

- PRAY
- No Bible study on 4/21.
- READ Matthew 6:5-34

Theme of Matthew: "Behold your King is coming to you" (Zech.9:9; Mt.21:4-5)

Theme of the Sermon on the Mount: Life Styles of the Rich and Famous

CHARTING THE COURSE FOR THIS EVENING:

- Review
- The Lord's Prayer: a "compendium" of the Gospel of the Kingdom
- Fasting

Benjamin Franklin's "father was accustomed to precede all his meals with long prayers, and even to say grace over every particular dish, he [BF] was desirous to correct this folly by means of the following sally of wit: Old Franklin, one day, at the beginning of winter, being busied in salting provisions; 'Father,' says his son, 'you ought to ask a blessing, once for all, upon the whole cask of provisions, as it would be a wonderful saving of time!" It has also been said that Franklin taught himself geography while his father was saying prayers by looking over four large maps that hung in his father's parlour!
<http://www.english.udel.edu/lemay/franklin/1706-1714.html>

"It was divine intervention. I have a great devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe ... and had just looked up at the \$2 million and said a little prayer to her when I hit the jackpot. Our Lady really looks out for me."
-- GUADALUPE LOPEZ, mother of JENNIFER LOPEZ, telling the New York Daily News how she hit a \$2.4 million jackpot on an Atlantic City, N.J., slot machine.

THE LORD'S/DISCIPLES' PRAYER AS A COMPENDIUM OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Tertullian (160-230) called the Lord's Prayer a *breviarium totius evangelii*, 'a breviary and compendium of the gospel' meaning that the Lord's Prayer contains everything necessary for our prayer life and that it is a summary of the Gospel.

In the extant writings of the Ante Nicene (before 325 AD) Fathers, there are quotations from all of the books of the New Testament. Of the twenty-six [sic] books, Matthew is by far the most frequently cited. Furthermore, the most frequently used portion of Matthew is that portion (chapters 5-7) now called "The Sermon on the Mount." (Harry Sturz, "The Sermon on the Mount and Its Application to the Present Age" Grace Journal Vol.4, page 3).

Our Father Who Is In Heaven

- ✓ **Our Father who is in heaven** (Mt.6:9)//Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and **glorify your Father who is in heaven.**"
- ✓ love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven**; (Matthew 5:44-45)
- ✓ You are to be perfect, as **your heavenly Father is** perfect (Matthew 5:48 with 6:9).

Hallowed Be Your Name (Matthew 6:9 with 28:18-20).

- ✓ God places His holy **Name** on His children in baptism
- ✓ Jesus, the Son of God has been given all authority in **heaven** and on **earth**
- ✓ We, God's children are called to do the will of God by making disciples and living as disciples
- ✓ God's will on earth is something that we are **active** participants in.

Your Kingdom Come

- ✓ “Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom...” (Matthew 4:23).
- ✓ Your kingdom come (6:10)//Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (6:33).

Your Will Be Done

- ✓ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven** will enter” (Matthew 7:21)
- ✓ “**For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven**, he is My brother and sister and mother.” (Matthew 12:50 (cf. 26:42))
- ✓ “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39,42,44)

On Earth As It Is In Heaven (Matthew 6:10)

- ✓ Your will be done on **earth** (Mt.6:10)//You are the salt of the **earth** (5:13)...Light of the **world** (5:14).

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread (Matthew 6:11).

- ✓ fasting (**Matthew 4:1-4**; 6:16-18)
- ✓ storing up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-24)
- ✓ worry and anxiety about tomorrow versus daily bread (Matthew 6:25-34).
- ✓ Feeding of the crowds (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39).
- ✓ “Jesus took some bread...and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’” (Matthew 26:26-29)
- ✓ “Our bread” also carries with it the connotation that we will give to the poor (Mt.6:1-4; see James 2:15).

Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Also Have Forgiven Our Debtors (Matthew 6:12,14-15).

- ✓ Forgiving others and pursuing reconciliation is to be a peacemaker (Matthew 5:9; cf. 5:43-47).
- ✓ It also includes loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:9 with 5:43-45; Matthew 26:28).
- ✓ “If you are presenting your offering...and remember your brother has something against you...first be reconciled” (Matthew 5:23-24). Remember that things are not right between you and God if they are not right between you and your brother (Matthew 5:21-22; cf. 1 John 2:9-11; 3:15; 4:20).
- ✓ Church discipline/reconciliation is an aspect of peacemaking (Matthew 18:15-17;)

Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil (Matthew 6:13):

- ✓ In Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus bound up the strong man and then begins His preaching, teaching, signs, and miracles.
- ✓ “I will build My church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18).
- ✓ “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart” (Matthew 13:19).
- ✓ “Get behind Me Satan!” (Matthew 16:23)
- ✓ Judas/Greed/Satan (Matthew 26:14-16).
- ✓ Peter’s denial of Jesus (Matthew 26:34-35,69-75).
- ✓ “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

Does the term “father” imply that God the Father has a gender?

If the term “father” does not imply the Father’s gender, then could we change the prayer to “Our Parent” or “Our Mother”?

Elaine Pagels, “What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity,” in Christ and Plaskow, eds., *Womanspirit Rising*, 107 comments that “the absence of feminine symbolism of God marks Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in striking contrast to the world’s other religious traditions, whether in Egypt, Babylonia, Greece and Rome, or Africa, Polynesia, India, and North America.”

AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL (Matthew 6:13; Gen.22:1; Ex.15:25; 16:4; 20:20; Num.14:22; Deut.8:2; 13:3; Psalm 141:3-4)

Does God ever tempt us? (James 1:13)

What are we asking for when we pray, “do not lead us into temptation”?

What are we admitting when we pray “deliver us from evil”?

What are we asking for when we pray “deliver us from evil” or “deliver us from the evil one”?

Did the disciples keep watching and praying that they wouldn’t enter into temptation? (Matthew 26:38-46)

What happened after Jesus kept watch and prayed and the disciples did not? (Matthew 26:51,56,69-75)

Psalm 91 talks of evil’s “omnipresence” in this fallen world:

Psalm 91:3-6

3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence.

4 He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

5 You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day;

6 Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.

Psalm 91 reassures us that the LORD’s will lead and deliver us from evil:

Psalm 91:7-10

7 A thousand may fall at your side And ten thousand at your right hand, But it shall not approach you.

8 You will only look on with your eyes And see the recompense of the wicked.

9 For you have made the LORD, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

10 No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent.

Look up the following passages and explain why we need to pray “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” with earnestness and humility. (Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:1; 6:9; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; 4:18; cf. 2 Peter 2:9)

2 Timothy 4:18

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

NOTE: Verse 13 can be translated as “deliver us from evil” (NASB95; cf. Matthew 5:37) or “deliver us from the evil one” (NIV; cf. Matthew 13:19,38; Luke 22:28-32). The reason for the two translations is that the Greek literally reads “deliver us from *the* evil.” Either translation is possible, and both should be understood as encompassing all of evil, its manifestations and influences. John Calvin wrote,

Whether by the term evil we understand the devil or sin, is not of the least consequence. Satan is indeed the very enemy who lays snares for our life, but it is by sin that he is armed for our destruction. Our petition, therefore, is, that we may not be overcome or overwhelmed with temptation, but in the strength of the Lord may stand firm against all the powers by which we are assailed; in other words, may not fall under temptation: that being thus taken under his charge and protection, we may remain invincible by sin, death, the gates of hell, and the whole power of the devil; in other words, be delivered from evil.¹

FASTING (Matthew 6:16-18)

Types of fasting

1. Not eating or drinking (Esther 4:16)
2. Fasting can include not eating fancy foods (Daniel 10:2-3). “...there is another sort of fasting, temporary in character, when we withdraw something from the normal regimen of living, either for one day or for a definite time, and pledge ourselves to a tighter and more severe restraint in diet than ordinarily” (Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV:xii:18).

Length of fasting

1. Morning till night (Judges 20:26; 2 Samuel 1:12)
2. Evening till evening (Lev.23:27-32 [Day of Atonement])
3. Seven days (1 Chron.10:12)
4. Three days and three nights (Esther 4:16)
5. Forty days and forty nights (Deut.9:9 [Moses]; 1 Kings 19:8 [Elijah]²; Mt.4:2 [Jesus])

Examples of fasting

1. David fasted when his child was sick (2 Samuel 12:22)
2. The Pharisees may have fasted twice/week (Luke 18:12)
3. Anna (Luke 2:37)

¹Calvin, J., & Beveridge, H. *Institutes of the Christian religion*. (III, xx, 46).

²“...the statement that Elijah went forty days without food and drink [1 Kings 19:8] only served to apprise the people that he had been raised up to restore the law, from which almost all Israel departed” (Calvin, *Institutes* IV:xii.20).

4. Saul (Acts 9:9)
5. The church fasted when the church at Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:2-3).
6. When elders were appointed it was accompanied by prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23)

Purposes of Fasting

1. To express grief (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 1:7-10; 31:13; 2 Sam.1:12; 3:35; Neh.1:4 [fall of Jerusalem]; Esther 4:3; Psalm 35:13-14; 69:10; 102:4; cf. Isaiah 24:6-11)
2. To express penitence (Lev.16:29, 31; 23:27, 29, 32; 1 Samuel 7:6; 1 Kings 21:27-29; Neh.9:1-2; Ezra 10:6; Dan.9:3-4; Joel 2:12-15; Jonah 3:5-8).
3. Fasting was a means of humbling oneself (Ezra 8:21; Psalm 69:10).
4. Fasting can be like prayer when it is done for the purpose of seeking God's guidance or help (2 Samuel 12:16-23; 2 Chron.20:3-4; Ezra 8:21-23; Acts 13:2,3).
5. Fasting is not an end in itself but a means of pursuing the kingdom of God and His righteousness (see Isaiah 58:4-7).

Does fasting make our prayers more effective? Do you agree with Augustine's statement, "Do you wish your prayer to fly toward God? Give it two wings: fasting and almsgiving"? (Matthew 17:21//Mark 9:29; Acts 10:30 KJV & NKJV; 1 Corinthians 7:5 KJV & NKJV)

NOTE: The early church took fasting seriously. In fact, some manuscript copyists inserted the word "fasting" into four New Testament passages (Matthew 17:21; Mark 9:29; Acts 10:30; 1 Corinthians 7:5).

"[F]asting is only a way which God hath ordained, wherein we wait for his unmerited mercy."
-John Wesley

This combination of fasting and prayer was common in Judaism, but in New Testament times the two seldom occurred together among Christians. On only four occasions in the New Testament were the two linked. Two of these refer to commissioning or ordination services, one refers to the practice of the godly woman Anna (Luke 2:37), and another is in connection with Saul's conversion (Acts 9:9-12) (Curtis C. Mitchell, "The Practice of Fasting in the New Testament; *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 147*:464).

SUMMARY OF MATTHEW 6:1-18: If we put into practice the righteousness of giving to the poor (6:1-4; cf. Matthew 5:40), praying to our heavenly Father (6:5-15), and fasting (6:16-18), we won't worry about what we will eat, drink, or wear (6:25-34; cf. Philippians 4:6-7). Anxiety about material things is due to a lack of practical righteousness; your eyes have been taken off the kingdom and are fixed on earthly things.