

THE WORDS AND WORKS OF KING JESUS

PART 5: CHRISTIANITY VS. 'RELIGION'

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MATTHEW CHAPTER 6:5-13

Parallel passage Luke 11:1-4

The Main Point → Righteousness does not come from what I do!

The Pharisees of Jesus' day had developed a works-based 'religion' which they sought to impose on all Jews.

To the Pharisee, righteousness and salvation was achieved by keeping both the written 613 Mosaic laws and the vast body of oral laws ("traditions"). They further felt compelled to teach others about their view of righteousness by setting an example of religious superiority. Such practices diverted people from the intent of the Mosaic Law and led them to the heavy yoke of a works-based religion ("trying harder").

I. THE LORD'S PRAYER

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be

like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. "' (Matt. 6:5-13 NIV)

[Note how in some translations (KJV, NKJ, NAU) the prayer ends with "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"].¹

II. DISCUSSING THE TEXT

A. What was the underlying reason for Jesus' criticism of how the Pharisees prayed (6:1, 5-8)?

1. They had the wrong motive, to be seen by others, and to gain righteousness before God.
2. They were trying to gain righteousness through works ("acts of righteousness").

B. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for their praying in public. Does that mean Christians are never to pray out loud in church or in public? Are prayer meetings to be avoided? Why or why not?

1. Praying silently or publicly with the proper motives is encouraged.
2. Prayer meetings help us to pray for each other, to share their requests, and to depend on each other.

C. What misunderstandings about prayer might Christians have today?

1. They must be lengthy.
2. They must be emotional.
3. They must repeat certain phrases over and over.
4. They must be done in large gatherings.

III. APPLYING THE TEXT

In this prayer there are six precepts; three are concerned with God and three are concerned with our needs.

A. Precept No. 1: Prayer is **worshipping the Father**

¹ Roman Catholic and modern Bible versions of the prayer do not have this ending. This powerful doxology has been falsely characterized as a late addition as it is not found in the two earliest Greek witnesses of Matthew 6:13 - Sinaiticus and Vaticanus both from the 4th century. Yet it is found in the third earliest Greek witness of Matthew 6:13, Codex Washingtonensis from the 4th to 5th century.

1. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."
2. This does not forbid us from praying to the Lord Jesus himself. There are examples of this in the rest of the NT (John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23-24; Acts 7:59-60).
3. All prayer should be directed to our triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible allows for prayer to one or all three, because all three are one.
4. Worship is expressing your love to God (Deut. 6:5-6; Matt. 22:37).
5. In what ways can we tell God we love Him?
 - By talking to Him and knowing that He listens to us (Psalm 116:1-2)
 - By singing to Him (Ephesians 5:19-20)
 - By listening to Him (Mark 4:9). When you love someone, you hang on every word they speak.
 - By giving to Him. Not giving things but ourselves (Romans 12:1)
6. His very name is to be regarded as holy, to be revered above all other names (Exodus 20:7).
7. By knowing and memorizing the names of God we can express our acknowledgment of His character (worth) more deeply.

B. Precept No. 2: "Prayer is expressing my allegiance to His Kingdom.

1. "Your kingdom come."
2. Placing your entire life under God's umbrella of control
3. How do worship and allegiance differ?
4. Worship = expressing your love and devotion to God; allegiance = submitting to God's rule.
5. A believer can recognize God's worth (worship) and still refuse to let God rule (allegiance) in their life.

C. Precept No. 3: Prayer is putting my will below God's will

1. "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
2. Things that might put my will over God's will include:
 - Setting my own priorities.
 - Busyness. Trying to cram too much into our lives. Always being in a hurry.
 - Doing things for God without spending time with God.

D. Precept No. 4: Prayer is acknowledging my childlike dependence on God.

1. "Give us this day our daily bread."
2. Why does this verse say "us" instead of "me"?
 - Because we are to ask for others, not just ourselves (intercession)
3. Who specifically is the "us"?
 - The church body (Ephesians 4:1-6)
 - Other people, including governmental leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2)
 - Christian leaders and missionaries (Heb. 13:18-19)
4. What is our "daily bread"?
 - Physical needs (food, clothing, home, health, etc.)

- Mental needs (knowledge of God, awareness of who he is, knowing what life is about, knowing God's will and his plan for our lives)
- Emotional needs (freedom from fear, guilt, a sense of being loved unconditionally, hope, security, a sense of worth)
- Spiritual needs, (need to fellowship with God, the need to express our love to God, to worship him)
- The purpose here is to develop a spirit of childlike dependence on God for all our daily needs

E. Precept No. 5: Prayer is asking forgiveness for my sins as I forgive others who sin against me.

1. See Luke 11:4. Debt=sins.
2. Forgiveness is so important that Christ comes back to it in verses 14-15.
3. What is our "debt?" Our debt is our lack of righteousness before God (2 Cor. 5:21).
4. But if God forgave us of our sins, once and for all why are we to ask forgiveness?
 - It is true that God forgave all our sins, past, present, and future at Calvary (Hebrews 10:10)
 - However, unconfessed sin puts a barrier between us and God
 - Adam and Eve hid from God when they sinned (Genesis 3:8-10)
 - John 13:10 speaks of having our feet cleaned yet our whole body is clean
 - We have our "feet cleaned" when we confess our sins (1 John 1:9)

F. Precept No. 6: Prayer is acknowledging my helplessness against temptation apart from God.

1. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one".
2. God does not tempt us to sin (James 1:13).
3. "And don't let us yield to temptation." (Lk. 11:4 NLT)
4. This is a cry of awareness that acknowledges the reality of the evil one and of the Christian's warfare

IV. CHALLENGE FOR NEXT WEEK



Finish reading Matthew Chapter 6, then read Chapter 7 and ask yourself, why is judging others to be avoided? What's the difference between judging and being discerning?