

Teach Us to Pray: “Our Father”

Matthew 6:9

Content vs. Words (v. 9a)

- After Jesus addresses the attitudes & pitfalls of human-centered prayer (v. 6-8), He moves to the content of our prayers
- He starts with the remark, “This is *how* you should pray”
 - What follows are not *necessarily* the words we need to recite but rather the content that prayer should focus on

Our Intimate Audience (v. 9b)

- Jesus begins by invoking God as “our Father,”
- The idea of God as the Father is mentioned in the Old Testament, though rarely (15x)
 - To the nation of Israel (Deut. 32:6; Isa. 63:16 [2x]; 64:8; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9; Mal. 1:6; 2:10)
 - To the Davidic king (2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13; 22:10; 28:6; Ps. 68:5; 89:26)
 - And arguably never in direct prayer
- However, calling God “Father” is Jesus’ preferred term
 - And not just for Himself, He is “our Father”
 - He refers to God as “your Father” 14 times in the Sermon on the Mount alone (Matt 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11, 21)
- “Father” is a term of intimacy
 - We pray to a God who knows us and who we know
- And yet, He is “the one who is in heaven”
 - Our Father is the transcendent God of the universe
 - He is all-powerful and all-knowing

Our First Focus (v. 9c)

- The phrase “Hallowed be Your Name” is a passive imperative
 - Meaning it is a declaration of a wish or desire
 - “May it be holy”
- A name in the ancient world was a way of not only identifying someone but also describing their attributes
 - Holy: To be set apart/special
- This is not a petition that seeks for God to show off His power, but rather that there is a recognition and reverence for His holiness throughout creation
- This starts with *us* reflecting His holiness to the world
 - This is not a request for God to do something *for* us, but rather that He do something *through* us

So What?

- Do we approach God as our heavenly Father?
- Do we desire to make Him know as holy?

Meditation Verse: *Matthew 6:9*