

St Martins C3 – June 9, 2024

Prayer For Life – A Daily Relationship

Sermon Summary:

The last three verses of the Lord's prayer give us wisdom and inspiration for how we can strengthen our relationship with God each day by trusting in His provision, forgiveness and leadership of our lives.

Read Matthew 6:11

Our Daily Bread

Jesus instructed his disciples to take their earthly needs and concerns - their anxiety around not having enough to eat and their desire to plan and protect their future - and bring it all before God in prayer. His challenge here was to make it a daily prayer, full of faith in our God who has enough to provide today and every day to come.

Everything we have comes from God, even our bread, the most basic of staple foods that we think we can place our trust in. It all comes from God and each day that He provides for us is a gift. When we daily acknowledge this truth and place our trust in Him, we can find new freedom in our relationships with God, free to spend more time with Him, listening to Him and allowing him to transform us into all He would have us become.

Read Matthew 6:12

Forgiveness

The life of a Christian is a lifestyle of repentance. We have all been forgiven and set free from the curse of sin when we first met Jesus and surrendered our lives to Him, but all honest believers know that we still struggle with sin. In our thought life, in the words we say or things we do, each of us still makes mistakes and sins. Jesus calls his followers to daily ask God for forgiveness.

In the same breath, He expresses His command for all believers to forgive others themselves. Following on to verse 14, directly after the Lord's Prayer, we see a strong warning to take this command seriously – if you do not forgive you yourself will not be forgiven.

Read Matthew 6:13 & 1 Corinthians 10:13

Lead Us

Learning to be led by God is lifelong work, but bringing His leadership into each day through prayer is a great place to start. The Bible promises that God himself will not lead us into temptation. As Christians, we long to be led by Christ in all that we do. Jesus knows that we will be tempted, but with His strength and encouragement, we can keep our eyes fixed on His leadership and not succumb to temptation.

These verses, along with the whole prayer are designed to bring us into a closer personal relationship with God: trusting God to look after our daily needs, living each day in His forgiveness and seeking to follow his leading in all areas of our lives.

Connect Group Material:

Key Point

Jesus takes the religious required prayers of the Jewish people and turns them into a life-giving gift for you and me.

Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

Can you pray the Lord's Prayer from memory?

Do you have a regular structure for when, where or how often you pray? Do the prayers themselves have a structure?

What is one "daily bread" type of need that sometimes causes stress or worry? Why?

Why is it easier to accept forgiveness than to give forgiveness?

How does the Matthew 6:14 challenge make you feel?

Share when you felt it hard to forgive, how did you learn to forgive?

Where do you need to repent or forgive right now?

What is an example of God's leadership in your life?

Can you reflect on a time when you didn't follow God's leadership?

Monday Devotion: Confidence in God

Read Matthew 6:18-33

This week in our devotion we are going to be reminded that God loves to look after His children. Jesus affirms that God offers personal support for those under His care.

In this passage, which follows quickly on from the Lord's Prayer we see what that care looks like. It begins with devotion to God over and above our commitment to our own prosperity and advancement. We cannot serve two masters.

However, if we choose to devote ourselves fully to God then we can rely on Him to give us what we need in life. Look at the birds – they are well fed. Look at the flowers of the field – they are well clothed. God loves you more than both of these, He will look after you.

What is incumbent upon us is to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all the rest of this will be given to us.

As we pray, "Give us today our daily bread," let's pray it with the confidence of those who know they have a Father in Heaven who loves them and knows exactly what they need. Bring to Him your needs and ask Him to bring His Kingdom in your life as He looks after you.

Tuesday Devotion: Dependence on God

Read Philippians 1:18-19

A recent movie that has been released is the true story, “Unsung Hero”. It’s worth seeing. It tells the story of David and Helen Smallbone. David was a music promoter who lost everything after a tour failed to fill enough seats.

He had no more work in Australia, so he moved his family of six children to America for a job in the Christian Music industry that quickly fell through.

He and his family had nothing, they lived in a house with no furniture, didn’t have a car and had to take cleaning jobs just to stay alive. In their house, they had a wall where they wrote “Prayers” and “Thanks”. A major part of the movie was seeing God come through and watching the “Prayers” move one by one to the “Thanks” wall.

They saw God come through for them in little and big ways. His daughter Rebecca St. James and two of his sons (now known as For King and Country), entered the music scene and have won 10 Grammys and helped millions encounter God.

It is a reminder that even though we may not see the big picture of what God is doing, He can use our lowest moments to show his love and prepare us for what He has for us next.

Wednesday Devotion: God's Best Gift

Read Luke 11:1-13

In Luke when Jesus teaches the disciples to pray he follows up the Lord's prayer with the rewards he will give.

¹¹ "You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? ¹² Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! ¹³ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

Luke 11:11-13 (NLT)

What is the gift that God longs to give those who ask? It's not just bread or fish or an egg. He longs to give the gift of His Holy Spirit.

God wants to answer our practical needs, but more than that He wants to provide us with what we really need. His personal presence going with us every day. As we consider all the ways God helps us let us thank Him that He promised never to leave us and never to forsake us.

Today, pray the prayer "Come, Holy Spirit." Ask God to come and fill your heart and life. Give Him all of yourself once more and then watch the way He will overcome the everyday difficulties that you face.

It is only His presence with us that can make a difference in our lives.

Thursday Devotion: Pray in the Right Order

Read 1 Peter 5:6-9

Many people pray the Lord's prayer backwards. The prayer we tend towards is a prayer that says, "Help I'm in a mess get me out of this" (deliver me from evil). Or, "bless me, help me, do good to me" (give me what I want). Then we realise that the reason we are in this mess in the first place is because we have messed up, so we pray, "Sorry for that" (forgive us our sins).

Once a pastor asked a child "Do you pray every day?" "No," said the child, "some days I don't want anything."

Then we realise we have been too focussed on ourselves and our eyes are lifted to see the vision of God's kingdom.

Finally, if we get this far, we realise that we should have started at the beginning.

We should have started with worshipping the Great God who is our Father. Then we can more easily see his Kingdom. Then our requests are put into their proper context. They press on us less and we see them for what they are – things that God already knows about anyway.

Every time we come before God we should begin with worship, move to submission and end with requests. As Peter says it begins with humility and then we can cast our anxiety on Him and take up what He has for us. The strength to be lifted, the strength to resist the devil and stand firm.

Friday Devotion: The Lord is My Shepherd

Read Psalm 23

We can be confident that Jesus' disciples were familiar with this Psalm. These words were written by the Old Testament King David, a psalm that many of us are familiar with too.

These words come from someone described as being a man after God's own heart. David loved God. He longed to follow Him and have God's blessing on his own life and his kingdom.

Many of us will know that David was tempted many times, and he fell quite devastatingly for the temptation to sin. And then sinned even more to try to cover up the first sin.

Scholars argue that Psalm 23 is written later in David's life because of the nostalgic feelings that come through. If they're right, here is a man reflecting on the ways that God has led him throughout his life.

He concludes with this: Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

That is the kind of confidence and assurance of God's leadership that I want to have. I want to come to the end of my days, look back, and see countless ways that God has guided, comforted and led me through my life. I want to live my life now with that perspective in mind and daily pray that God will empower me to live it.