

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, PART 2

BIBLE TEXT: Matthew 6:1-34.

LESSON 20 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 6:1-34.

¹ Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

² Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

³ But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

⁴ That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

⁵ ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

⁶ But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

⁷ But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

⁸ Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

NOTES:

The Lord hates a hypocrite. Jesus often came in contact with the scribes and Pharisees, and it filled Him with righteous indignation to see the wickedness in their hearts while they tried to appear as zealous followers of God. He did not hesitate to tell them that they were "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27).

The Hypocrites' Prayers

The Pharisees loved to be seen praying. They would stand in the synagogue on the Sabbath and offer long prayers to God; they even prayed on the street corners so many people could watch them. Jesus said Isaiah had prophesied well about them when he said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). Jesus told His listeners not to be like the heathen who thought they would be heard because of much speaking.

You know the Buddhists have prayer wheels, sometimes huge cylinders, which have prayers inscribed on them. Every time the wheel turns around, it is supposed to be the same as if a prayer had been uttered. The Chinese even put their prayers on water wheels, so that they do not have to bother to turn them. It would be easy to say many prayers that way, but Jesus never hears such prayers. Other "heathen" consider a certain nod of the head equal to a prayer, and they will sit for long periods of time with their heads bobbing back and forth. Even in our own country there are people who think they can get forgiveness for a sin by repeating a certain prayer perhaps twenty-five or fifty times, parrot-like. All such prayers are hypocritical.

Jesus' Instructions Regarding Prayer

Jesus told His people to enter into their closets when they wanted to talk to God, so that nothing would interrupt their praying. We can pray like that in the meeting, too. We can forget everything about us and pray as though we were alone in a closet. Have you ever seen children pray hard for a few minutes, then peek through their fingers to see if someone was watching them? They are praying to be seen of men, and not talking to God at all. God does not pay any attention to that kind of praying.

When we talk to God we should remember that we are in the presence of a Holy God, Who made Heaven and earth; and be careful that we come before Him reverently. You remember when Isaiah was in the Temple and the seraphim cried: "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." "And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke" (Isaiah 6:3, 4). So majestic, great, and powerful is our God! How careful we should be to come before Him in true worship and praise!

But Jesus did not want us to be afraid of Him. When He taught His disciples to pray, He began by saying, "Our Father which art in heaven." Children who are loved by their parents are not afraid of them, and God wants us to come to Him just as we would ask something of our father. He said a parent would not give his child a serpent when he asked for fish, or a stone when he asked for bread. God is so much bigger and better, and loves us so much more than our parents do, that He will surely answer our prayers.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 ¶ Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

Praying Always

It is as natural for a Christian to pray as for the natural man to breathe -- and as necessary. If we stop praying we shall die spiritually. You may say, "If God knows what I have need of, why should I pray?" Because Jesus told you to. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). Prayer is in the heart of a Christian all the time, and in the moment of need it comes forth in an instant. Have you ever pinched your finger so that it hurt severely, and right that instant the prayer came from your heart, "God, help me!" The prayer was right there, ready to go up to God.

Jesus was the Son of God, but He prayed many times. He would sometimes go out in the mountains alone and pray all night. That night in Gethsemane He prayed so earnestly that "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood." He prayed for His disciples; He prayed particularly for Peter who was weak; and He wept over the people of Jerusalem who were His enemies.

A man is not weak or a "sissy" if he sheds tears when he prays. Jeremiah, one of God's greatest prophets, was called the "weeping prophet," because he cried and prayed over the sins of the people. David said, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126: 6). Paul said he had served the Lord "with all humility of mind, and with many tears" (Acts 20:19). A boy was very ill and asked his mother to pray for him, he needed help badly. He said, "Cry and pray!" When we really "cry" before the Lord, our will broken, He will hear and answer.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Those words are in the prayer Jesus was teaching His disciples to pray. When He was in the garden, praying in great agony of spirit, He said, "Let this cup pass from me." You would think that with such earnest praying, surely God would answer. But Jesus quickly added, "Not my will, but thine, be done." It was not the will of God to let Him escape crucifixion, so perhaps you think Jesus' prayers did not do any good. But they did. Jesus conquered His human will. He consecrated every desire, every thought, every breath of His life to do the will of God. That is what God expects of all His children. They don't have to suffer the terrible pain and grief that Jesus did, but it seems like a great price to give up one's will to the Saviour. So when we come and make our petitions known to God, we should add, "If it be Your will." After all, if we love God more than anything else in the world, it will not be hard to say, "As You will it."

"From Whom All Blessings Flow"

"Give us this day our daily bread." Do you ever stop to think that all the food you eat and the clothes you wear, are given to you by our bountiful Father in Heaven! Are you grateful to Him for His kindness to you? In this country God has given us an abundance of everything, but often we read stories of missionaries who have been sent by God into poor countries where it is not always easy to get enough to eat. They pray to God and know that because He sent them there He will provide for them. God works many miracles in providing for our needs.

Have you ever watched the birds and wondered how they could find enough to eat, even in the wintertime? Jesus said, "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they" Think of the polar bears in the Arctic region where everything is covered with snow. God provides food for them. Man worries and fusses about getting enough to live on, but Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" -- and He will provide everything we need.

You have read the account of the glories of Solomon's court. People brought great wealth and rich treasures from many countries

²⁴ ¶ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

so that Solomon could live in luxury. But Jesus said that even the wild flowers were arrayed more beautifully than he.

"He paints the lily of the field, Perfumes each lily bell;

If He so loves the little flowers, I know He loves me well."

Forgiving Our Debtors

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Jesus forgives our sins, and He expects us to forgive those who have wronged us in any way. We cannot expect the Lord to do anything for us if we hold a grudge against someone else. We are even to go to our brother and make things right if we know he has something against us. When everything is clear between our fellow men and us, we can expect God to hear and answer our prayers.

We must watch and pray continually that we be not overcome by temptations. We may love the Lord and have a purpose to serve Him, but Jesus said that though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. We must pray daily for strength to live for Jesus and overcome every temptation.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by doing alms?
2. What was the hypocrite's method of doing alms?
3. What method did Jesus teach?
4. What was the hypocrite's method of praying?
5. Commit to memory "The Lord's Prayer."
6. How may we lay up treasures in Heaven?
7. What does Christ promise us, if we seek first the kingdom of God?

