

## MESSAGE TRANSCRIPTS

Series: Prayer

Part 3

Tim Armstrong, Senior Pastor

Weekend February 21/22, 2009

Crossroads, good to see you. Let's take our Bibles and turn again to Matthew, chapter 6. A familiar piece of scripture in and of itself...ah...probably becoming even more familiar now that we are working our way through the Lords prayer. Let me remind you that it's set in a context of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus is cutting against the grain of culture, quite literally. Coming against what had been established as the norm in teaching, he comes to this issue of prayer and he does nothing less...ah...than again re-establish a new concept of prayer. He starts it radically by...by instructing us to say, our Father, which had never been done up to this point. He's leading us away from the practice of...of righteousness displayed for the sake of other people. He's saying, don't be like the Pharisees...don't be like the Gentiles, don't stand on the street corners and synagogue and pray just so everybody else can see you. Your prayer to the Father should be intimate and should be personal. He says, I want you to pray like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen. So is this how we are supposed to pray? Is this...is this the words, the cadence? Ah...is this the...the...the method, the formula every time we pray? Are these the words that should be coming from our mouth or is this more like a model? We're taking the model approach...the idea that there are segments, parts, components in here that teach us about prayer...teach us about the relationship that we have with the Father. We started last week. We looked at the first two components. We said the first component comes right out of verse 9 when we read: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. We approach God in adoration, hallowed, holy, holy be your name. And...and I challenged you, set aside time in your prayer life. Don't make it a list...just where you have an opportunity to adore the Father...where you able to do that? Were you...were you able to connect with God on a level where you weren't just saying this is all about me which you were...you were enjoying his presence, you were glorifying him for his creation, you were thanking him for the Son or the Spirit or for mercy or for grace. You see, that's adoration...that's a part of prayer. This is what Jesus is teaching us. And then he comes, in verse 10, and says: Your kingdom come, your will be done. In other words, acknowledge God's will over your own. It's the idea of saying to God, God, I want your agenda above my own agenda. These are components of how we communicate with the Father.

Well, now we're going to continue on into the Lord's prayer. We're going to look at two additional components this morning that come out of verse 11 and verse 12. Verse 11, he shifts the focus from God to us. And he says: Give us this day our daily bread. This is the prayer now that we should be praying to the Father. Do you notice the difference? In verse 9 and 10: Your name, your kingdom, your will. All the focus was on God. Now the focus is changing and we are to ask God to meet our needs. He commands us to pray this way. Give is in the imperative...the idea that we're called to approach God asking

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him to supply our daily needs. Ah...specifically, he calls on us to say: Give us this day our daily bread. Is that how we are to communicate? Ah...are we to ask God for bread? If you think about it, especially those of us who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we might be tempted to just bypass this completely because we're thinking, well, I got enough bread. Alright, we've got all the bread we need and, if we just broaden it a little bit and say, well, this has to do with food, that might not even meet us where we're...we're really at. I mean, think about it. You and I have probably more food in our cupboards that could sustain us probably for two, three, maybe even four weeks than most people have in the world. Not only that, but we have more choices of what we want to eat at any given moment. Alright, we could just go down any major thoroughfare here in town...we could have our pick. You want Chinese? You know, we could have Chinese. We have different restaurants that serve Chinese. Mexican...all kinds of Mexican restaurants. It weren't that way fifteen years ago...they're all over the place now, right? You...you want steak...many different steak places, right? Ah...we could...we could go...we want...we want Italian...we have our choices of Italian restaurants. We probably would be the least likely candidates to be praying, God, give us our daily bread.

But I think we need to broaden our understanding even more beyond food. Martin Luther, the father of Protestant Reformation, said: Everything necessary for the preservation of life is bread. Everything that is necessary for the continuation of our lives fall under the category of bread. He says that includes food, it includes a healthy body, it includes good weather, a house, home, a wife, a husband, children, good government, peace. In other words, there's nothing too small to bring before God...that we ask God for whatever might be the need to sustain us...to supply. Why do we do this? Why do we pray like this? What does it communicate? Doesn't it communicate our dependence upon God? Isn't that really what we're saying? God, I depend upon you to supply me for what I need to make it through life. Now the reverse could be said...what...what are we doing when we don't say this? We're basically saying to God, well, you know, I don't really need that. I don't need to depend on you for these things. I can handle that. And yet, Jesus is coming before us and what is the whole tenet of the Lords prayer...the idea that we're communing with God in relationship? And so he's...he's teaching us go before the Father and be dependent on him for your daily supply. Recognize this. By the way, this word, give, this is the heart of the verse. It's...it's the idea of recognizing our need. And you know what else it does? It reveals our heart. It's like standing before God and saying, I need you and I'm not going to take anything for granted. ....You see I think it's at the height of arrogance to...ah...just make the assumption that we're always going to have our needs met. But as believers we come before him and we say, God, on this day, and he makes a point to delineate daily which literally means this current day, not worrying about tomorrow, but this current day, I need you. I'm dependent upon you.

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Matthew Henry, classic commentary, work that was done in the 16<sup>th</sup> century writes: Every word here has a lesson in it. And really that's true. There's seven words here: Give us this day our daily bread. You could go through every word and spend time in prayer just over each word. He shows us how to do that. He says, we ask 'for' bread. That teaches us temperance. We ask for bread...not extravagance...it's what is supplied for today. We ask for 'our' bread...that teaches us honesty. We do not ask for the bread out of other people's mouths but the bread honestly gotten. We ask for our daily bread which teaches us not to take thought for today but constantly to depend upon divine providences...those that live hand to mouth...completely antithetical to what you and I understand as Americans. That's not like American...that's not the American way. You know, we should have so much with this concept...we are...our mindset is we should have so much we should never have to live hand to mouth. But that's not the concept of scripture. The idea of scripture is that we're dependent upon God and we do not see above or beyond today. And so, Matthew Henry was saying this is just a part of the providence of God when we say, I'm going to depend on you for today. He continues by saying: We beg of God to give it to us...not to sell it to us...not to lend it to us...but give it. The greatest of men must be holding to the mercy of God for their daily bread. He says we pray, give it to us, not to me only, but to others in common with me. This teaches us charity and compassion. We pray that God would give us this day which teaches us to renew the desire of our souls towards God every day. You see, I think that's really what is lying behind this imperative: Give us this day our daily bread. It's every day we come before the Father with a sense of dependence. This is a component of our prayer life. Now...I don't need to spend any more time on this because we all understand what it means to ask God to meet our needs.

We're probably very good at that but I really want to spend the rest of our time focusing on verse 12 because here, he mixes it up a little bit. His...his continuation of the same sentence, he says: Give us this day our daily bread and, what? Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. So the fourth component, I would say is that we're called to admit sin. Not only that but to forgive others. So we admit our sin and we forgive others. Let's...let's look at the first half first...the idea of admitting sin. Do you realize that the most severe problem you and I face...not the economy...not troubled relationships...not physical issues...not spiritual or rather mental issues...it's a spiritual issue...it's a sin issue. Did you realize that how badly sin has devastated humanity? It has done it in at least two ways. It damns people to hell. Not only that but it destroys...it robs us from the fullness of life...from the joy of our salvation. That's sin. Sin dominates our mind...it dominates our will...it dominates our desire...sin has a tendency to lead our affections away from God. It brings us under the control of Satan and it enacts divine wrath upon us...it destroys our relationships...it creates misery in our life. But do you know what it does most of all? It separates us from the Father. It separates us from God. Sin separates us from even being able to have a relationship with God.

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And so what do you and I need more than anything else? Well, we need a Savior. We need forgiveness and isn't that just what God gives us? He gives us forgiveness through Christ. Alright? If that's the case, track with me. If that's the case, he has given us forgiveness, then why, in the Lord's prayer and many other places in scripture, are we called upon to...to this continuation of confession...this continuation to admit our sins? If we've already been forgiven by Christ, why must we continue to admit our sin?

That's because we need to understand that there are two types of forgiveness. Let me give you a little theology on forgiveness so you have a...a full understanding. Cause you know what I find? Many times, we'll read passages of scripture and we'll read...but we...we don't quite understand the full impact...because we don't understand how it all works together especially in this case cause there's...these two types of forgiveness: Our judicial forgiveness and parental forgiveness. And many times, we'll read a passage of scripture and they somewhat overlap and if we don't understand the two types of forgiveness, we won't understand the scriptures. Judicial forgiveness is God's declaration of our righteousness through the Son. That means that God once and for all declares you forgiven. Romans 8:1: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That is a declaration of forgiveness. Nothing can take you...take that away from you. You don't have to ever worry about losing your salvation. God has declared that to you. It's not something you do, not something you manufacture. It's something that is produced by faith in Christ and it's a declaration. That's judicial forgiveness.

But there's a second type of forgiveness that's often mentioned in scripture and it's called parental forgiveness. Let me just help you see through the chart that I've put in your program. Let me just walk you through, first, judicial forgiveness. Your status under judicial forgiveness is first sinner...you are a sinner. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23. That's your status. And so what is your relationship to God because of that status? God is your judge. Just as Psalm 96 says: He will judge the world in righteousness. You are sinner; God is judge. The result of that is death...is eternal death. The wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23. The role of Christ then is Savior just like we were saying a moment ago. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, I Timothy 1:15. Christ acts as a Savior and, what is our need? Our need is salvation. That means of salvation is through faith. That's how we receive forgiveness. If we don't do that, the consequences are hell. The positive response if we do that is a new relationship. Like John 1:12 says: But to all who receive him, who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. Now that's important, why? Because there is a transaction that has occurred that has changed your status. God has declared you judiciously forgiven from your sins. You're no longer seen as sinner; now you're seen as a child of God, do you understand that? That when he declares you righteous through faith in Christ, he now brings you into the family of God. Now you're sliding over into

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the right-hand column. The issue that we now deal with on a regular basis with God is not judicial forgiveness...that's done. It is parental forgiveness. You say, what is that? Well, your status as child now means your relationship with God is that of Father. Galatians 4:6: We have our hearts crying out, "Abba! Father!" There is a connection. What is the result of sin? The result of now sin and we will, right? It doesn't matter if you're been a believer two months, two years, two decades. We all will continue to struggle with the sin nature. We will all, occasionally, maybe more than occasionally, fall into acts of unrighteousness. What do we do? What's the result? The result is a broken relationship, a broken fellowship.

Now let me just play this out in your mind. If my son or my daughters, if they do something that offends me, does that mean that they're no longer my son or daughters and I'm no longer their father? No. Because that's a family relationship. That's established. What has happened? They've offended me. Ah...let me make it much more for...for maybe many of you could understand this. When you mess up with your spouse and they're mad at you, what does it take for you to get back in their good graces? Three days (from the audience) (laughter) Is that true? No, much longer? That was quick. Ah...it's been a while since I've been heckled. ...Threw me off a little bit. Alright, three days so, OK, it takes you three days. But at the end of that three days, you still have to come back groveling. You still have to come back in forgiveness and ask and repentance, right? And then, you can mend the relationship and sometimes that's the best part, right? Because that's the makeup time, right? And some of you know what I'm talking about...some of you better than others. But you...that's a makeup time...and...and so you're making up and...and the relationship is fine. But you understand that when we sin against the Father, that's like grieving him. It doesn't destroy the relationship; nothing can destroy. You've been judiciously forgiven, that's fine. But what...what we now need to do is we need to go to the Father and we need to confess, to repent, to restore the joy of our fellowship with him. Isn't that exactly what David said in Psalm 51, he said: Restore to me the joy of your salvation. Many times when we fall into sinful patterns, what happens is, is that we move away from God and it starts to sense like he's distanced from us. But he didn't move, we moved. And we have that sense...which is...it's just a feeling....you know what I mean? If you've walked with Christ for a time, you know what I'm talking about. There's just this sense that there's a disconnect, and so we go to him and we repent and we confess and suddenly there's this sensation that the relationship is restored. There's a renewed fellowship.

This is pictured very clearly in a passage in John, John, chapter 13. Why don't you go ahead and find that. This is a...a really a dynamic passage because it's not only showing us the servitude of Christ but it also gives us this...ah...symbolic picture what goes on in forgiveness. Many times I've heard people read right through this and they don't fully engage into what's going on. They see it only as face value for the scriptures...but

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there's so much more. Let me set it up for you. Ah...Jesus is in the upper room. He's sharing the last Passover meal that he's going to share with his disciples. Towards the end of the meal, he gets up, he takes out his...takes off his outer garments and he puts a towel around his waist...in other words, he...he actually dresses like a servant and he gets a...a bowl of water, verse 5, pours it into a basin, begins to wash the disciples feet and then to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. Now you need to understand there must have been an incredible amount of tension building in the room at this point. Because here is Jesus acting like a servant. No one else had gotten up to wash anybody's feet. You know, they'd been walking the dusty, dirty roads. They came in...they sat down at this table. It's not a table like you and I are used to where our feet go under the table. It's...it's kind of a lounging type...type of a table where you almost lounge on your side and...and so your feet are just very close to the food. And customarily you would go into a house...ah...you would have your feet washed by a servant before you would set down at the...at the table. No one had done this yet. And so really afterwards...ah...what should have happened before, Jesus gets up and he takes the role of a servant. But he does it for a purpose. But more than that, I think the tension would have come because remember what happened back in John 6? Peter said to Christ, you are the Son of the living God. He made a confession. You are the long awaited Messiah. You're the creator of the world. And so the tension must have been, here is the creator of the world bowing down, washing the creatures' feet. The most exalted person in the room was doing the most lowly, menial task. And you picked that up in the text because it says he came, verse 6, to Simon Peter who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" or...or some translations, "Lord, you can't wash my feet!" It's...it's like an exclamation. Jesus answered him, "What...what am I doing you do not understand now but afterwards you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him back, he says, "Well, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Alright, well that changes everything for Peter. So he says to him, "Well, Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head." In other words, give me a full bath. I mean, if that's what it takes to stay in communion with you, I want the whole deal. And so he get's...he gets a little upset and then Jesus calms him down. He says to him, the one...now listen...the one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet but is completely clean and you are clean. Let me decipher this. Do you know what he is saying? He is saying, when you have bathed...the idea is when you have been regenerated...you don't have to do that again...it's been done. But there needs to be a relational cleansing and the...the idea of the feet symbolizes the sin that you and I commit as believers. And so Jesus was teaching a much broader lesson than just mere servitude. He says, you don't need to be completely cleansed here...you did that at regeneration. You need to practice a continual cleansing that is relational.

The question is, are you doing that? Is this a component of your prayer life? Are you coming before the Father on a regular basis or are you just kind of maybe sliding this

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under the rug saying, you know, I'm hoping God forgets this if I forget about it. Maybe the larger question we need to ask is why aren't we doing this? Is it a sense...is it the sense that God is too big and too distant and so we need him to come closer...we need him to be small...or...or is it the retribution that we fear when we admit this. Don't forget we are in the midst of a relationship with him. There is no fear of retribution now. What we experience is the exact same thing the prodigal son experienced? He's coming back repentant and forgiven...seeking forgiveness from the father and he's coming up the road to the house and what does the father do? The father runs after him, holds open his arms. That's the exact same response God will give you. There's nothing to fear. This is in a secure relationship and, now he is saying, come...come to me. The comprehensive nature of God's forgiveness is that it is so wide east and west...so deep the deepest sea cannot contain. It's like what Jeremiah said: I will remember their sins no more. That's the comp...comprehensive nature of forgiveness. We should have no fear. This should be actually the component that's elevated to the highest level of our...our prayer life with the Father...not something we dread...not something that we shamefully crawl before God but we come before him with that of a son, a daughter. With the desire to restore intimate fellowship of God the Father. And what is the outcome?

How can we tell that this is...this is healthy...this is working in our life? It's the second half of the verse. We are...we're quick to forgive others. You see, when realize that you've been forgiven much and forgiven continually, it's easy then to forgive those who have wounded and offended us. Make these components part of your communion with the Father. They enliven our relationship...they deepen this...this connection that we have. Without it, you're missing one of the great joys of the judicial forgiveness that he's already given you. Let's bow our heads and pray. Practice a little bit this component. Father, we are in need of you. We fall woefully short. We lose it...ah...so many ways. And I pray that your people will have a strong sense from your word and your Spirit that they can take a deep breath knowing that you love them. And that this is not a time of punishment...it's not a time where you're going to rain down some kind of judgment upon them but you're going to receive them...forgive them. You will care for us and nurture us into a rich fellowship and then even use the things that have once broken our relationship with you...broken our fellowship...use that to strengthen. Teach us what it means to be in this kind of depth of a relationship. Don't let it pass us...pass us by. Thank you, Jesus, for making it possible. In your name. Amen.