5. Speaking with God

When you became a Christian

You entered into a relationship with your Creator
Like any relationship, communication plays a significant role
God speaks to us primarily in the Bible and we listen

God also listens to us as we speak to him in prayer

“Prayer”: talking with God about anything and everything
Joyous — privilege — natural — mysterious

As a new Christian, you may be asking, “How do I pray?”

Jesus’ disciples asked him the same question

“Lord’s Prayer” (Matt 6:9-13)

6:9a — “Pray like this”

Not intended to be mindlessly repeat it like some magical incantation
Not recite in church without thinking
Basic structure/content
Room for flexibility
“OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN”

Prayer starts with a proper view of God Who he is

“Father”

“Abba” — Family term for the father Teaches us to approach God with familiarity He cares for us as a father cares for his children “Immanence”

“In heaven”

Never forget that “Our Father” is also the God who created/sustains all things Merely spoke, and galaxies came into existence Teaches us to approach God with astonishment, trembling, reverence, awe “Transcendence”

Pray with this mix of familiarity and reverence
FIRST HALF — PRAYER FOCUSES, FIRST AND FOREMOST, ON GOD

Not clear in translations — imperatives calling on God to act
Not for our benefit but for his — his glory — he is praised/honored

1. “Hallowed be your name” — May your name be hallowed

   “Hallowed” means “holy” — sinless

   God is holy — calling on God to act in such a way that the world sees he is holy — sinlessness, perfection

   Starts with me

   In all I (don’t) say and do — you be held up so all can see your holiness — name be revered

2. “Your kingdom come” — May your kingdom come

   Not earthly realm (Pontius) — but a kingly rule in the lives of his disciples

   Calling on God to exercise his kingly rule in me — expand throughout the world

   Exactly what will happen eventually — Jesus return — Every knee will bow …

3. “May your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”

   God’s will — purposes; desires — are always done, perfectly, in heaven

   Pray with Jesus in Gethsemane—“Not my will but yours be done”

   Calling on God to do his will in me — expand throughout the world

   No surprise — being a Christian means it is no longer all about me

   “I have been crucified with Christ …”

   “Deny yourself …”

Biblical prayer begins with God - putting him first

   As we pray “our Father in heaven,” we fade into the background

   Become consumed with God and his glory — praised for who he is …

   Prayer begins with worship
2. OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON GOD FOR EVERYTHING

Second half is not about me
Self-reliance is not a Christian virtue — sin
God not help those who help themselves — helps those who turn to him

4th imperative—dependence for physical needs—“Give us this day our daily bread”
Yes, God is concerned about the details of our lives — mundane, boring
What kind of friend would he be, if he were not interested?
Point is not that we pray for food and nothing else
Dependence on God for physical needs — clothing, shelter
Matt 6:25, 32-33a
Notice — wants to give us our needs, not our greeds
Daily bread, not yearly bread — no trust

5. Dependence for spiritual needs — “Forgive us our debts …”
Jesus is thinking of sin as a debt we owe to God
“Forgive us our trespasses …”
Note the relationship between God forgiving us, and us forgiving others
Not talking about our salvation — relationship
Point is so important it is elaborated on after the prayer — vv 14-15
You will be sinned against — friend, coworker; pastor; elder; people in church
Temptation: cross arms — in pride — “I’m right; they hurt me” — not forgive until they’re not sorry
Only person we really hurt is ourselves — if we do not forgive; God ≠ us
Eph 4:32 — no one nailed me to the cross — I nailed; “Father forgive”
Sign of my true repentance
Matt 18:21-35 — not an easy thing, but a necessary thing
Sixth/final imperative—“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

God does not tempt anyone with sin (James 1:13)

We are dependent on God to resist the power of sin and evil (One)

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood …”

Keep us from temptation we cannot resist — especially from Satan

LEAVE YOU WITH TWO PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. “Speaking with God” — healthy communication is always a dialogue

   Can be mysterious

   Mind wandered; guilty — Tozer

   Start by reading

   Listen for promptings of God’s Spirit — encourage; convict

   Stop and pray — talk; ask

   Quiet — listen —

   End in a focused, extended time of prayer

2. Memorize it

   Not to mindlessly repeat

   Times when you just can’t find the right words

3. Pray the structure

   Paraphrase — adding the specifics of your life

Close with reciting the Lord’s prayer, then I will show you what I mean