

INTRO

Re. when look at issues of the day;

**Cost of living crisis, War/Famine/Pandemic/Climate we can feel overwhelmed
As well as with the situations we face ourselves.**

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

Slide 1 – 'If you want to humble a man' Prayer hard work.

Slide 2 – 'God enjoys our company'

The easiest most natural thing to do but strangely hard to develop our prayer lives.

THERE ARE DIFFERENT SORTS OF PRAYER

Prayer is a very varied thing: PRAISE/ADORATION. CONFESSION.

PETITION – Asking prayers. **INTERCESSION** (on behalf of others)

HEALING – Gifting. **HELP PRAYERS!!** Recited Prayers & Spontaneous Prayers.

Sometimes can over think/ over complicate Prayer – God just wants us to pray.

BACKGROUND TO TEXT

Re. Luke 11 – Lord's Prayer given in response to disciples 'Lord teach us to Pray'

Here in Matthew it is in the **Sermon on the Mount**.

In Luke – When you pray. In **Matthew** this how you should pray;

Not if or when you feel like it.

WARNINGS

a). Context of **warnings of being seen to pray** – Not a problem in our society.

b). Also a **warning of empty words – not from the heart.**

SLIDE 3 CALVIN (re. Tolstoy 'The Three Hermits').

Ironically it is now a danger with the Lord's Prayer – can become too familiar

A model and basis for prayer – It contains all the elements that make up a prayer life

Not all the elements every single prayer.

1. **ADORATION (6 v.9) (SLIDE 4)**

Not a blueprint but a good starting point: (re. short prayers Help etc. valid).

i).WHO GOD IS

Not just acknowledging who he is but **praising him as well:**

He is **our creator and sustainer**.

So many of the great prayers of the Bible start in this way:

Ephesians/ Acts / Throughout Psalms.

Psalms etc. also reflect on what God has done and use it as a springboard to prayer.

That is who we are coming into the presence of – wow! (re. SJB in Wales)

Father – intimate Abba / Hallowed sense of the awe of God.

Not coming to some white-haired old man in sky / **kindly Grandfather**

2. **SUBMISSION (6 v.10) (SLIDE 5)**

YOUR kingdom come YOUR will be done.

Re. Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus's prayer acknowledged the sovereignty of God.

CONTEXT OF SUBMISSION

a) Father/child relationship est. at start (v.9) good guide.

Father/parent wants the best for **child but not to spoil.**

Parent wants to give **child his needs** but **not his wants**. (Stephen and Sweetcorn!).

A child has to submit to a Father's judgement so we to father in Heaven.

Commissioning of disciples (READ Luke 9: 1&2). In Jesus name we have underused authority

Not fatalism – **Prayer changes things**

SLIDE 6 Karl Barth quote – Praying for change even in 1930's Germany.

God responds to the hearts of his people re. God changing his mind eg. Sodom and Gomorrah.

Again best understood: as parent/child relationship

Ultimately the Father's Will prevails.

A parent wants their child to ask can be influenced by their response/actions as God was.
re. **Psalmist haggling and arguing with God** – (sometimes fear for him!).

Reminding him of his promises etc (**Read Psalm 77:8**)

ACCEPTING GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL IN OUR PRAYERS

God wants us to use that authority more/in submission to His will.

Accepting God's Will can be the most difficult thing for a Christian.

Difficult understanding our parent's words.

Letting go (re. man at a church who realized he resented God for health situation

Re. Joseph Scriven 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus (re. x2 fiancés who died)

We can understand it in context of parent/child relationship but doesn't always help.

Why did that person die/why did that thing happen/why did that job fail or relationship????

SLIDE 7 Hendrikus Berkhof

There is a time & place for Raging against it (re. The Psalmist)

But ultimately accept and let go. (re. those who say 'I tried that and it didn't work for me').

.eg. when some prayers seem unanswered etc. (parents praying for children).

Acceptance of this not fatalism because **persistence in prayer encouraged.**

(Queen Bertha Cantebury 6th Century King Ethelbert Christianisation of Britain).

But sometimes after persistence lack of answers/signs means not Gods will.

3. SUPPLICATION (6 v.11) (SLIDE 8)

Father delights in us asking him so that he might bless us.

Re. Theologians arguing over what it means – **The Whole person:**

'My God shall **supply all my needs (not my wants).**

That means physical/spiritual/emotional-whole of us.

a).PHYSICAL

Maybe needs money/food God provides. (re. cost of living crisis/foodbanks etc).

Sickness/illness Pray about them.

b).SPIRITUAL

Spiritual crisis/dryness/lack of understanding re doctrine or unanswered prayer.

Pulling us down. Ask God for help and understanding.

c).EMOTIONAL

A weakness- temper/anger/greed undermining witness.

Depression wrong attitudes etc.

Prayer shouldn't be a shopping list but shouldn't be ashamed of asking.

READ Luke 11 v.11-13 context of parent child relationship. Give them things but not spoil

4. CONFESSION (6 v. 12) (SLIDE 9)

Re. Protestant church reacting to the Medieval abuses (re.1517 - 95 Theses)

But there is a place for it (1 John 1 v.9)

There are so **many blocks to prayer:**

a). UNFORGIVENESS (6 v.12)

Forgiveness must be important - v.12b and reiterated after v.15 & 16.

Nothing seems to be worse for prayer.

As a church - sense of moving on / fresh start / not held back by unforgiveness.

Our sins through Christ are forgiven and saved.

So important - our forgiveness should lead to a forgiving attitude towards others.

Root of bitterness **causes blocks with Father** (re. attitude of children holding on to things)

Need for reconciliation. If not right with others then unlikely to be praying in Father's will.

b).SINFULNESS / UNHOLINESS (6 v. 13)

If our lives are marked by sinfulness and rebellion we are less likely to be praying or if praying less likely to be praying according to the Father's will.

If not filled with Holy Spirit less likely as well.

Keep it Simple – Keep close to God keep closer to His will.

We all fall short of God's standards – but besetting sin etc.

This also highlights another truth about prayer:

We are often involved in the answers (not a passive thing).

Repentance = Returning/ turning round and changing things.

eg. sin - change lifestyle / Unforgiveness – change of attitude, Disobedience-change of direction.

c). APATHY & BUSYNESS

The greatest barriers

Be imaginative in prayer. Can so easily get stuck in a rut.

eg. use of books/poems/songs even in private prayer life.

Use the times we have re. train journeys/plane journeys etc.

More opportunities than think - make best use of our lifestyles and get priorities right.

5. PROTECTION (6 v.13)) (SLIDE 10)

Acknowledging the fact that we are in spiritual battle.

Against the forces of darkness etc. (Ephesians 6)

Don't give all the credit to Satan – take responsibility.

Walk in his ways and he will protect you.

Doesn't mean there won't be dangers and temptations on the way.

WE have to play our part but also pray to God for his help.

6. GLORIFICATION (6 v.13 b)) (SLIDE 11)

The **doxology does not appear in most** early m/s -not in most version.

But does sum up central purpose of the prayer – brings us back to where we stated.

To glorify God - give thanks for answered prayer.

To bring His kingdom here on earth even in little ways.

The way forward **individually to develop that relationship/prayer life more.**

Go forward as individuals and as a Church with a prayerful foundation.

