



Sermon on the Mount
Wk.21 "Learning to Use Your Words"
By Pastor Jody May 01/12/2025

[CALL TO HEAR]

Matthew 6:5-8 ESV

⁵"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

**Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."
People - "Thanks be to God."**

Pray

Introduction

Well, we are well on our way to getting through the SoM but every week I find myself challenged again by another teaching from our Lord. That's how it should be with Christians every week when we gather together for the corporate reading and preaching of God's Word. It should never be an expectation of ours that we are coming together again and that there is nothing special in it. Every week we are to be here with expectation that God is meeting us here again to work redemption in our hearts. If that is your expectation I tell you, that is what you will discover.

But before you ever arrive here, the Christian is called to cultivate a heart of renewal, repentance and confession.



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Psalm 51:10 ESV

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Like David this should be the Cry of our hearts, but have you ever noticed something about David, he's so vocal and spends a lot of time talking to God. There are 75 Psalms that are accredited to David's writing.¹ He not only spends his time doing the kingly things that God asks him to do, he not only spends time having the Torah read to him in the court, he spends a lot of time coming up with public prayers put to music spoken to God. The life of the person that is after God's own heart ([1 Sam 13:14](#)) is a person that talks it out with God for clarification, supplication, and thanksgiving. If we want to see our walks develop, if we want to see God's Kingdom take over our community, then we have got to be people that are committed to prayer.

How committed should we be to a practice that which doesn't come naturally? **Well, how bad do you want it?** Driving is not a natural talent. When you are born there is nothing in your DNA that makes you a good or bad driver. You learn to drive by practice. The more you drive the better you get at. As a matter of fact, most of you would agree with me, that you get so good at it that it becomes just as natural as breathing, you don't remember how you got to that point but now it is a second nature thing. Some of us we can get in our cars, and we have an idea of where we want to go and they after a short while we discover we have arrived at our destination with no memory of how we got there. This happened with a **desire + duty + device = destination**. That's how prayer works!

Christians have a **desire** that is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever by bringing in the Kingdom of God by ongoing conformity of our heart to His.² That takes a desire to see that happen, that comes from the conception of a **duty** that you know you must perform, that is to be a disciple and disciple others. **Prayer is the device** that gets you to where you need to be, and the **destination** is an eternity in the presence of God. Prayer can become just as natural as breathing, but it takes a commitment to practice, it takes a commitment to accept that's just how God says it is going work, and it takes

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Psalms-David.html>

² <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/our-grand-obligation>



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an adherence to the rules of prayer, just like traffic laws for driving, for it to be effective.

So let me give you the call of chapter 6 one more time.

6 "**Beware** of **practicing** your **righteousness** before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Beware folks, you will be practicing your imputed righteousness (Chp. 5), and it will happen through the practice of prayer, you WILL learn to drive! Along with that Jesus gives us the same type of warning that we received last week for giving.

⁵"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Don't desire to pray in front of others because you want to be seen by them, you want others to see your righteousness, you want to publically toot your own horn on how theologically literate you are by how you pray. If that is what you want, you will receive your reward in full. Remember that means paid up, there will be nothing for you to receive from God, that means **your public hypocritical prayers will go unanswered!** Your driving will never get you to the desired destination.

Luke the physician, in his gospel shares an account of Jesus giving a parable on this very thing. He uses the example of the Pharisee to show us what he speaks of in the SoM.

Luke 18:9-14 ESV

⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like



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other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² **I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.** (please note these are the exact three things that Jesus is teaching on not to be like the hypocrites in the SoM) ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

You know, without diving in too deep in this passage, do you know what the main difference is between the Pharisee and the Tax collector? The Pharisee had absolutely nothing to say to God for everything was about himself and how good he was. That was more like what the pagans did in their religion back then, just look back at our main text today as Jesus pointed out.

⁷ "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

The tax collector said fewer words but in that he said everything, for it was about his sheer dependence on God to change him, to CONFORM his heart. Jesus says back in our main text today,

⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Jesus said that man, that tax collector that prayed from the heart, went home justified, and the Pharisee was PIF at that moment, but would receive no reward from God for that false prayer. When we pray our heart God always understands how to answer the dilemma we were in and will give us exactly what we need.

Friend before we dive into this let me make a plea to you. You may not speak high and lofty prayers about your righteousness but don't let that fool you. You may not pray that much at all, and it may be perhaps that is because you don't think you need it. Could it be that your lack of drive to pray comes from a heart that is really ok with who you are, and that you don't need the Work of



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God in your life to conform your heart to our Lord's image? Could be a lack of a prayer life is the revelation of dependence on self and not on God?

For that reason, we are going to spend the next three weeks exploring this topic of prayer. This week I want to bring us to attention to the topic of prayer in the Bible, to make us aware of the necessity and how it should be conducted, covering the call to practice that we see in vs. 5-8. Next week Pastor Mike is going to start walking us through the Lord's Prayer itself expounding on the phrases there and how they teach us to pray in vs. 9-13. Then Pastor Onan is going to top that off with the realization of a forgiving heart that needs to be there if we want our prayers to be answered vs. 14-15.

MP:

Praying in a way that honors the father not us.

This week we want to cover the nuts and bolts of prayer so we can begin to practice the vehicle that gives us what we most desperately need, being right with God, my goal today is to increase your desire to drive. Today we are going to touch on the reasons to pray, followed by barriers to pray, to be encouraged by motivations to pray, moving into how to pray with some applications in our Call to Obedience.

1. Reasons to Pray

Now being the good, reformed folk that you are you may be thinking the same way I am, and that is if I believe in a Sovereign God that reigns over all things, provides for all things, and in the end will make His desires come about, then why do I need to pray?

Ephesians 1:11 ESV

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of **Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will:**"

Isaiah 46:10 ESV



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¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, **and I will do all my pleasure:**

God not only determined the ends folks, but He also determines the means to the ends. Man was created to bring about the Glory of God and enjoy Him forever and **prayer is the delivery mode** for that to happen so that all know **that it is not by the work of our hands that glory is manifested but by the direct intervention of God.** Prayer makes the will of God visible to other men!

- We pray because it is a command from God.

Ephesians 6:18 ESV

¹⁸ **praying at all times** in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, **making supplication for all the saints,**

1 Thessalonians 5:17 ESV

"Pray without ceasing"

The call is to pray, the call is to pray all the times, and the call is to pray making 'supplication' the saints. That goes to say dear family if it 'IS' a command from God then it is a sin 'NOT' to pray as well.

1 Samuel 12:19-23 ESV

And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." ²⁰ And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. ²¹ And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. ²² For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself. ²³ Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should **sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you,** and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.



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Just as Samuel never stops praying for a rebellious people, a people who are relentless in their pursuit of sin, he never ceases to stop praying for them BECAUSE it is sin, it falls short of his representation for God. I hope you saw that he already knew how God would answer and yet he still prayed. Again, it is about revealing the will for God to people through prayer so that their faith may be increased, and they would come to know that blessing was not because of the work of man but of God!

- We pray to Sync our will with God's.

Daniel 9: 13 & 15 ESV

¹³As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.

¹⁵And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

Daniel knew this would be a 70-year stint in a foreign land, He knew their captivity was their fault, he knew it wasn't permanent, he knew they would go back AND he knew the Messiah would come, and in all of that he NEVER stopped praying. Praying persistent and repentant prayers, declaring God is right and you were wrong again, aligns your heart to His. Prayer is a mandatory tool for repentance syncing our heart's desires with God's once more. Martin Lloyd Jones told me of this necessity in his writings on prayer and faith.³

*I must confess my particular sins, I must name them one by one; it means that I must not gloss over them, I must not attempt to deny them, I must confess them, I must look at them... - this honest facing of the things I have done and of what I am; it means that I must confess it to God in words. - **Lloyd-Jones***

³ Jason Meyer, [Lloyd-Jones on the Christian Life / Doctrine and life as Fuel and Fire](#). (Wheaton, Ill., Crossway Publishing, 2018). P. 155.



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Prayer is a command, it is unceasing, it intervenes for others, we do it even when we know the end and prayer is a tool of realignment with our hearts to God's.

2. Barriers to Pray

Even though we know it is a command it does not necessarily make it easier to do. Sometimes family we have mental blocks that keep us from going to prayer because we are either thinking He won't listen, I am not being sincere, or I just don't care enough, sometimes that just has to do with plain old spiritual warfare.

Romans 7: 15, 19, 22-23 ESV

¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

- We won't pray when we fail to grasp spiritual warfare.

Fighting our desire to pray comes with the understanding we are at war against ourselves, this world, and with the Devil. Whenever we don't 'feel' like Praying that is exactly the time we need to pray, and simple prayers like *God help my disbelief, change my desires*, as Pastor Martin Lloyd Jones said confess that shortcoming out loud. There is a barrier, but it is not of this world so know the enemy always starts first with cutting down lines of communication.

- We won't pray when we are unforgiving towards others.

If we are to be praying unceasingly in supplication for the saints, then let us all be honest, one of our biggest barriers is our heart towards others.



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Matthew 5:23-24 ESV

²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Along with offering comes prayer, those two things go hand in hand. God does not want to hear our words of praise if we have been keeping our words of love from others. If there is blatant bitterness in your heart, then there will be no peace to be had from God.

- We are reluctant to pray when there is trouble at home.

When we have conflict in family relationships, arguments with spouses, children in rebellion, lack of unity around discipleship, chores, and love, it sucks the life out of the praying home. It is like trying to build a fire in the rain, the kindling is wet, what should inspire a person's heart is dampened by those they should gain strength from. Those cold relationships instead of building a spiritual desire to intercede in the home for each other builds doubt.

James 1:6-7 ESV

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

When we doubt God working in the heart of our loved ones, we won't pray, yet God desires us to pray AND pray with an expectation of the reward of seeing the lives of our loved ones affected! Let me encourage you with this.

Hebrews 11:6 ESV

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Family so beware, our barriers are not of the natural kind they are supernatural, and the enemy wants to cut us off from the throne of Grace.



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Embrace forgiveness and recognize your doubts and choose to operate out of your faith and expect rightly that God will always intercede on your behalf.

3. Motivations to Pray

- We pray so that God gets Glory.

Daniel 9:18-19 ESV

"O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."

When we pray part of our motivation is to see God's name lifted up, to see Justice fulfilled, to see God extend Mercy, so that His name becomes known! We pray because it fulfills one of the deepest desires of our heart, for people to know that our God reigns on high!

- We pray so we can fellowship with God.

Psalms 42:1-2 ESV

"As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"

1 John 1:3 ESV

"that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Fellowship is relationship, it is about learning and experiencing the blessing, the boundaries, and the functionality of our communion with God. We were created to experience an interactive relationship with God and prayer is what ushers us into that by the quest for answers from our God. One of the most beautiful things I have ever discovered in my relationship with God is that He



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speaks through scripture and responds through prayer, and that interaction is what perseveres us until we meet the Lord face to face!

- We pray for Wisdom.

James 1:5 ESV

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

2025 want to make better decisions with Kingdom impact then we go to the throne of God first and ask for Wisdom. You start at the top using the collective Wisdom of all our forefathers and you do what they say to do first, that is the wise thing to do!

- We pray so we can express our thankfulness.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 ESV

"We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Offering thanks to God reminds us from where all blessings flow and secondly, notice what we are to give thanks for, our church family. Focusing on thanksgiving increases our capacity for love.

- We pray for those in authority and for those in need of Salvation.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 ESV

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Romans 10:1 ESV



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"Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved."

2 Peter 3:9 ESV

"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

The greatest need for the lost IS Salvation, and the more our rulers get saved the more opportunities to see that miracle replicate. Never stop praying for the lost, remember we are called to love our enemies and pray for those that persecute us ([Mat 5:44](#)).

- We pray for our Spiritual growth.

Colossians 1:9-12 ESV

"And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."

Perhaps we all can spend more time in praying for the growth of our loved ones instead of praying for behavioral corrections for those things that perturb us. Again, praying for your own likes may be off because of your motives but praying for the growth in someone is what God wants to do and it is the path towards you getting along with others better.

[CALL TO OBEY]

4. How to Pray.

- We pray in the name of Christ.



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John 14:13-14 ESV

"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."

If the motivation to pray is seeing God glorified then our call to obedience is to pray all things in, for and to the name of Jesus. That means our hearts will be convicted if what we ask for does not honor Christ.

- We pray asking in Faith.

Matthew 21:22 ESV

"And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

If we have been following all the instructions for prayer, I think you will find your prayers are being answered. When we ask God for His will to be done, not ours, conforming us into His image, you will almost immediately see how He is answering prayer all the time.

- We pray with persistence.

Luke 11:5-10 ESV

"And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

Persistence will yield an answer and will also teach you something about your heart. Sometimes we hear resounding "NO" from God at first. It's not because we aren't sincere or He's not listening, but it is simply not the will of God at that time, or He has other plans. Don't give up but accept that he may be after



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a different outcome. He's on a different schedule than you, I always try to remember that, and I go back to scripture and practice my belief, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose." (Rom 8:28) Just because it is uncomfortable with me does not mean that it is not good, that it is not perfect timing on God's grand scheme, and it does not mean it won't be answered. Push through your doubt, practice your faith, and keep praying, and keep talking the situation out with God.

Praying in a way that honors the father not us.

Prayer

Communion

Matthew 26:26-29 ESV

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus. Throughout His whole life Jesus, even though being perfectly righteous, spent a large portion of His time in prayer. He prayed before picking the 12, He prayed before performing miracles, He prayed before and during the crucifixion, and He even prayed for us while we were still enemies. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love through prayer.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood. Because we would not pray for others, we would not pray for His will to be done, and because we allowed our sin to drive us from communication from God His blood was required to make us clean. Because of His great



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sacrifice we are told we may enter once more with boldness in His name before the throne of God. Praise be to Him for His wonderful Love.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – "Christians, what do we believe?"

London Baptist Confession of Faith 1689 Chapter 8 Section 8 Christ Fully Saves Everyone He Died For

To everyone for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption, he certainly and effectually applies and imparts it. He:

- intercedes for them
- unites them to himself by his Spirit
- reveals to them the mystery of salvation in and by his word
- persuades them to believe
- governs their hearts by His Word and Spirit
- and overcomes all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom.

He uses means and ways that are perfectly consistent with His wonderful and unsearchable governance. All of this is by His free and absolute grace, not because He foresaw any merit in them.

38. John 6:37, 10:15-16, 17:9; Romans 5:10

39. John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20

40. Romans 8:9, 14

41. Psalms 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26

42. John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]



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Go in the name of the Father, that has heard the prayers of His Son, that has heard the prayers of His people and has remembered His faithfulness.

Go in the name of the Son, that in all situations of His life prayed with faith for the will of His Father to be done, and through His obedience opened our communication with the Father again.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that calls us to pray persistently in faith for the saints and for the lost, now go and discover how God is answering your prayers..



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