

Monday Week 40 The Prayers of Jesus

Bible Reading: Matthew 6:5-15

Q 157. What did Jesus teach us to pray?

A. Jesus taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer.

A small child was asked by her mother to pray before eating lunch. She bowed her head and prayed, "Dear Lord, don't let us ever get too much that we forget about You, and don't let us ever have so little that we have to steal." She paused a moment and then said to her mother, "That's in the Bible." The little girl had been listening to the words from the Bible and made them part of her prayer.

The disciples listened to what Jesus said about prayer. The prayer he taught them is what is called the Lord's Prayer. For two thousand years people who follow Jesus have been praying this prayer. It can help you pray, just like it helped the disciples to pray.

Thinking Deeper

On at least two occasions Jesus taught his disciples to pray these words. One was while he preached the Sermon on the Mount. The other is when the disciples heard Jesus pray and asked him to teach them to pray. It has been the practice of Christians since the time of the early church to pray this prayer. What we have called The Lord's Prayer is actually the prayer the Lord taught us to pray. Some shrink from praying this prayer because it can become ritual. However, just because some have sunk below the level of reality does not invalidate the prayer for those who have a warm heart. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his disciples to pray "after this manner." The prayer can be used as a pattern for our prayers. But that is not all it is, for when they asked him to teach them to pray He said, "When ye pray, say, Our Father..." Even though some have abused certain forms in worship or prayer is no reason to abandon what Jesus clearly taught. It is in keeping with the teaching of Christ and with the practice of the historic Christian church to pray the prayer we call The Lord's Prayer.

Tuesday Week 40 The Prayers of Jesus

Bible Reading: John 11:32-44

Q 158 Why did Jesus pray out loud before Lazarus was raised from the dead?

A. Jesus prayed out loud so that the people who heard him would believe.

Charlie Wireman was an outlaw who lived in the mountains of Kentucky. He was mean and tough. On evenings when Charlie was in town, he would see the lawman and say, "It's your bedtime. You need to go home now." The lawman was afraid of Charlie. He would go home, leaving the town unprotected from the outlaw. Charlie drank a lot, and became weak from drinking liquor. One day he was walking along a street and passed the house where a Christian lady lived. Charlie was so weak that he had to lean against her gate. Her window was opened and she was praying. He heard her pray for various people. Then she raised her hands heavenward and pled with God, "And Oh Lord, I pray for that wicked Charlie Wireman. Get a hold of his heart! Save him for Jesus' sake." Charlie couldn't get away from that prayer. Finally, he realized he needed to get saved. He was delivered from his meanness and his drinking. Charlie heard a prayer that helped him to faith.

When Jesus prayed for Lazarus, he prayed out loud so that the people who heard would believe. When Lazarus came out of the grave, they knew that God the Father had answered Jesus' prayer.

Thinking Deeper

Jesus lived his life on earth in a unique way. He had a constant relationship with the Father in heaven. Jesus often went by himself and prayed. Sometimes the disciples overheard his prayers. They wanted Jesus to teach them to pray. In this case, they heard Jesus pray, and then watched as Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, emerged alive from the grave. This dramatic prayer and answer was a great boost to the disciples' faith.

Jesus did not need a boost to faith. Of all the people who have lived on earth, Jesus lived the closest to the Father in heaven. Jesus had ongoing communion with Him. Jesus was one with the Father. So Jesus said, "I know that thou hearest me always." Jesus did not pray with distance between himself and the Father. He did not live with the need of a "mediator between God and man" since He is the mediator.

Our prayers can be answered if we stay close to Jesus. He is our mediator. He is at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. The closer we stay to Jesus the clearer will be the answers to our prayers.

Wednesday Week 40 The Prayers of Jesus

Bible Reading: John 17:13-20

Q 159 What did Jesus pray for his own disciples?

A. Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify his disciples.

A family installed a hot-tub on the deck beside their home. The family made some rules about the hot-tub. They were to keep it covered, except when they used it. The water was to be clean and hot. Also, it was to be used only by their family. No one else was to get into that water – not even other close relatives. The hot tub was special to that family. It was just for them.

When Jesus prayed that his disciples would be sanctified, he was praying for something that was only for believers in Jesus. His prayer included all believers, because he prayed for those who would believe. People who don't believe in Jesus cannot be sanctified. Jesus said clearly that his prayer was for "his own" and "not for the world." Sanctification is a special cleansing only for people who already believe in Jesus.

Thinking Deeper

A young man was working on his car. The longer he worked, the greasier his hands became. He tried to wipe the grease off his hands with a cloth, but his hands were still greasy. Grease was in his skin and under his fingernails. To get the grease off of his hands, the mechanic had to use detergent. The detergent applied to his skin along with water released the chemical bonds that imbedded the grease into his skin. The detergent freed his skin from the grease.

Humans are flawed creatures. They were not flawed at creation, but because of sin they fell into a state of depravity. When people are saved, God forgives them for their sins and lives in their hearts. But there is still "something lacking in their faith." The apostle Paul, including himself with the believers he addressed, said "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." But we cannot cleanse ourselves without Christ's blood anymore than the mechanic can wash the grease from his hands without detergent. God has made provision for our cleansing. "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." We "cleanse ourselves" by going to Christ by faith and appropriating His blood, which sanctifies us.

Thursday Week 40 The Prayers of Jesus

Bible Reading: Luke 23:33-38

Q. 160 What did Jesus pray for those who crucified him?

A. Jesus prayed that his Father would forgive them.

There is an old story about a soldier who kept getting in trouble. The judge ordered him to have extra duty. He was made to work very hard. He was lectured. He was put in prison. But he kept getting in trouble and was sent to the judge again. The judge looked at his record. Then he decided to do something different. “Young man,” said the judge. “You have been in trouble too many times to remember. You have a very bad record, and nothing we do seems to make any difference. I’m going to do something we haven’t tried before. I’m going to forgive you. I’m taking your bad record and throwing it away. You can start over.” The young soldier was so amazed that he changed his ways. He didn’t get in trouble anymore. Forgiveness changed him!

Jesus showed us how to forgive when he was on the cross. He asked God to forgive the soldiers that crucified him. If we follow Jesus, we will show forgiveness to people who wrong us.

Thinking Deeper

A New York pastor preached a message called “One Way Forgiveness.” He spoke of how Jesus gave forgiveness from the cross. Jesus didn’t wait for the soldiers to ask for forgiveness. He offered them forgiveness one way—from His standpoint. That is how God offers forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive...” The forgiveness is there for the asking. God offers it to those who will confess. It is there for the taking. It is not forced. It is not coerced. But it is available, anytime.

A minister received some negative words from a parishioner. The words were hurtful and accusatory. Later, the parishioner sought the Lord, came back to church and was welcomed into the fellowship. Several years went by. One day the parishioner came to the minister and asked for forgiveness for those hurtful words. “I forgave you a long time ago,” said the pastor.

Jesus gave us the pattern for forgiveness. We are to have it available, anytime.

Friday Week 40 The Prayers of Jesus

Review the Week's Questions

- Q 157. What did Jesus teach us to pray?
A. Jesus taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer.
- Q 158 Why did Jesus pray out loud before Lazarus was raised from the dead?
A. Jesus prayed out loud so that the people who heard him would believe.
- Q 159 What did Jesus pray for his own disciples?
A. Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify his disciples.
- Q. 160 What did Jesus pray for those who crucified him?
A. Jesus prayed that God would forgive them.

David Brainerd was a missionary to the American Indians. He had a secret that helped him reach them. He prayed for God's power. George Washington was General of the American Army when it was so poor as to not have shoes for the soldiers. He had a secret that helped him win anyway. He prayed for God's help. John Wesley was a great preacher in England. He was not allowed to preach in many churches. He had a secret that helped him preach to thousands of people anyway. He prayed for God to help his preaching.

Jesus knew the secret of prayer. He knew how to talk to his Father in heaven. Jesus did great things because he knew what his Father wanted him to do. Jesus taught us to pray also. We can use the secret of prayer to do great things for God.

Thinking Deeper

There is something about praying in secret that God responds to. Jesus often went to pray alone. The Bible says he withdrew himself. Jesus told the disciples if they prayed in private, God "which seeth in secret" would reward them openly. Powerful prayer is often not public prayer. Powerful prayer is often not loud prayer. Sometimes Jesus prayed out loud in public, but more often Jesus prayed alone. Powerful prayer is often secret prayer.

The stories about George Washington praying are found not because Washington prayed to be seen, but because people came upon him by accident. Many great men of God prayed in secret, often early in the morning before the rush of the day was upon them. Among those who prayed secretly and to great effect were Monica (mother of St. Augustine), John Wesley, founder of Methodism, John Fletcher, great Methodist theologian, Praying Hyde, who saw many answers to prayer.

There is nothing to stop any of us from doing great things for God. The door to our prayer closet is open. Just go in and shut the door.