

Morning Sermon June 14, 2020

“Christ’s Correcting Messed Up Prayer” Matthew 6:5-8

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love;” Robert Robinson

I. *When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites -*

<sup>5</sup>“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. Matthew 6:5

**Hypocrite** – “88.228 ὑποκριτής, οὔ m: (derivative of ὑποκρίνομαι ‘to pretend,’ 88.227) one who pretends to be other than he really is— ‘hypocrite, pretender, one who acts hypocritically.’ ... ‘when you fast, do not put on a sad face like the hypocrites’ Mt 6:16.”

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*

a hypocrite could be a speaker or actor who interpreted the words of a poet or the music of a composer. <sup>1</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (p. 621).

*According to Jesus a hypocrite was a person who play-acted being godly to win the notice / applause of men!*

1. *Note Jesus says they “love” to pray in public - standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets ...*
2. *Such people can be eloquent, skillful, maybe even entertaining in their prayers –*
  - A. *A preacher and sometimes elders are called to do public praying, we must be careful especially concerning our hearts, the motive behind our prayers.*
  - B. *We must be concerned about the direction of our prayers, aim to be heard by your Heavenly Father, not by an earthly audience.*

II. *Go to your room and pray –*

<sup>6</sup> But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Matthew 6:6

1. *Do you have a room, a place, a closet you go to pray? The KJV of the Bible uses the word closet -*

<sup>6</sup> But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Matthew 6:6 (KJV 1900)

2. *Here Christ is telling us we should get alone with God –*

<sup>6</sup> But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

*One of the reasons I think for our not getting alone with God more is a lack of faith –*

A. *It is easier to preach or pray or talk to other human beings because we see they are there, because God is invisible, though we believe He is, we don’t believe it enough that we are acting on that belief –*

**for he who comes to God must believe that He is ... Hebrews 11:6** *He is in this room, this closet with me, even though I may feel all alone ...*

B. *But we pray not only because we believe He is, we also believe - that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)*

*It is why later in this same sermon Jesus tells us –*

<sup>7</sup>“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup> Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Matthew 7:7–11 (NKJV)

*Time in the closet, or in your secret room, is productive time! Because - your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Matthew 6:6*

III. *When you pray, do not be like the heathen (the ungodly) –*

<sup>7</sup> **And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.**

1. *Vain repetitions –*

What the *fault* is that is here reproved and condemned; it is making a mere lip-labour of the duty of prayer, the service of the tongue, when it is not the service of the soul. This is expressed here by two words, *Battologia, polylogia*. (1.) *Vain repetitions*—tautology, battology, idle babbling over the same words again and again to no purpose, ... like that imitation of the wordiness of a fool, Eccl. 10:14, Matthew Henry

A. *Worldly, ungodly meditation –*

*Transcendental Mediation ... “Uhm mmm, uhm mmm, uhm mmm...”*

B. *Roman Catholic “Hail Mary...” so many of them, repeated*

C. *Wordiness of a fool –*

<sup>14</sup> **A fool also multiplies words. ... Ecclesiastes 10:14 (NKJV)**

D. *Prayer-aerobics – prayer as an exercise rather than as a relationship, this leads to the next point -*

IV. *Know your Father, He knows you, and your needs*

–

<sup>8</sup> **“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. Matthew 6:5–8 (NKJV)**

*This seems to be a summation of what is before, verses :5-7 and Jesus elaborates on this summation in verses :9-13, which we call the LORD’s prayer ...*

1. *Here it is a summation for neither the hypocrite, play-actor or the heathen chanter, repetitive meditator really know God, neither really believes God sees and knows them –*

- A. *It is a danger even for believers, the missionary prays for provision of money but may be praying thinking about her wealthy Christian friends / hearing her prayers, reading her requests ...*
- B. *The hypocrite, whether he knows it or not is only praying for the ears and eyes of men!*
- C. *Vain repletion at best treats God like He is hard of hearing, or short on memory and at worst as if He does not really exist but that the repetition itself can create –*

*My old wrestling coach – “I’m six feet tall, I’m six feet tall, I’m six feet tall... 100 times everyday in front of a mirror, Cyber cybernetics! He was barely five feet!*

2. *Knowing God as your Father means:*

A. *You are born again – John 3:3*

<sup>3</sup> **Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3 (NKJV)**

B. *You have faith and confidence in God, that He will answer your prayers, even prayers for more faith –*

<sup>24</sup> **Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” Mark 9:24 (NKJV)**

C. *It means you have a real relationship with God, which can grow to be dynamic -*

<sup>12</sup> **Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:12–13 (NKJV)**

**"To Him Who is everywhere, men come, not by travelling, but by loving"**

**Augustine**

*Arnold Brevick*