

Enjoy the Lordship of Prayer

Matthew 6:8-14

Ted Turner the media mogul, founder of the Cable News Network otherwise known as CNN and Turner Broadcasting Station otherwise known as TBS and Turner Network Television known as TNT was once a man who had faith in God. My mother actually worked for Ted Turner in the 1960s in Asheville NC.

His little sister Mary Jean died after a five year long agonizing battle with lupus. Ted Turner cried out to God for his sister and his prayers went unanswered:

Ted Turner, once expressed that he had considered going into the ministry as a young man. Then his sister died of cancer. In spite of his prayers, God never healed her. He said he refuses to serve a God who doesn't care enough to answer the most important request of his life. Perhaps you have struggled with God because of a lack of understanding about prayer. ¹

Prayer can comfort a person.
Prayer can change a person.

But prayer can also confound a person.

Our Lord is explaining the dynamics of prayer to us in the sermon on the Mount. He is teaching us how to pray.

He has disclosed how to Experience the relationship of prayer and Express Worship in prayer. Now today He guides us to Enjoy the Lordship of prayer.

1. Prayer is about Getting

Word translated pray in Hebrew and in Greek means to ask.

He trains us who to ask. - our Heavenly Father who is the one and only God who hears and answers. He already knows what you need before you as Him. He has all power and all authority therefore is capable of answering your request unless the request is contrary to His nature. He is not duped by the pitiful phony nature of mankind. He is attracted to authenticity.

He trains us how to ask. Ask simply and genuinely. Ask with a humble, believing spirit. Ask knowing that your relationships are healthy and whole especially with the body of Christ.

He trains us why to ask. Because we are so dependant upon the Lord and He is so willing to provide what we need. He has chosen to work through the prayers of His people. The need begins in heaven, comes to our heart then is expressed back to the Lord.

¹Dwayne E. Mercer, *Getting God to Say Yes* (Alpharetta: Apex Book Manufacturing, 2009), p. 38-39.

He trains us what to ask. Our daily bread.

In Matthew 7:7-8: “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 he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

***Pray for the ordinary**

daily bread - reminds me of the manna - the wilderness was to prepare the generation who would take the land - he taught them dependance

all of the Canaanite deities had a chief - Baal

In Canaan they were dependent upon the fertility of the land, which, in popular thought, was controlled by the Baal gods. Many, therefore, conceived it wise to pay deference to the Baal gods.²

the story of the loaves

Mark 6:52: “For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.”

***Pray for the everyday**

so practical and so interesting to the Divine - God wants to be the biggest part of the ordinary, the everyday of your life

everyday is how you grow and how you live

God pays attention to the small things

Widows mite

Boys loaves and fish

The shepherds boys faithfulness to his father and those sheep

When we think about it for a moment, though we realize that this prayer is completely consistent with Jesus' pattern of living, for he occupied himself with the trivialities of humankind. He provided wine for those who were celebrating, food for those who were hungry, rest for those who were weary (John 2:1-12; 6:1-14; Mark 6:31). He went out of his way to find the “little people”: the poor, the sick, the powerless. So it is fully in order that he invites us to pray for daily bread.³

²Merrill C. Tenney *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, A-C* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976), p. 432-433.

³Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), p. 185.

In May 1996, ValuJet Flight 592 crashed into the Florida Everglades, killing 110 passengers. To determine the cause of the crash, the National Transportation Safety Board needed the plane's black box. That would not be easy to find. The crash had scattered plane debris across a large area of swamp. Dozens of searchers descended on the scene to sift through muck and water as much as eight feet deep in an attempt to find the black box.

Navy experts tried using special technology that detected submerged metal, without success.

Holding a rope that kept them spaced three feet apart, other researchers systematically poked through every square foot of the crash area. After fourteen days, they had found nothing.

For workers the physical conditions were nigh unbearable. The Florida sun beat upon them, and temperatures hovered in the 90s. Diesel fuel and caustic hydraulic fluid from the wrecked plane floated in the water, forcing searchers to wear several layers of protective rubber and latex despite the heat and humidity. Fourteen days of that had left many searchers dehydrated, but they had to find the black box.

Sergeant Felix Jimenez, of the Metro-Dade police, was one of the searchers. For fourteen days he had prayed for the bereaved families and for the safety of his fellow workers, but on the fifteenth day as he took a break, suddenly he realized he had failed to pray for one important thing: that God would help them find the black box. So he asked God for direction, resumed the search, and when he stuck his pole into the water, he hit something metallic. He pulled the object out of the muck. It was the black box.

Jimenez writes in *Guideposts*, "At the end of the day ... I thought of the many days we had spent searching for the recorder, how we must have tromped over it many times, and I wondered why its retrieval had taken so long. Amid the low rustle of saw grass and the call of a great white heron, I seemed to hear the response: 'Why did it take you so long to ask?'"⁴

Dependence
James 4:2

2. Prayer is about Giving

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

"To fore give"

Forgiveness is like he experience at the bank - you have to deposit into the account - now this is not earning your own forgiveness but rather demonstrating your repentance

Prayer - Forgive

As Saint Augustine says, "God gives where he finds empty hands."

⁴Craig Brian Larson, *Choice Contemporary Stories & Illustrations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), p. 205-206.

If our hearts are so narrow as to see only how others have hurt and offended us, we cannot see how we have offended God and so find no need to seek forgiveness. If we are always calculating in our hearts how much this one or that one has violated our rights, by the very nature of things we will not be able to pray this prayer.

In the affairs of human beings there is a vicious circle of retaliation: you gore my ox, and I'll gore your ox, you hurt me, and I'll hurt you in return. Now the giving of forgiveness is so essential because it breaks this law of retribution.

But forgiveness means that this real and horrible offense shall not separate us. Forgiveness means that we will no longer use the offense to drive a wedge between us, hurting and injuring one another. Forgiveness means that the power of love that holds us together is greater than the power of the offense that separates us. That is forgiveness. In forgiveness we are releasing our offenders so that they are no longer bound to us. In a very real sense we are freeing them to receive God's grace. We are also inviting our offenders back into the circle of fellowship.⁵

-forgiveness is rarely given

-forgiveness is rarely received

3. Prayer is about Guiding

Lead us not into temptation

the word temptation -

trials are to be joyous things - count it all joy

tests are not joyous

I never liked tests. They are so testing. No hiding what you don't know. No running from an answer. Everything is black and white on a test. I would get so nervous. I was a nail biter.

I especially never liked surprise tests. Unannounced tests. My teachers always called them pop tests because they normally popped me between the eyes or they made me so mad I could pop.

I thought that when I finished school I would be through with tests. Then I found out that life is full of them. And all of them are unannounced.

Are you being tested? You are either in a test, coming out of a test or going through a test right now. Just as tests in school have to be passed for you to be promoted, in life it is the same way.

⁵Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), p. 187-188.

The Bible says **“The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the hearts.”** (Proverbs 17:3)

Jesus gets us ready for it

after you have returned to me
promise in threr

Many times we do not notice His preparations - because we are overconfident

We think that we are not ready - we are by His grace

Jesus prays for us

He goes before the father

Romans 8:26-27: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*”

Jesus delivers us

He has delivered us and now we want to see His deliverance in our experience

Jesus restores us

Jesus restored Peter - we are not mature until we have cycled through one wave of persecution

Appeared to him 4 times - upper room twice; sea shore; ascension

4. Prayer is about Glorifying

Job's words - The Lord gave first and we took the gift for granted - we treated the gift as something that we earned, deserved and belonged to us - it was not anything special -

In “Total Eclipse” Annie Dillard writes:

The Ring Nebula, in the constellation Lyra, looks, through binoculars, like a smoke ring. It is a star in the process of exploding. Light from its explosion first reached the earth in 1054, it was a supernova then, and so bright it shone in the daytime. Now it is not so bright, but it is still exploding. It expands at the rate of seventy million miles a day. It is interesting to look through binoculars at something expanding seventy million miles a day. It does not budge. Its apparent size does not increase. Photographs of the Ring Nebula taken fifteen years ago seem identical to photographs of it taken yesterday.

Huge happenings are not always visible to the naked eye - especially in the spiritual realm. How often it is that this nebula resembles the process of prayer. Sometimes we pray and pray and seemingly see no change in the situation. But that's only true from our perspective. If we could see from heaven's standpoint, we would know all that God is doing and intending to do in our lives. We would see God working in hearts in ways we cannot know. We would see God orchestrating circumstances that we know nothing about. We would see a galaxy of details being set in place for the moment when God brings the answer to fulfillment.⁶

Appearances, Change, Patience, Perseverance, Perspective
Dan. 10:12-14; Luke 12:5-13; 18:1-8

⁶Craig Brian Larson, *Choice Contemporary Stories & Illustrations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), p. 204.