

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE – 2

February 8, 2012

“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).

As we continue our study of the Christian's prayer life and use the Model Prayer as our guide, notice the third thing the Lord mentions: “Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.” It is paramount that all Christians pray that the will of God is carried out on this earth, because this has a direct effect upon us. In this country, we are blessed with the opportunities to worship God in the way we deem necessary, without outside interference. Paul told Timothy, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour” (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

In his statement to Timothy, Paul used four words that can mean “prayer.” He first mentions “supplications.” This represents a very specific request to God for certain needs. Because we understand that our complete dependence is in God, it is proper that we ask God to bless the attending doctors of a brother or sister so that the cure to a certain illness may be found or applied. It may be the case that we ask for a certain bad situation to come to a better end through His providence.

Paul then speaks of “prayers” which would address our always present needs in this life. This is more of a general term that would include requests such as asking for more wisdom (Js. 1:5), asking God to bless us in our dedication to Him as we endeavor to walk in the light (1 Jn. 1:7), confessing our sins to Him (Js. 5:16; 1 Jn. 1:9), and asking for forgiveness and strength.

He then speaks of “intercessions” or petitions . This indicates that one pleads for something on the behalf of another, either for or against. The idea is that one would plead for a favorable ruling in the presence of a king. We read of such an instance involving king Solomon. Two mothers came to him, to request that he determine which one was the actual mother to the baby they had brought before him (1 Kings 3:16-28). They both pleaded to him for a favorable conclusion. In the life of a Christian, we should understand these as personal private petitions or appeals to God made with urgency and boldness. It is as if we are seeking a private audience with the God of all creation to plead for something.

“Giving of thanks” expresses the idea of giving our gratitude to God for all the many great physical and spiritual blessings He has so liberally given to us. Much of this gratitude may be for the answers to previous prayers that were laid at the Lord's throne of grace. Whether our prayers were answered in a manner we saw fit or not, we still are the recipients of many great blessings from God. The mindset of not being thankful is a great sin. Paul wrote about this attitude of ingratitude in his letter to the Roman Christians, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Rom. 1:21). Also to Timothy he said, “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (2 Tim. 3:2). After all, when we get to heaven, this form of prayer will continue, unlike all the other forms of prayer that will no longer be

necessary at that time. John recorded in the Revelation, “And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 4:9) and, “Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Rev. 7:12). A thankful heart will always be an attribute of God’s people.

We will continue our study of the Model Prayer in next week’s bulletin. Pray this week for the leaders of our nation, so that we may continue to lead peaceable lives. Remember to always pray for our efforts as we strive to bring honor and glory to God through our work of spreading the gospel.