

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE

February 1, 2012

While our Saviour walked upon the earth in the form of man, He met and conversed with many people. During one of these meetings He spoke with a woman of Samaria, and their conversation turned to the subject of worship. He said to her, **“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth”** (Jn. 4:23-24). All that claim and obey Christ as their Lord have a great interest in the worship of God. Though countless people have a great desire to worship Him correctly, there are many that do not. There are five acts the Christian participates in that God recognizes as worship; one of those acts is prayer.

When we understand the great importance that faithful Christians place upon the acts of worship, it does not surprise us that when “change agents” come into the church, the first thing they normally attack are the avenues of worship. In 1992, Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris made such an attack on the worship of the faithful and made this statement, “The tired, uninspiring event called worship in our churches must give way to an exhilarating experience of God that simultaneously exhibits and nurtures life in the worshippers” (The Second Incarnation, West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 1992, pg. 13). God organized His worship the way He intended for it to be done and when people feel the desire to change it as they see fit, they are putting themselves in God’s place and on par with His knowledge and power.

Shelly and Harris are not the only ones that have attempted to pervert the worship of God and certainly will not be the last ones to do so. As an act of worshipping God, we go before His throne of mercy and grace in prayer to Him. The early Christians were faithful in their prayers and desired to do it in the way God prescribed. Remember the words of the disciples, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Lk. 11:1). During the time of the apostles, prayer was a very important part of the Christian’s life and should still be just as important to us!

As we examine the Model Prayer, we will notice the object and the manner of the prayer. Matthew’s account records Christ saying, **“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen”** (Mt. 6:9-13).

The first thing Christ did in His prayer to the Father was to exalt Him. Christ pointed out that the Father was, in fact deity, and resided in the holy abode of heaven and that the Father deserved to be worshipped when He said, “Hallowed be thy name.” In like manner when we go before the Father, we should exalt and acknowledge His greatness, as well. However, we do not have to use the exact words recorded, but in some way we need to honor His name before we begin to petition Him on our own behalf. Through Christ giving due respect to the Father, we should understand that it is not our place to change the way in which we worship Him through prayer.

The second thing Christ mentioned in His prayer was the kingdom. He was mindful of God’s approaching kingdom and wanted to petition the Father to bless those efforts to bring it about. We can no longer pray for the kingdom to come, because it has come and Christians are members of it

presently (Acts 2). However, we should still be mindful of the kingdom and ask God to bless our efforts and hard work in expanding the kingdom as we labor to bring honor and glory to God (Eph. 3:21; Phil. 1:11).

Our prayers will aid us in these efforts. We should pray as if success rested solely upon God and work as if it rested solely upon our efforts. Paul was well known for asking his readers to pray for his efforts and he for theirs (2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:18...). Christ gave us the assurance that our prayers will be answered if we pray in confidence and faith (Mt. 21:22; Jn. 14:13; 15:16; 16:23).

The study of prayer will continue in next week's article. The goal is to understand more about the Christian's prayer life and how we can benefit from prayer. This will be seen as the Model Prayer is studied further.