

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE – 3

February 15, 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, for ever . Amen” (Mt. 6:9-13).

“Give us this day our daily bread.” The Lord continues to focus on the physical within the first half of His prayer by asking the God of heaven to provide for us the needs we require. The Lord did not ask for the luxuries of life; He simply asked for the basics that are needed for survival. While we all enjoy the nice things that this world has to offer, we sometimes confuse our needs with our wants. When we petition the Father for the things we need in life, we ought to be mindful of not allowing ourselves to ask for too much. If we were to ask our fellow Christian for assistance, we would not expect them to give us all they had, and we need to show the same respect to almighty God.

In the same respect, we need to understand that it is proper to ask God for the things necessary in life. Notice what John said to Gaius in his letter, “The elder unto Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 Jn. 1-2 ASV). John desired for his beloved friend to prosper financially and to enjoy good health. It is within this sentence that we learn how rich one may become and still remain faithful to God. There is nothing wrong with gaining earthly possessions and riches, if done honorably, as long as we prosper spiritually. When we begin to prosper financially more than we do spiritually, then we have too much of what this world has to offer. This happens when we lose focus on our souls and concentrate only on gaining wealth. Again, understand that there is nothing wrong with money or having a lot of money, it is the attitude we have that makes the difference. Paul told Timothy, “For the **love of money** is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10, emphasis mine). Paul didn’t say money was the root, but our attitude toward money was the root of all evil. The Hebrews writer admonished us to “Be ye free from the **love of money**; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5 ASV, emphasis mine).

In this request, we are reminded of our dependence upon God for our very existence. He did not create man and then simply leave him to his own devices in this life. He created man and, when allowed, has directed his steps in a manner consistent with heaven. The great prophet proclaimed, “O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

The Lord now turns to the spiritual. “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” This is an expression used to indicate our sins. The thing most needed by mankind is forgiveness of sin. Paul told the Roman Christians, “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). However, if we refuse to forgive those that sin against us, the Lord will refuse to forgive us. Our forgiveness is a conditional gift from God. We must adhere to the plan of salvation for initial forgiveness and then live as Christians if we hope to obtain forgiveness for future trespasses. The apostle John described this lifestyle as “walking in the light” (1 Jn. 1:7). Jesus not only taught this in the Model Prayer, but at other times, as well (Mt. 5:23-24; 18:21-35; Lk. 17:3-

4). It is essential to the salvation of all Christians that we are willing to forgive when asked, but we must remember that forgiveness cannot be granted unless it is sought.

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.