

Sermon Notes *by Pastor Jamie Tonge*



Prayer Changes Everything.

James 5: "The prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective".

Since God created the world, His greatest joy has been His communication with mankind. In the beginning he had perfect communication for us, unknown this side of the grave. As **1 Corinthians 13** says we only see through a frosted glass with only distorted views of the heavenly kingdom of God. Those who have been able to experience some form of transportation into the heavens such as what Paul describes as the 3rd heaven, can only give us a glimpse of what they have seen as human words fail to describe the glory of the eternal kingdom awaiting us.

However it is Gods heart to have a two way relationship with us in this life that if we are willing is life transforming and life empowering. It is the world of prayer, open to all who know Christ.

The Bible and history is full of men and women who have been able to see the amazing things God will do, for all who will ask him. Let us take a little time to look at some.

Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Nehemiah, Elijah, Elisha.

In the New Testament, The life of Christ, The early Church.

Testimonies of recent Church history.

Examples in our own life, and those around us.

While crossing the Atlantic on an ocean liner, F.B. Meyer was asked to address the first class passengers. At the captain's request he spoke on "Answered Prayer." An agnostic who was present at the service was asked by his friends, "What did you think of Dr. Meyer's sermon?" He answered, "I didn't believe a word of it." That afternoon Meyer went to speak to the steerage passengers. Many of the listeners at his morning address went along, including the agnostic, who claimed he just wanted to hear "what the babbler had to say."

Before starting for the service, the agnostic put two oranges in his pocket. On his way he passed an elderly woman sitting in her deck chair fast asleep. Her hands were open. In the spirit of fun, the agnostic put the two oranges in her outstretched palms. After the meeting, he saw the old lady happily eating one of the pieces of fruit. "You seem to be enjoying that orange," he remarked with a smile. "Yes, sir," she replied, "My Father is very good to me." "Your father? Surely your father can't be still alive!" "Praise God," she replied, "He is very much alive." "What do you mean?" pressed the agnostic. She explained, "I'll tell you, sir. I have been seasick for days. I was asking God somehow to send me an orange. I suppose I fell asleep while I was praying. When I awoke, I found He had not only sent me one orange but two!" The agnostic was speechless. Later he was converted to Christ. Yes, praying in God's will brings an answer.

The Requirements of Prayer.

In **Matthew 6** Jesus taught us the fundamental requirements of prayer. We know that God hears the cry of any who will call upon him, however when we walk with him, then I believe there are some fundamental truth that we need to know about his heart. This is not a legalistic rule or some form of ritual that must be performed nor some formula needed to get God's ear.

I believe that in **Matthew 5, 6, & 7** Jesus lays down certain requirements of the human heart in our relationship with God.

In **Matthew 6: 9-14** He teaches on prayer. We know it as the “Lord’s Prayer” but in truth it lays down the **requirements of our heart and mind**. Let’s look at them.

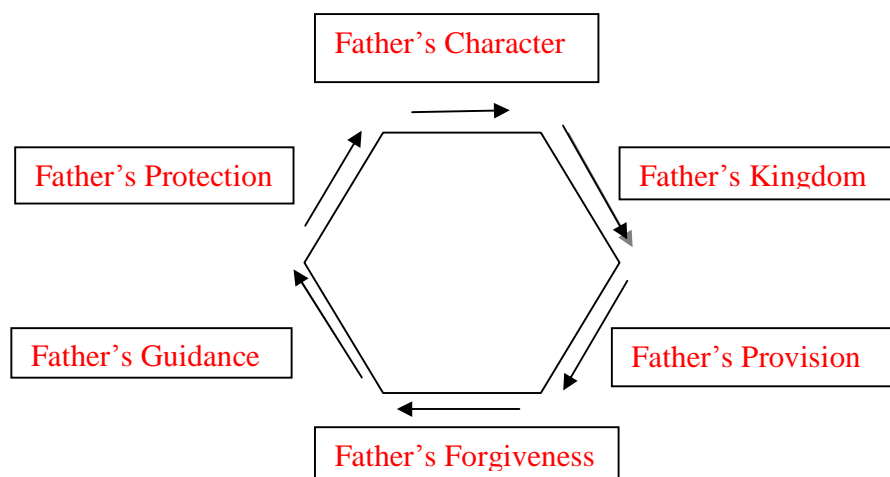
Matthew 6:5-8 Jesus tells us what God does *not* want to hear.

Hypocrisy - the word used here means a ‘*stage player*’ God wants us to be real.

The message puts it like this ...”*don’t turn prayer into a theatrical production, do you think God sits in a box seat?*”

Babbling – the original meaning is to ‘*prate tediously*’ thinking we will be heard by our many words!

In his book “**The Passionate Life**”, Mike Breen gives us six principles that is found in this prayer and uses the hexagon as a visual aid.



I would like to use these principles, as they give us a handle on each aspect of the way Jesus taught us to pray.

V9 this then is how you should pray:

The Father’s Character.

“Our Father who is in heaven Holy is your name”.

Realise who He is (we need to have a true understanding of God as our Father) and draw near to Him.

See everything from a heavenly **perspective** and from a heavenly **position**. Looking down from a higher position everything looks different. Peter when in prayer saw a vision and he was able to see how God saw humanity. It changed the direction of the early church (**Acts 10:9**) by changing his perspective; it changed his position because he saw it from heaven.

Recognise who He is. It is easy for us to lose sight of the greatness of God in his ability to do “**far more than we can ask or imagine**” (**Ephesians 3:20**) and also in His Holiness. Holiness is about what God sees more than what man sees.

The Father’s Kingdom.

“Your Kingdom come your will be done”.

His rule and reign on the earth as it is in heaven. Receive God’s sovereign will.

The Father’s Provision.

“Give us today our daily bread”.

It's a now thing, God deals in our life now.

The Father's Forgiveness.

“Forgive us as we forgive others”.

Whether we like it or not, forgiveness is conditional. If we are unwilling to forgive, then we are not going to receive His forgiveness. See **Matthew 6:14-15** as well as **6:12**.

The Father's Guidance.

“Lead us not into temptation”.

Asking for His keeping power. What we ask for, must not be something that will lead us into sin.

The Father's Protection.

“Deliver us from evil”.

The prayer ends as it begins. We call upon God to intervene on our behalf to deliver us from the works of darkness.

When I pray I'm praying to my **heavenly Father**, one who loves me and wants the best for me and whatever situation or person I'm praying for. But if I don't have a correct view of God as my Father, then it is difficult for me to pray. *I need to gain an understanding of true Fatherhood, as I need to be able to draw near to Him. He is enthroned in the heavens;* our prayer comes to Him in that lofty place, that place outside of both time and space. He is going to answer prayer from an eternal perspective not just a time based one. *We must remember this as we pray. Holy is your name,* when Isaiah saw the Lord in **Isaiah 6**, his life and ministry were transformed. I believe that when we pray, *it's important for us to not lose the reverence of His holiness. Psalm 34 calls it the “Fear of the Lord”.*

This is our Father's Character.

As we pray what we are asking for must come into line with **your Kingdom come** God is not about to give us what is contrary to His Kingdom. We may well want to pray with David in Ps; 58:6 'brake there teeth O God' but it's hardly a prayer in line with Kingdom values even if it is in line with scripture!! *We are called to live by His values not the worlds Your will be done submitting everything to the will of God it's that simple but we need divine power to live it out.*

This is our Fathers Kingdom

God is aware of all our needs before we ask Him but He still wants us to ask **give us today our daily bread** He is interested in the now, He will deal with the needs we have He is not above caring for all we need *when it comes to bread for today He is a today God*

This is our Father's Provision.

One of the most important things to God is forgiveness. **“Forgive us as we forgive others”** the only part of this prayer that is underlined by re-emphasis in **verses 14-15**. *It cannot be over stated, the power of forgiveness to set us free and the power un-forgiveness gives to Satan over our lives.*

This is our Father's Forgiveness.

Many Christians have no real understanding of the last two lines of this prayer. In simple terms *it is giving to the Holy Spirit the right to alter the direction of our day or actions*, so that we will **“not be lead into temptation”**.

This is our Father's Guidance.

“And delivered from evil” This does not mean there will not be temptation or evil. We know there is. *But when we ask for God to do or give us or others it is important to pray that the answer if granted, would not be a cause of temptation or of evil.*

This is our Father's Protection.

- He is our Father and approachable – draw near.
- His view is higher and better - get His perspective.
- He is a Holy God - reverence.
- His Kingdom - will it fit in.
- His will - is it part of His plan.
- Daily bread today - hands on now God.
- Forgiveness for us and others - just do it.
- Avoiding temptation and evil - It may look good but is it good for you!

In his book "Why Prayers are Unanswered", John Lavender retells a story about Norman Vincent Peale.

When Peale was a boy, he found a big, black cigar, slipped into an alley, and lit up. It didn't taste good, but it made him feel very grown up, until he saw his father coming. Quickly he put the cigar behind his back and tried to be casual. Desperate to divert his father's attention, Norman pointed to a billboard advertising the circus.

"Can I go, Dad? Please, let's go when it comes to town."

His father's reply taught Norman a lesson he never forgot. "Son, he answered quietly but firmly, "never make a petition while at the same time trying to hide a smouldering disobedience".