly Father.

Read 6:5-15

While I will cover this entire passage this morning, I want us to consider it from the angle of the first two words of the Lord’s Prayer: “Our Father” They set the tone so deeply regarding our relationship with God, who he is, who we are, and how that should DEEPLY impact how we go about our business in everything, especially prayer.

I. Like a child...

1. Spend undistracted time with your Father.

Jesus begins teaching on prayer by telling them what not to do!

- There is a wrong way to pray: impress others.

- One of the greatest hindrances to prayer is our concern for others. Self-glory
 - Manifested among the religious leaders as a self-righteous pursuit of self-glory. Let me translate: look how holy I am and praise me for it.
 - Winslow: Pride can creep into our most holy acts. Protean evil... Sea god (Greek mythology)
 - This can happen ever so subtly... that ounce of pride... oh, that was a good one. I prayed with insight. I prayed with power. True prayer is empowered by God. We can boast of nothing.
- One of the greatest hindrances to prayer is our concern for others. Self-Humiliation
 - This is probably not the temptation for most of us in this room, and we can praise God for that, BUT there is an opposite and equal temptation that also flows from a concern for others. It's not the act of praying to look good in the sight of others. It's withholding prayer to not look bad in the sight of others.
 - We don't pray - because we won't sound spiritual enough. WE don't pray because we feel like we don't have the right words. We don't pray because we can't quote all the Bible verses other people do. We don't pray because we are not as eloquent as others, passionate as others, ___ as others. We don't pray because we have a higher regard for people than we do our Father who is the one we are talking to in the first place!
 - • **“The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe” (Proverbs 29:25).**
 - CG: Two weeks ago in my Group, two people prayed out loud in front of others in a Group setting, for the first time in their lives! C'mon now! Clap for them!!
 - And you know what Pastor Tanner does (sometimes...) I just tell and don't ask (you know what I'm saying) - Bobby, you're praying. Lionel, you're praying!
- Jesus eliminates the temptation through intensifying our focus. Shut the door! Get in your room. translations say: get in your closet, go away by yourself. It's about getting in the private. JUST YOU AND GOD.
 - “The “closet” (ταμεινον) is a small storage closet inside the otherwise single-room Palestinian home. It was the only room that could be locked, in one sense the least sanctified part of the home with food for animals, etc., . . . the most private part of the home. The point is total privacy to commune with the Father apart from outside distractions.” (Osbourne)
 - Kill the distractions. This is a call to seek God by killing the distractions. Coming to him for only him!(Does not mean that we can't pray when there are a 1000 things swirling right in front of us - of course pray, especially then, pray), but there is something special about undivided attention.
 - CHRISTMAS SEASON!! Plans. Presents. Parties... Get this. Go there. Connect with them. The most wonderful time of the year can become the most stressful time of the year. RHC.... SLOOOOW Down.
 - What distracts you?
 - One of the reasons we cut cable is to eliminate the temptation to watch hours upon hours of shows, games, news stories, you name it.
 - Social media.
 - Socializing...
 - One thousand good things undercut the one best thing: quality, focused, undistracted time with God.
 - The devil distracts!
 - Like holiday ads...
 - Popup feeds..
 - Each ad - a mini-sermon
 - Identify a place & a time where you can get shut in with God.
 - Where in your house?
 - What is the ideal time?
 - Can you identify a time in your week beyond your typical devotional time, where you can spend extended time in prayer with God?
 - Solitude / quiet is so important
 - “I will awake the dawn.” (Psalm 57:7-11)

- Get up. Go to bed. Stay up late and sleep in a bit. I promise you - that time with God is better than one more show, one more article on the internet, one more hour of social media, one more whatever. Test me, and see. More importantly, test him, and SEE!
- But your quiet time does not have to be quiet. In fact, there are times are time with God should be anything but quiet! I will sing. I will pray out loud. I will get hype!
- Week of Prayer & Fasting

Like a child...

II. Communicate without reservation or need to impress (7-8).

- Like the Gentiles
 - Praying without a truly engaged mind or heart. Just going on and on with the expectation that - the more I say, the more likely God will hear!
 - God does not negotiate with us! Expound - 1000 words - Get an answer by the end of the month. 10000 words - maybe by the end of the week!
 - God does not negotiate, but he does listen!
- Many words - Trying to impress God!
 - What?! He's our Father
 - Complete freedom — "Daddy"
 - Complete freedom & complete reverence (Our Father - in heaven)
 - Prayer is not a conversation between peers; it is not a fireside chat among equals. This is the creature (one of billions) speaking to his sovereign Creator (of whom there is only ONE).
 - Access - because of Jesus.
 - COME TO HIM... WE WERE MADE FOR HIM... TO BE WITH HIM. EDEN > NEW CREATION WITH HIM EXPOUND walking with God.
- Pic: Word Count...
 - Brevity is fine.
 - God is after sincerity.
- Your Father knows what you need before you ask (another reason you don't have to pile up the word count).
- But... this does not mean we have to be brief.
 - Luke 6 "all night"
 - Psalm - on my bed watches of the night...
 - Pray without ceasing...
 - Eph 6 -
- Take the whole of Scripture into account... don't isolate texts.

T: Kids want to spend time with their dad. One of the great joys of my life right now is when my girls "fight" over who gets to play a game, read a book, snuggle with daddy. Prayer is not a chore. If it is, something is off. Prayer is our greatest privilege.

III. 3. Ask boldly for what moves the Father's heart.

The "Lord's Prayer" is also known as the "Disciples' prayer." It serves as a model for us! It's perfectly fine to pray the words verbatim if we mean them sincerely, but Jesus did not say: "pray this," he said, "Pray like this" That's why I think it is even better to allow this prayer to launch us into further prayer along these same lines. Whether you quote it verbatim for 20 seconds or allow its flavor to permeate your prayers for two hours, we should pray how Jesus taught us to pray.

More Glory (9).

"Our

- Do you notice what is stunningly absent? "I/my" There is no first-person singular pronoun in the entire prayer!

- Community Prayer... The moment we pray “Our” we bring in the needs and concerns of those journeying with.
- Jesus intercepts the selfish bent of our hearts with the very first word. Privilege of being family... INTERCESSION.

Our Father”

- Intimacy
- Nearness
- Nothing builds intimacy like Time. (Date nights) Quality time!
- Wherever you are, you can safely assume, SAFELY ASSUME - God wants to take you deeper still. It’s a thrilling realization, if not, a bit scary - in the best possible ways. Faith...
 - “To have found God and still be looking for him (seeking more) is the soul’s paradox of love.” - Tozer
- Get on the mountain. Face to face — “Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.¹” (Ex 33:11)
- Get to know God... Be in tune each day... led by his Spirit...

“In heaven.”

- Transcendent (above all)
- Sovereign (over all)

“Hallowed be your name.”

- Praise in your prayer! (Read the Psalms)
- The heart of prayer is worship. PRAY and SING. Let your songs be prayers.
- God is set apart. Treated as holy. Completely other than. None like you.
- Both us.
- And others...
- “May your name be kept sacred.”
- GLORY for his NAME... reputation.
- “May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun!” (Psalm 72:17)

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- ¥ Father, no one touches you.
- ¥ God, there is no one like you. Were there a thousand other gods to rival your name, your name would rise above the rest.
- ¥ You alone deserve our highest allegiance, our best attention, and our increasing affection.
- ¥ Help us see you as the infinitely perfect one, and we pray that all would see the greatness of your glory!
- ¥ “Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.”]]

More Renewal (10).

“Your kingdom come,”

- Now. Pictures. Previews. Heal brokenness. Restore. Save! (All brokenness: spiritual, emotional, physical — Week of prayer and fasting)
- Not yet... Bring your kingdom here.

“Your will be done.”

- Primarily - God’s Sovereign will. (Not my will, but your will be done - his plan/purpose)
- Revealed will is really covered in - lead us not into temptation - and yet, his sovereign plan includes his desires for us to live lives that reflect his kingdom and hallow his name! (Delight to do his will - what he wants - not what I want)

“On earth as it is in heaven.”

- Right here.
- Right now.
- How will our city be different (“in Boston as in heaven”)?
- How would your workplace be different? (Kingdom, will, here!)
- How would your home be different? (215 High St, as in heaven)

T: God First - All these requests... Directed to GOD. Now, requests related to us.

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- ¥ Father, bring heaven to earth. There is so much brokenness in our world in need of healing.
- ¥ We want our workplaces, neighborhoods, schools and government to reflect the values of your kingdom.
- ¥ Better than that, we want your gracious rule and reign to flood our hearts and the hearts of those around us.
- ¥ Bring your work of kingdom renewal in increasing measures.
- ¥ “Your kingdom come.”]]]

More Provision (11).

“Give us this day our daily bread”

- Real life needs. Food, clothing. Shelter.
- “Give us our bread for today and tomorrow.”
- In terms of the Jewish prayers, the morning prayer is for today’s bread, and the evening prayer for tomorrow’s bread.²⁵ This is a prayer reflecting total God-dependence. (Osborne)
- “When most pray it, they think, “Gimme, gimme, gimme.” But this petition actually means, “I rely on you for my daily needs.”²⁶ Moreover, it reflects an attitude that takes one day at a time, reflecting the first-century day laborer who was paid one day at a time.²⁷ The point is trusting God for each day’s need, reflecting faith...” (Osborne)
- I want some of you to come to the Week of Prayer and Fasting with these kind of requests.

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- ¥ And Father, even though we would rather starve and not pay the bills if we had to choose between your glory and your kingdom and our needs, but...
- ¥ Father, would you put some bread on the table again today? Would you meet our needs again?
- ¥ Would you help them find an apartment? Would you heal her sick mother, and his addicted son?
- ¥ “Give us each day our daily bread.”]]]

More Transformation (12-13).

“Forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors.”

- Gospel Prayer
- SAVED? Now. Why not now?

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (or evil one)”

- Everything we’ve been hearing in the S.o.M — anger, lust, truth,

[[¥ And Father, you know we’ve blown it. We have trusted in our own wisdom and followed our own selfish desires. Forgive us.

- ¥ And help us extend the forgiveness we’ve received from you, lest we be hypocrites.
- ¥ And Father, one more thing: don’t just forgive us from our current sin. Protect us from future sin.
- ¥ “Lead us not into temptation.”]]]

Conclusion:

Content of our Prayer...

“Our theology is never so clearly displayed before our own eyes and before the world as in our prayers.” (Mohler, 10)

“As we pray, so we believe.” we learn a great deal about someone by what they ask others to pray for.

[[Those who know their God are before anything else people who pray, and the first point where their zeal and energy for God’s glory come to expression is in their prayers . . . If there is little energy for such prayer, and little consequent practice of it, this is a sure sign that as yet we scarcely know our God.5]] (Packer)

Prayer. Prayer Team. Come home to Your Father. Come to your Father. Individually. Together.