

Pray This Way
October 29, 2006
Matt 6:5-13
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Synopsis:

Just what is prayer and how do we do it?

- Whirling wheel of Buddhists
- Inaudible groans, stuffing papers in Wailing Wall
- Pictures left at saint's graves (Assisi)

This is the question the disciples asked Jesus (Luke 11), and that Jesus taught his disciples (Matt 6).

I.

The Context of Prayer

6:9 "Our Father in heaven"

Literary Context for Gospels:

Luke 11 =Tell me how to do it = doing prayer

Matt 6 = Righteousness = doing righteousness

*Prayer is doing something

e.g. cherry bomb, set down and run away

Relational Context: "Father in Heaven"

Father = Jesus, goodness and provision, already knows

e.g. not your Daddy

Heaven = power

e.g. not what is humanly possible (feed 5,000)

If prayer is action (boom) towards a Father (Jesus, good, provides) and God already knows, then how and why do we pray?

Two Caveats:

-Calvin: Both truths, "That he freely anticipates our wishes, and that yet we obtain by prayer what we ask."

-Not a formula (vv 7-8 babbling, meaningless, get attention)

II.

Content of Prayer: Part One

6:10 “Your name . . . kingdom . . . will”

Structure of LP:

6 Petitions = 3 x 2

Similar to 10 C's (About God, About us)

Directed to God (with us in mind)

Directed to us (with God in mind)

Directed to God (with us in mind):

-Jussive (3 pers impv, “let”)

Holiness = not us, separate (not about me) e.g. china

Kingdom = reign, who's boss (not about me) e.g. politics

Will = heaven to earth, obedience e.g. Mark Twain

*Start prayers with God

It's about God's will, it's about obedience

III.

Content of Prayer: Part Two

6:11-13 “Give bread . . . debts . . . trial”

Directed to Us (with God in mind)

-2 pers impv (Give, Forgive, Lead not)

Give Bread = rich and poor, what is daily needed e.g. miracle

Forgive = bind me to God and others e.g. pass peace

Lead not to evil = destroy me e.g. choose destruction

Conclusion: About why and how to pray

-Loving Father who already knows

-Start with God, end with us

-State God's needs and your needs