

When You Pray... Part 3

Matthew 6:9-13

INTRODUCTION:

Note: God is more interested in your holiness than your happiness because without holiness you can't see God. There is a happiness in God's holiness that happiness by itself cannot reach. Many get angry with God for not providing what they think will make them happy or allow them to go through unhappy times. God sees the big picture and knows that the trial you must face will bring you to a place of holiness you have been running from or ignoring only so that you may find a greater and deeper happiness in Him.

N.T. Wright

God is not a man-made idol. He is the living God, who dwells in 'heaven', and longs to see his sovereign and saving rule come to birth on 'earth'. This is, in fact, a prayer for the **kingdom of God** to become fully present: not for God's people to be snatched away from earth to heaven, but for the glory and beauty of heaven to be turned into earthly reality as well. When that is done, God's name—his character, his reputation, his very presence—will be held in high honor everywhere. The first half of the prayer is thus all about God. Prayer that doesn't start there is always in danger of concentrating on ourselves, and very soon it stops being prayer altogether and collapses into the random thoughts, fears and longings of our own minds.

Matthew 6:9-13

“Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,

Your name be honored as holy.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

[For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.]

I. The Sovereignty of God

Notes: _____

Romans 8:28

We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.

C.S. Lewis in his book *Perelandra*

"Whatever you do, He will make good of it. But not the good He had prepared for you if you had obeyed him."

II. The Sanctity of God

Notes: _____

Sam Storms

The holiness of God only secondarily refers to His moral purity, His righteousness of character. It primarily points to His infinite otherness. To say that God is holy is to say that He is transcendently separate. Holiness is not one attribute among many. It is not like grace or power or knowledge or wrath. Everything about God is holy. Each attribute partakes of divine holiness.

Isaiah 55:8-9

We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose.

Charles Spurgeon

In holiness God is more clearly seen than in anything else, save in the Person of Christ Jesus the Lord, of whose life such holiness is but a repetition.

III. The Sanctuary of God

Notes: _____

C.S. Lewis

God is not proud. He will have us even though we have shown that we prefer everything else to Him.

Psalms 46 NIV

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. *Selah*

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

CONCLUSION:

Exodus 15:11

LORD, who is like You among the gods?
Who is like You, glorious in holiness,
revered with praises, performing wonders?

Sinclair Ferguson

God's holiness means He is separate from sin. But holiness in God also means wholeness. God's holiness is His "God-ness." It is His being God in all that it means for Him to be God. To meet God in His holiness, therefore, is to be altogether overwhelmed by the discovery that He is God, and not man.

"Our Hearts are Restless Until They Rest in You"

From the *Confessions*

Saint Augustine of Hippo

Great are you, O Lord, and exceedingly worthy of praise; your power is immense, and your wisdom beyond reckoning. And so we men, who are a due part of your creation, long to praise you – we also carry our mortality about with us, carry the evidence of our sin and with it the proof that you thwart the proud. You arouse us so that praising you may bring us joy, because you have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.

Grant me to know and understand, Lord, which comes first. To call upon you or to praise you? To know you or to call upon you? Must we know you before we can call upon you? Anyone who invokes what is still unknown may be making a mistake. Or should you be invoked first, so that we may then come to know you? But how can people call upon someone in whom they do not yet believe? And how can they believe without a preacher?

But scripture tells us that those who seek the Lord will praise him, for as they seek they find him, and on finding him they will praise him. Let me seek you then, Lord, even while I am calling upon you, and call upon you even as I believe in you; for to us you have indeed been preached. My faith calls upon you, Lord, this faith which is your gift to me, which you have breathed into me through the humanity of your Son and the ministry of your preacher.

How shall I call upon my God, my God and my Lord, when by the very act of calling upon him I would be calling him into myself? Is there any place within me into which my God might come? How should the God who made heaven and earth come into me? Is there any room in me for you, Lord, my God? Even heaven and earth, which you have made and in which you have made me – can even they contain you? Since nothing that exists would exist without you, does it follow that whatever exists does in some way contain you?

But if this is so, how can I, who am one of these existing things, ask you to come into me, when I would not exist at all unless you were already in me? Not yet am I in hell, after all but even if I were, you would be there too; for if I descend into the underworld, you are there. No, my God, I would not exist, I would not be at all, if you were not in me. Or should I say, rather, that I should not exist if I were not in you, from whom are all things, through whom are all things, in whom are all things? Yes, Lord, that is the truth, that is indeed the truth. To what place can I invite you, then, since I am in you? Or where could you come from, in order to come into me? To what place outside heaven and earth could I travel, so that my God could come to me there, the God who said, I fill heaven and earth?

Who will grant it to me to find peace in you? Who will grant me this grace, that you should come into my heart and inebriate it, enabling me to forget the evils that beset me and embrace you, my only good? What are you to me? Have mercy on me, so that I may tell. What indeed am I to you, that you should command me to love you, and grow angry with me if I do not, and threaten me with enormous woes? Is not the failure to love you woe enough in itself?

Alas for me! Through your own merciful dealings with me, O Lord my God, tell me what you are to me. Say to my soul, I am your salvation. Say it so that I can hear it. My heart is listening, Lord; open the ears of my heart and say to my soul, I am your salvation. Let me run towards this voice and seize hold of you. Do not hide your face from me: let me die so that I may see it, for not to see it would be death to me indeed.

Excerpted from the Confessions of St. Augustine (Book I, Chapter 1)