

Text – Matthew 6:11-13

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Main Point – The privilege of praying for man's needs

Introduction

Hook (200)

Have any of you been hypothermic? Or know someone who has been hypothermic.

There is a point when a person gets so cold that the body goes into survival mode.

When a person is hypothermic two strange things happen. They stop feeling the cold and they want to sleep.

They **feel** they no longer need to keep their warm clothes on and all they **feel** that the thing they need the most to do is to curl up and have a good sleep.

But to do either of those **needs they feel so strongly**, would mean certain death

What they really need to do is to stay awake and keep moving and get to a warm environment. That is their real need.

To follow **felt needs** can be perilous, but to address real needs is critical.

Today we are going to look at man's need. But not through hypothermic lenses of what we feel we need, but through biblical lenses, understanding our real needs, as defined by God.

Today we are going to be looking at the privilege of praying for man's needs.

Background (300)

If you have been with us over the last two weeks, you will know this forms the third part of our study through the Lord's prayer.

Jesus is at the start of his ministry, and a large crowd is following him because of his miracles and because of his teaching.

So he goes up to a mountain, sits down and starts to teach. And in this teaching, know to us as the sermon on the mount, Jesus teaches us what it means to follow Him. How his followers are to act towards one another, towards the world and towards God.

In the midst of his teaching he turns to the topic of prayer. After telling us what not to do, he gives us a pattern of prayer to follow. And what a pattern it is.

He tells us that we can pray to a Father. That we can approach God as children approach their daddy.

And our prayers are to start with hallowing God's name, setting him apart in our thinking.

Our prayers are to be concerned with his kingdom coming. That people would turn to Jesus as their king. That his followers would be loyal in following Him. And that his followers would have an anticipation for his return.

We pray that His will would direct our lives, not our own wills. That we would obey him completely, heartily and immediately just like he is obeyed in heaven.

Those were the first three petitions. Praying for God's glory.

And today we look at the last three petitions. Praying for Man's Needs.

Outline (50)

We look at the privilege of praying for our need. We may think that praying for our needs may appeal to our pride. But in fact it is the very opposite. When we pray following this pattern we realise how needy we are and how much we depend on God.

We see three petitions for man's need and each petition will form one point of our study today

So through this prayer we will see how to pray for:

1. Our Need for Provision
2. Our Need for Pardon
3. Our Need of Protection

Part 1 – Our Need for Provision (1000)

Exposition (500)

So let us begin by looking at praying of our Need for Provision. This is verse 11.

¹¹Give us this day our daily Bread

Bread means every physical need

Jesus is using bread as a symbol for all of our physical needs. His intention is not for us to simply pray that we have a baguette or a sough dough loaf every day. He is thinking a bit wider than that. Bread was the basic staple of life and is symbolic for what is necessary to keep us alive and functioning in this world.

Food and drink are the obvious things, but it is wider than that too. Bread is symbolic for all of our needs in the physical realm.

- Our clothes and our houses,
- Our health and our safety.
- Our jobs and the economy.
- The soil and the weather
- A country of peace and stability.
- An honourable and well-functioning government.

These, and more, are all physical needs we face.

This prayer is a display of dependence

And in this prayer we show our dependence on God for all of these need. It is a prayer which recognises how needy we are.

At this point you may be thinking, “I am not needy! My pantry is full, I have a place to call home, I have a

secure job and NZ is a pretty good country to live in. Do I really need to pray this prayer? Surely this prayer just valid for those in the midst famine?"

But you depend on God for all of those things just as much as anybody else. This prayer is just as valid here as in the midst of a famine.

God is the giver of our daily bread. God is the giver of every good gift we learn in James 1:17.

We are never ultimately feeding ourselves, or clothing ourselves or housing ourselves. Everything originates from God.

- God has made the earth.
- God has made the resources you use.
- God has created your brain which can think.
- God has blessed you with gifts and talents.
- God has given you the strength and wisdom to learn and work your craft.
- God has given you the opportunity of work and the economy to earn money.

Every good gift comes from God and we are entirely dependent on Him.

And in this prayer Jesus reminds us that we depend on God our father. This was true in the past is true in the present, and will continue to be true in the future.

Daily Bread

So we pray for our physical needs because we depend on Him. We pray for bread yes, but we are instructed to pray for our **daily** bread.

We are asking that God would provide what is necessary for us today. We are not praying for a year's, a month, or even a week's provision, We are praying

for our daily provision. We are expected to turn to him daily and **constantly** rely on Him.

And this principle of praying for daily bread also implies that we should not be praying for excessive wealth or for luxuries.

Proverbs 30:8-9 is a prayer along these lines too.

Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say "Who is the Lord?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.

This proverb from Agur reflects exactly what Jesus is trying to teach us here.

We pray for our daily bread, not for excessive wealth.

Application (500)

Ok to pray for physical needs

So is it ok to pray for a good job or for a good home? It is not only ok, Jesus commands us to. We must not think that praying for material things makes us somehow less spiritual. That we are more holy if we ignore them.

In fact, to neglect praying for physical things is a symptom of pride and arrogance. Omitting these prayers implies that you do not need God in these matters and that you have these things under **your** control.

We feel our physical need daily. Food, drink, sleep. And this is a grace from God. When we rely on God for our daily needs, every single day we will be driven to think

of God and his goodness to us. Every time we eat, drink and sleep we are reminded that He is the one who gives us these good gifts.

And God commits himself to meet the needs of his own. He promises. He pledges that He will look after those who trust him and pray to Him.

Further in his sermon on the mount Jesus says:

If you then who are 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!

We read in Matt 7:11

Not ok to pray for Luxuries

But we must guard ourselves here. It is all too easy to start praying for the desires of our flesh instead of our daily bread.

It would be nice to have surplus of money, right? Then I could treat my family, or buy that sailing boat or go on that fancy holiday, or whatever. That would be nice. But would it be right to be praying for these things and bringing them up at prayer meeting and bible study? I think not.

It is not only presuming on God's goodness, but also stems from a heart of worldly pleasure. A heart that is still struggling to fix its eyes on eternal things not temporal things.

God may choose to bless us with abundance and surplus in physical things as he deems is good for us. But when we are in the presence of the king of kings and lord of lords, expressing our wants is not what Jesus is instructing us to do.

If you are staying at a friend's house, your friend would want you to let them know you are hungry, and you would accept the warm soup given, with no further expectations. But if cake is offered, that is your friend's choice.

More often than not, God does provide beyond our absolute basic need. We can all attest to that. But that is an expression of his goodness, not a licence to ask him everything we might desire.

So let us keep praying for our daily bread.

Wonder that God cares

Before we move on to the next point, just consider the wonder that God cares to hear about your physical needs.

God wants to hear.

The one who is to be exalted above all things, the one whose kingdom will come and the one whose will is done, wants to hear you pray for your health, your daily food, and your petition for peace.

You don't disturb the CEO to let him know that your vehicle needs to be fuelled right,

Nor do you tell the Mayor of the city that your fridge is empty.

But the king of kings the Ruler of the universe, wants you to pray for your daily bread.

Link

He wants you to pray for your daily bread, but he does not want you to stop there. The petitions for man's needs must continue. We go on to address some much more significant needs.

This brings us to our second point of the study

Part 2 – Our Need for Pardon (1000)

Exposition + Application (500)

In verse 12 Jesus continues with the petitions for man's needs:

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors

Forgiveness form Father, not Judge

This petition may seem strange to some of us. Why do I need to ask for forgiveness for my sins when Jesus has already paid of them? Is asking for forgiveness undermining the finished work of Christ?

But we must remember the context. Who is praying and who are we praying to?

God's children are praying to "our father in heaven".

We are praying to our father, not to a judge. This prayer is not the prayer of a guilty criminal before a judge, in the courtroom. This is the prayer of a child before their loving father, in the living room.

Who can call God father

And who has the right to call God father? To approach God as father?

- Those who realise that their own actions condemn them.
- Those who trust that Jesus paid for their sins.
- Those who cling to the promise of Jesus' work.
- Those who trust Jesus as Saviour and follow him as Lord.

- Those who are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Those of us who believe and live out these things, have the right to call God Father.

No Condemnation

For us there is no condemnation because we are in Christ (Rom 8:1) and there is nothing that can separate the us from their legal standing before God. (Rom 8:33-34) Our slate is wiped clear. We have been declared righteous because, and only because, of the work of Jesus.

Our actions have no regard to our adoption status! Don't miss this. There is nothing you can do or say which will improve the work of Jesus.

Your actions condemned you to hell.

The only way you can be rescued is by the work of Jesus on the cross. We receive this by faith and we cling to it by faith.

Actions impact relationship

Our actions make no difference to our salvation, but our action have a lot of impact with the relationship with our Father in heaven. Our actions will greatly affect weather or not our father is pleased with us or not. Your daughter does not stop being your daughter if she disobeys you. But your relationship with here is affected. There is a breakdown in relationship.

As Christians, sadly, we disobey our father in heaven. To deny that is to deceive ourselves and contradict the clear teaching of scripture. Scripture teaches this and it is displayed in our own experiences.

And so as Christians we must continually turn to our father in heaven and plea for his forgiveness for our sins against him.

Washing of the feet

When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples he was demonstrating servant leadership, but he was also teaching them another principle. After Peter is rebuked for not allowing Jesus to wash his feet, Peter then asks him to wash his hands and head too. But Jesus answers:

John 13:10 –

The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.

The picture is pretty clear. Those who are saved are completely clean. But the world still leaves the stain of sin while we live here. So continual dealing with sin is necessary. We need to keep asking God for forgiveness while we are on the earth.

But just the feet. The whole body is clean. We have been washed clean from the power and penalty of sin, but sin is still present, and we need to take our daily foot bath, and ask for forgiveness from our father.

Condition to our forgiveness? Or something else?

But what about the second part of this petition? What is this saying

Second part of v12

*Forgive us our debts, **as we also have forgiven our debtors***

Is this putting a condition on God's forgiveness of us?
Do we need to work for God's forgiveness?

And even look ahead to v14 and 15, Jesus drills this thought again:

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

What is Jesus talking about? Is he saying we need to forgive others in order to be saved?

Unforgiveness is sin

Again, it is vital to remember the context here. Jesus is teaching this prayer to believers. He is talking to those who are already saved.

He is saying, if you don't forgive others who sin against you, your relationship with your father in heaven will not be restored.

And the logic is simple. Why will your relationship with the father not be restored? Because to withhold forgiveness is also a sin. And sin is an offence to our father in heaven.

We are commanded again and again by Jesus forgive one another. Forgiving one another is to characterize the followers of Jesus. It is right and expected for a Christian to extend forgiveness to other. This is the example of Jesus that we are commanded to follow.

Hard but possible to Forgive

Forgiving sin committed against ourselves is extremely difficult. It does not come naturally and our pride hates doing it. To forgive a person who has caused you hurt, pain or offence is near impossible. In fact without God, it is impossible. But...

- We can forgive others because we have been regenerated by the Spirit.
- We can forgive others because the spirit is in us
- We can forgive others because we have been forgiven
- We can forgive others because we did not receive what we deserved
- We can forgive others because we seek to follow Jesus.
- We can forgive others because we trust God as the ultimate judge.

There is something so wrong with a believer, who has been forgiven so much, refusing to forgive.

Parable of the wicked servant

The parable of the servant who would not forgive little after being forgiven much, illustrates the point Jesus is making here. You know the story.

One servant has a great debt to the king. Roughly equivalent to 8 billion dollars. He pleads for the king to forgive that debt, and in his mercy the king clears the debt. But that servant was also owed a debt, 15 thousand dollars, not insignificant, but tiny compared to what he was just forgiven. And he was not willing to clear that debt, between him and a fellow servant. How outrageous!

In verse 34-35 we hear how the king responds and how this applies to us.

Matt 18:34-35

“And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt.

So also my heavenly father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Wow!

Do you feel the weight of the seriousness here? Forgiving one another as fellow believers is serious to God. God is angry at sin, especially sin committed by his children, and he will discipline his children as necessary. We will be *Delivered to the jailers* as is were. Disciplined for a time until forgiveness is extended.

Warning to all

Let this be a warning to all of us. Our hearts tend to hold grudges and we keep a record of wrongs against us.

But in this prayer, we not only learn that continual confession is necessary, but forgiving others is critical to restoring our relationship with our father in heaven

Holding a grudge is a temptation for many of us.

But we must keep ourselves from the sin of unforgiveness.

We must pray for God to help us with this.

But it is not the only sin we must keep against. The attacks from sin are many and diverse.

In the next section, Jesus teaches us to pray for God's protection against sin.

Part 3 – Our Need for Protection (1000)

Exposition (500)

Verse 13 reads:

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

This next petition is really a prayer of humility. A prayer which recognises our weakness and our need for God's protection.

Minor paradox

It is worth highlighting the minor paradox which is presented in this verse. Here we see Jesus teaching us to pray such that our life would not go through trials. That we would be spared for situations which make us prone to sin.

But in James 1:2 we read that trials are good for us.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing.

How many of you want to be "*perfect and complete, lacking nothing*"? All Christians have this desire. To be like Christ perfectly. But James tells us that this happens through trials of various kinds.

So, should we pray for trials or should we not pray for trials? Should we place ourselves in difficult situations in order to test our faith?

There is a small paradox here, we know trials are good for us, but it is never our desire to be in them.

Prayer of humility

But in saying that, the heart of this prayer is not so much an attempt to avoid trials, but a recognition of our weakness. Jesus knows that in **difficult** situations

we are more suitable to sin. When we are squeezed by the pressures of the world our sinful behaviours come to the surface.

- Financial strains often bring conflict within a marriage.
- When you are sick or in pain you are more selfish.
- When things are stressful at work, some cope with excess food or drink

And so the heart of the prayer is to avoid sin. To avoid thinking, saying and doing things which betray our Father in heaven. We are weak and our flesh is still a powerful force to be reckoned with.

So this prayer is along the sentiment of:

“Lord, don’t ever lead me into a trail that will present such temptation that I will not be able to resist”

Praying 1 Cor 10:13

Jesus is teaching us to pray here in a way that makes true to us, the fact that is taught in 1 Cor 10:13.

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

This is God’s promise to us. And in recognition of our weakness, we pray that we would be spared from these trials.

Prayer in the Trial (250)

But of course God knows what is good for us. He knows what trails we need to face. He knows what we can handle better than us.

- And we do face trials.
- We do face difficulties.
- We do face troubles, grief and sorrow.

And in the midst of those we pray that he would deliver us from evil. Again, this prayer is not so much praying that the trial will stop. This is a prayer that we would not sin while we are in the trial.

This is a prayer where we confess our need for God's protection and His deliverance. There is no room for presuming on your own strength or to believe you are self-sufficient in resisting evil. We depend on God to deliver us from evil just as much as we depend on him for our next breathe, and for saving us from hell.

And so we pray *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"*.

Application

Don't presume on your strength

Because the sad reality is that we will never be free of the danger of sin until Christ returns. We are foolish to think we are above the possibility to sin. 1 Cor 10:12

¹² Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

The moment you think you stand strong, that is when you are at your weakest. Everyone is susceptible to sin.

- Men and women,
- young and old,
- new Christians and veteran Christians.
- Faithful church members and those at the head of international ministries.

Don't think you are out of range of sin

We often believe we would be like Joseph and flee in the face of temptation, but the reality is that most of us are more like David. And this is true not just for all sin.

Matt 26:41

⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

And Jesus was telling his Disciples this because they could not even stay awake. How much more valid is this warning against our sinful fleshly desires. The flesh indeed is weak.

We are all tempted daily

And temptation come in all sorts of forms. Evils are all around us.

Of course there are the basic desires of the flesh: lust, pride, selfishness, gossip, gluttony and so on.

But there are more subtle temptations too.

- Temptations to abuse a good thing,
- or temptation to place more priority on one thing when it should be another.
- Temptations to major on the minor and minor on the major.
- Temptation to swing to one side of the pendulum out of fear of the other extreme.

We can sin by doing something just as much as by neglecting something.

For example, think of the temptation to withdraw from society instead of being a light in a dark world and the beacon of truth. It is easy to withdraw into holy

huddles with no care or concern for those who are lost and suffering. We know the war rages on, but we are very happy to stay in our bunker to try and keep safe.

But on the other side we can be tempted to do so much ministry work, or study the bible with every free moment, to the extent that we neglect our God given responsibility to our spouse and our children.

Temptations are everywhere and take many forms.

And so our need for deliverance is also constant and also takes many forms.

Our prayer to God for deliverance from evil is ever necessary.

We are weak and we need his protection.

Conclusion

So as we bring this study to a close, and our study of the Lord's prayer to a close, let us keep in mind the privilege we have to pray.

Jesus has been teaching us a pattern of prayer that is pleasing to our heavenly father. He is giving us a structure we can follow when we pray.

We have the privilege of praying to a **father**. Not to a judge, or to a captain or to a boss, but to a father.

Like a child coming to a father, we can come to him in prayer with no fear of rejection, and full confidence of his love and care for us.

And when we pray we have a serious privilege to pray for God's glory.

In prayer, we have the serious privilege to pray that **God's name be hallowed**, set apart in our thinking and in the thinking of all people.

In prayer we have the serious privilege to pray that **God's kingdom would come**, through people being saved, through people being committed to Jesus as their king, and through the fact that Jesus will return soon.

In prayer we also have the serious privilege to pray that **God's will be done** on earth as it is in heaven. That our will would conform to his will and that we would fulfil his will completely, heartily and immediately.

And as we have seen in detail today, we also have the privilege to **pray for mans needs**. Not our needs as we define, but as God defines our needs. And as we pray for these needs, we show our dependence, our penitence and our humility.

In prayer we recognise our need for **His provision**. As strange as it may seem, we are expected to bring our physical needs to our heavenly Father. He wants to hear even hear, and daily we are reminded of our dependence on him. Not praying presumptuously for extravagant luxuries, but recognising certain things are necessary to live and function in this world.

In prayer we recognise our sins and our **need for his pardon**. We pray for forgiveness not as a criminal to a judge, but as a child to a father. And by reminding ourselves how much we have been forgiven, it makes it impossible to hold a grudge. We must likewise forgive others.

And finally, In prayer we recognise our **need for protection**. There is not room to pretend that we are strong. We know our weakness and so pray that the situations for us to sin would be limited. And when we are faced with temptations, we pray that God would deliver us.

In this prayer we see a perfect balance.

- Balance of praying for God's glory and for man's needs.
- Balance of dependence and responsibility.
- Balance of reliance and action.
- Balance of recognising our weakness and being strong in the Lord.

And so when you pray, pray then like this:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[continue praying]