



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)

Mailing Address : 11428 E. Artesia Blvd. # 4 ; Artesia, CA 90701
562-924-5051

Website : www.sp-ecc.org

October 18, 2009

Theme: God Is Listening -What Do I Say?

Text: Matthew 6:11-15

Last week we discussed the first two verses of what I call "The Disciple's Prayer." It is a pattern that Jesus gave to his disciples for their prayers. We thought about some of the elements of prayer that Jesus taught. Prayer is personal—we pray, "Our Father..." We remember God's purity or holiness. This leads us to have a holy reverence for God and His name—we pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." We pray for God's Power to be unleashed upon the earth in this age—we pray, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." This week will cover the elements of: Provision, Purification, Protection, and Praise.

Provision: The first request that applies to ourselves has to do with God's provision for our daily needs. Bread is a word that refers to the basic diet of many of the people who lived in Galilee in Jesus' day. They ate mostly bread and fish. Jesus urged his disciples to trust God for their daily needs to be met. He said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Purification: When we have prayed, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name..." our response should be to see the darkness of our spiritual and moral lives when compared with the light of God's holiness. But the Scripture promises that if we confess our sin, God will forgive our sin and cleanse us from it. To confess our sin means to agree with God that what we have done is wrong. Confession is a courageous admission that we have violated God's holy Law. When God purifies our hearts, we are free to change our behavior to bring it back in line with God's Word. When we ask for forgiveness, we are also making a promise to God to forgive those who have wronged us.

Protection: In the Christian life we have more than our own sin to overcome. We must also contend with the Devil and his allies. They are fallen angels who seek to turn believers away from God's purpose for their lives. And so we pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." This is not a prayer to be free from all temptation. The minute Jesus was baptized; the Holy Spirit led Him into the desert to be tempted by the devil. We can expect temptation as a normal part of following Jesus. The prayer is a prayer for victory over the evil one. It is a request that God will empower us be able to resist temptation when it does come.

Praise: The final element of prayer is praise. We can say that the prayer begins and ends with worship. The praise of God is the worship of God. It is the ultimate worship of God. One way to praise God is to choose an attribute of God and to praise Him for it. For example, we might thank Him that He is Sovereign and in control of everything. Or we



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)

Mailing Address : 11428 E. Artesia Blvd. # 4 ; Artesia, CA 90701
562-924-5051

Website : www.sp-ecc.org

might thank Him for His Justice. Or, we might thank Him for His mercy and grace as it was revealed in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Worship is an important element of our prayers.

Forgiveness: Jesus follows the prayer with a saying about forgiving others of their sins against us. This is so important to Jesus that he says that if we don't forgive others of their sins against us, God will not forgive us of our sins. This saying has puzzled many Christians. It seems to imply that I might lose my salvation if I fail to forgive others when they sin against me. But that is not what He is saying. There is eternal forgiveness, which is the forgiveness that we receive when we confess Christ as Lord. That is secure. What will be affected if we fail to forgive others will be our day-to-day relationship with God. It is our day-to-day sins that God will not forgive if we do not forgive. If we fail to forgive others, our daily relationship with God will not remain alive and fresh.

Forgiveness means that when someone sins against me, I make a clear and definite decision to give up all plans of revenge or getting even. It means that I will refuse to say or do hurtful things to the person who has wronged me. It means that I will let go of my feelings of anger or bitterness towards the person who has wronged me. I am convinced that forgiving does not mean forgetting. Our brain is like a hard drive in a computer. Unless it is damaged in some way, the information that is recorded there stays there. Random events or thoughts can bring the memory of the wrong that was done back in to consciousness at any time. This means that if the memory of the offense comes to mind, I must renew my decision to let go of all plans of revenge or getting even. Furthermore, I need to ask God to help me with His power to let go of my desire to get even. If I take this course of action, with God's help, the feelings of hurt, bitterness, anger, revenge and so on will eventually stop coming up to the level of consciousness. This is not forgetting. It simply means that we stop retrieving the data from the hard drive.