



St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)

Worship Address : Cerritos High School Auditorium
12500 E. 183rd St., Cerritos, CA 90703
(Enter at Bloomfield, across Heritage Park)

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October 11, 2009

Theme: God Is Listening -What Do I Say?

Text: Matthew 6:9-10

For the past two weeks we have been reflecting upon the importance and purpose of prayer. We have asked the question: Why do I need to pray if God already knows what I need and if He is Sovereign over the universe? We saw that we pray because prayer is one way of growing in our personal relationship with God. We also pray because God has decided to accomplish His will in part through our prayers. Finally, we pray because Jesus prayed. If we want to be more like Him we will pray because he was a man of prayer. Last week we thought about prayer as a way of finding pure pleasure in God. This week and next week we will think about what we should actually say when we pray.

We will study what is usually called the Lord's Prayer. But this prayer should actually be called the Disciple's Prayer. It should be called this because this is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. In Luke's Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray just as John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. This means that the prayer that we find in Matthew 6:9-14 is a prayer that is to set apart the disciples of Jesus from all other believers in God. Let's see how this is so.

The first thing that Jesus wanted his disciples to know is that prayer is intensely personal. Prayer means much more than asking God for things. Prayer is a primary way of growing in our personal relationship with God. When we pray we are not praying to a Supreme Being or a cosmic force of some kind; we are praying to our personal Father—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus shocked the religious sensitivities of the Jews of His day by referring to God as His personal Father. The Jews also thought of God as their father; but as the Father of their nation. Individual Jews did not speak to God as their own Father. But Jesus did. Jesus claimed to have a relationship with God that no one else had. He gave us the permission and the privilege of relating to God as Father as well. We might say that Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God, while we are the adopted sons and daughters of God. We will inherit the kingdom of God along with Jesus Christ. We will rule in the kingdom of God along with Jesus Christ. Prayer is personal communication with the Personal Living God. God is our Father and we are His adopted children who will inherit His eternal kingdom along with Jesus Christ.

The second idea that Jesus wants His disciples to have in mind when they pray is purity. We pray to our Father; but specifically, we pray to our Father who is in heaven. This phrase refers to God's purity or holiness. Jesus has given us permission to relate to God personally and intimately but we must not confuse this with a mistaken familiarity with God. Unbelievers sometimes refer to God as "the Man upstairs." God holiness should prevent us from that kind of mistake. God holiness means two things: (1) First, it means



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that God is transcendent. This is a word that theologians use to speak of God as being far greater in glory and majesty than any created being. God is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, and Everywhere-Present. We must stand in awe of His glorious majesty. (2) Second, God's holiness means that He is absolutely, morally pure. In His holiness, God takes action against all sin. We must either admit our sinfulness before God, or change our concept of who He is. Many people choose the second option. They create a god in their own image who approves of just about anything they think, say, and do.

God's holiness means that we will reverence and respect His Name. We talked about this two weeks ago. It is a request that God's name will be regarded as holy and sacred by His people. But it is also a request that those who do not believe would come to believe and so come to regard God's name as sacred. Those who think of God's name in this way will never use it as a source of profanity. But there is another way to misuse God's name. We dishonor God's name when we call ourselves believers, but live in a way that contradicts His commandments.

The second request in the Disciple's Prayer is this: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This is a request that God's power or reign would be revealed on earth as it is in heaven. This is a request that God's mighty power would be revealed on earth as it is in heaven. When Adam sinned, he threw the world into chaos. When Jesus began His ministry, he revealed God's mighty kingdom power here on earth. That power reversed the chaos that Adam's sin had caused. That chaos is reversed whenever a person comes to confess Jesus as Lord. When a person does that, God's Spirit comes to live inside them and they become a new person. Every believer who lives like a believer is a revelation of God's power at work on earth. Our prayers should include requests that people come to confess Christ as Lord.