

# Matthew 6

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[ 0 : 00 ] I said I have four children, so that means that I have four dependents. A dependent is somebody that requires someone or something for financial or other support.

Reliant on, to be counting on, to be leaning on, to be supported by, to be sustained by. Somebody else, this idea of being dependent.

And a Christian is somebody that is dependent on God. A Christian is somebody that, left to their own devices, would flounder. Left to their own devices, realizes that they are in trouble.

And has come to recognize that there is a firm place on which to stand. There is a father that takes us into the family.

There is a shepherd that cares for us. And we willingly surrender ourselves and put ourselves into the protection and care of somebody else.

[ 1 : 01 ] And as we look at these last three petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts. Lead us not into temptation. These three concepts are flesh out what it means to be dependent on God.

What it means to be a Christian. What is the posture of a Christian leaning on, depending on someone else. Just to take the Lord's Prayer as a whole for a second.

It is a great statement to explain what a Christian is. If you are in any doubt as to what a true Christian is, just recall what you said as a child in the Lord's Prayer.

And it will give you the categories of what it really looks like to be a Christian. Somebody that has said our Father. Somebody that has come to be enveloped and to be within the care and the family of God.

But Jesus, you know, turns up in the pages of Scripture in the New Testament. And at his baptism, the Father speaks from heaven and says, My Son in whom I am well pleased.

[ 2 : 17 ] Or this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And so we would fully expect Jesus to call God Father. But what is really striking and stark and in a sense new in the Scriptures, when we get to the Lord's Prayer, is that not only would Jesus call God Father, but he would encourage us to come and to call him Father.

And so those of us that are within God's family, then these first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer show us what it's like to be within the family, whereby we live for the glory of his name.

We are fulfilling what the people in Romans 1 are condemned for by not glorifying God. We live for the sake of his name. That is what it is to be a Christian, living for his kingdom, his kingdom come.

I'm not about me anymore. It's not me.com that's the ruling influence and force in my life. It is, I am living for the interests of my Father. What else does it mean to be a Christian?

Well, to pray that his will would be done. And in order to pray that his will would be done, you need to be prepared to do his will. Because if his will is going to be done on earth, it will have to be done within the square meter in which you stand as well.

[ 3 : 50 ] And so, it just, and even as we pray in the order that we pray the Lord's Prayer, God's interests first, our dependences second.

We see something of what it means to be a Christian. We're first and foremost for God. First and foremost, we're about his name. We're about his kingdom.

We desire above our own interests that his will would be done on earth. And so, this prayer that we have prayed since we were little boys in BB, that we've prayed since we were standing in school assemblies, that we've prayed our whole lives, reminds us.

It doesn't mean that everybody that prays it is a Christian, because sometimes it can just run through you without being meant from the heart.

But if you stop and consider these words and are prepared to mean these words, these are a true statement of what it means to be a Christian, to live, to be within the family of God, to live for his kingdom, to be prepared to set aside your kingdom and live for his kingdom, and thinking these things through.

[ 5 : 04 ] But as we come to the second half of it, it is this idea of dependence on God. I suppose it's seen by the word as being a weak thing to depend on somebody else, to be needy, to be a dependent.

It's seen as coming of age or maturing, that you don't need to be dependent on your father anymore for finance or whatever, and I'd be glad of that when my kids are that age. But as God understands it, he would have us depend upon it.

And there is a great... Don't see that as negative, because it is a... For those of you that are young and considering whether or not you'll forge your own path, or whether or not you'll follow God's path, it is a wonderful thing to not be the boss of your life.

It is a wonderful thing that all of the responsibilities for your decisions, and all of the responsibilities for your provision, doesn't fall on your own shoulders all the time.

It's a wonderful thing whenever you go to choose a wife or a husband, to be aware that somebody else is in this process of decision with you.

[ 6 : 25 ] It's a wonderful thing when you're wondering even what career you'll embark upon. To know that you're not just picking something arbitrarily out of the careers manual, but to know that there's a father who has your best interests at heart, who knows you better than you know yourself, that is shaping and influencing you.

And so to be dependent on somebody else is not to be despised, but it's to be embraced. I suppose I grasp that better now than I ever did. It's a wonderful thing to know that even if I can't meet my needs, that there's a heavenly father who is attending to things for me.

And so just that by way of comment. So give us today our daily bread. What should we say about that? Take it in its first context, first of all.

It was Jesus' instruction, first of all, to the disciples. And as you look at how the disciples operated on a day-to-day basis, it gives you some idea of what God's intention is.

Give us today our daily bread. I think it's a fair deduction that when Jesus fed the 5,000, if you go back in your minds to that story, Jesus feeding the 5,000, the only resource they had that day was the five loaves and two fish.

[ 7 : 52 ] So what I think we can deduce from that is that the disciples didn't even have that much on that day. They didn't even have a peace box with them. When the leader rose to pay the temple tax later on, Peter didn't seem to have the two drachma that was required to pay the temple tax.

And when Jesus in Matthew 10 sent out his disciples on mission, he said to them, You take it in its first context, give us today our daily bread, you see a tight group of gospel-focused fellows going out to be about God's kingdom.

And they didn't have as much as two fish and five loaves with them. And that gives us something of the context, this idea of daily bread, to be about God's purposes.

The Puritan Thomas Watson said that we need temporal things for spiritual ends. Anyway. I think included in, if we're to take these last three petitions of the Lord's Prayer to encompass everything that we're going to need for life, then daily bread has to include more than just a loaf.

I think it has to include all things physical. Luther said that it included all things in the physical realm. Food, health, suitable weather, a house, a home.

[ 9 : 36 ] The heart of the matter as we come to God in this first petition that concerns ourselves is to ask God for everything that we're going to need physically.

I think even the truth of what we're praying comes out sometimes when we say grace. Because even though we might have enough money in the bank to buy the shop that includes the bread, never mind the bread that's in it, still, we could have bread on our shelves and it do us no good. Sometimes we embrace the spirit of this prayer when we say our grace that we would ask God to bless the food to us because we're aware that even though we have money in the bank, it still might not meet our physical needs.

It's also a prayer, it also says give us today our daily bread. This word that's translated daily only occurs here in the New Testament and what it seems to mean is for the coming day.

So at some stage, whether it's in the evening or whether it's in the morning, we're praying just for the coming day. It's a helpful thing and it just reminds us that we do need to pray daily.

[10:57] We do need to be asking God daily. Sometimes people doubt. I've been encouraging young people and encouraging myself to have a daily quiet time ever since I became a Christian and sometimes people will call into question where do you find that in the scriptures?

Well here we see that we would pray daily. Here we see that God expects us to come daily and to ask of him what we need. And it also reminds us that we do need to ask.

God expects his people to ask. J.C. Riley says this. He says, I hold salvation by grace as strongly as anyone. I would offer gladly, I would gladly offer a free and full pardon to the greatest sinner that ever lived.

I would not hesitate to stand by his dying bed and say believe in the Lord Jesus Christ even now and you shall be saved. But, Riley says, that a man can have salvation without asking for it. I cannot see in the Bible. It just reminds us that we came to be within the kingdom of God. We came to be part of the family of God as we called out to him for mercy.

[12:08] And we never get beyond that as Christians whereby we're continually depending upon him. And for all that we need he encourages us to ask him. It also reminds us that we need to live one day at a time.

A massive percentage of our worry and how we get overwhelmed is when we're concerned about something more than just the day that is before us.

When we start to think a few weeks ahead, when we start to think a few years ahead, when we start to think like that, life becomes overwhelming. But we're not intended to live like that. The Lord's Prayer reminds us that we're supposed to live one day at a time because in a sense tomorrow is too much for us to fathom.

There are too many variables. Too much to... It just becomes overwhelming. But today, especially today with prayer, is a manageable chunk chunk of the unknown that we can trust God for.

Give us today this daily bread. Helen Rosevear speaks of living in the Congo when rebel insurgents were savagely beating up people. There were barbaric mutilations and indescribable murders.

[13:26] She says, life was a living nightmare. But we had to go on living, she says. Whenever we could, we met together in the church or home or under trees to pray to read the word of God and sing his praises.

And so we kept seeing and God graciously replaced fear with peace. Give us today our daily bread. We're a people that are dependent on God for all things physical.

God requires... God entreats us to come and ask him. And he, he graciously gives us all that we would need.

What else? Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. The context here as I've already described is of a believer's prayer.

This is a prayer that Jesus is encouraging his, those that are already his disciples to pray. And he says, forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. When we first come to faith, we're forever changed in God's sight.

[14:33] I firmly believe that. John 5, 24 says, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, he does not come into judgment but has passed him from death to life.

Christians are once dead, now alive, forever. that is a definite change. Romans 8 says, there's therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And so Christians are no longer under condemnation but they've been brought to a place of peace with God. 2 Corinthians 5, 17 says, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. And so for the Christian, sin is not that which leaves us dead again.

It is not that which leaves us condemned again. It is not that which leaves us being restored to our original lost condition.

But 1 John tells us that we're not sinless even as God's people. We've been brought into fellowship with the Father and with the Son but, John went on to say, if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

[15:52] And so, this prayer, moving on from the physical to the spiritual realm is how we keep clean before God. It's how we manage sin on a daily basis.

What will sin do? You might ask a question. Can I, can I rely on grief? Can I just make my way through life and the blood of Jesus will sort it all out in the end?

and I can just leave it and do what I want? What will sin do? You might ask. Well, Isaiah 59, 2 says that your iniquities have made a separation between you and God.

And your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. So, there's a risk that if sin is not confessed, if sin is not forgiven on a daily basis, that there's a separation, that there's something of a distance comes in between us and God such that our prayers are less effective.

What else will sin do? Well, Psalm 51, hope to look at this in the tent tomorrow night, but Psalm 51 says, let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

[ 17 : 06 ] You feel a heavy, heavy weight of David's unconfessed sin coming out in Psalm 51. Let these bones that you have crushed rejoice.

A sense of living under a cloud if we don't know something of God's daily forgiveness. And sure, we would know that anyway.

Any of you that, any of you husbands that live with a wife will know rightly that if there's a fight going on in the house, your bones are somewhat subdued. There is somewhat of an uneasy spirit in the place.

And it would be easier to head off in the van than it would be to sit around the table and have a cup of coffee. And so it is. So it is spiritually. If there's an issue between us and our Father, we know about it.

Even it comes to us somehow and just within our spirits, our strength is sacked. Our boldness in prayer is gone.

[ 18 : 15 ] Our heart to come before God is missing. Psalm 32 says, When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength dried up as by the heat of summer. Tell me, did you once have a vitality as a Christian that you don't have now?

Can you go back to a time where you stopped asking God for forgiveness? 1 John says, Fellowship and joy are linked.

Has Christianity lost its shame? Are you missing something even of the strong positives that come out in Psalm 51?

Restore to me the joy of your salvation. Then I will teach transgressors your way. Can you witness? Have you the boldness within you to witness?

[ 19 : 30 ] Or have you lost that because you've lost out? And you know, it's not really that big a deal to get it sorted out.

It's just a prayer way. It's just a humbling of ourselves. That's all that stands between us. And knowing the flood of God's presence, the life of his spirit, like wind in our sails again.

It's only a humble prayer way. If we had to go on a pilgrimage, if we had to do community service, it would be different, but it's only for the sake of a prayer, for a calling out to God again, for a moment of honesty, that you could know the vitality of the Lord flowing through your veins again.

What a privilege. as we have forgiven our debtors. It's a two-way thing. God has forgiven us and paid the price of that forgiveness.

He has forgiven us and he took upon himself what it cost to get, to deliver, to procure that forgiveness for us.

[ 21 : 04 ] when I was preparing this, I was listening to an Australian preacher, just to get his take on it and try to get my head rounded. I was listening to a guy called Phil Jensen.

He was explaining when he used to play cricket with his son in the back garden, that there was a neighbouring house with a row of windows. He says during the course of he and his son growing up and the two of them playing cricket together, they managed to break almost every single window in the neighbour's house.

He says always the neighbour was gracious to him and he forgave him every time. But he only forgave him so long as Phil was prepared to pay for the glass and put it in.

But he said there was a different instance whereby he was playing cricket with his would-be brother-in-law in his would-be father-in-law's back garden.

And the same thing happened whereby they broke one of his would-be father-in-law's windows.

And he says in that instance it was totally different because not only did he break the window and his would-be father-in-law forgave him, but the would-be father-in-law also paid for the glass and

even after paying for the glass went on to give him his daughter.

[ 22 : 28 ] And that's the difference forgiveness of the kind of forgiveness that has been made available to us. Not only does God forgive us, but he doesn't ask us to climb a mountain or to do anything in terms of trying to pay for the debt of our sin.

But he forgives us and he takes the hit himself on the cross to deliver for us what he's given us. And as we come then to forgive others, to forgive our debtors as we have been forgiven, that's the kind of forgiveness that we have to offer.

Not only do we forgive the person who has slandered us, but we take the hit ourselves by not trying to justify ourselves or to keep our name clean.

We take the weight of it upon ourselves. I'm familiar with a minister back home in Northern Ireland and he's trying to preach the gospel, but he can't forgive a large section of the congregation for ousting his wife from the chair of the women's group.

And he might as well sit down and forget about preaching the gospel if he cannot find it within himself like Christ to offer the same unreserved costly forgiveness that was offered to him at the cross.

[ 23 : 58 ] Forgive us our sins as we forgive our debtors. I'm out of time and my boss wouldn't have me go any further I don't think.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Again, it's just reminding ourselves that sin is too much for us.

We couldn't cope with sin in our unregenerate state. Left to ourselves, we find ourselves in the list of vices that are mentioned in Galatians five.

But with God's help we can produce or live the fruit of the Spirit. And so let us never forget that sin is too much for us and we're continually dependent upon the Father.

That's as much as far as I can go. What a prayer. prayer to set the compass at the beginning of the day. Our Father, I will be about your interests today.

[ 25 : 16 ] Our Father, I can't get through this day without you. I need your help for physical sustenance. I need your help for spiritual sustenance. I am in danger of going down blind alleys today and they are crowding in over me and being in great trouble.

J.C. Ryland finished with a quote from him. He says, prayer obtains fresh and continued outpourings of the Spirit. He alone can carry it forward and make it prosper.

But the good spirit loves to be entreated and those who ask most will always have the most of his influence. Just a few thoughts from the Lord's Prayer.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you for your kingdom. We thank you, Lord, that the ages of the church remind us that from a fearful group of ordinary men meeting in an upper room in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, all that we have seen these past 2,000 years reminds us that your kingdom will come, that your kingdom will be established, and that no one and nothing can stop it.

And our Father, we pray that we would find ourselves part of an army of ordinary people who have set ourselves to be about the business of God first.

[ 26 : 51 ] And our Father, the promise, the inherent promise in this prayer is need. That as we set ourselves to be about your work, that you will come in behind us as a strong man and enable us to have physically and spiritually everything that we need.

So, our Father, we thank you for our time together. We pray for the week that lies ahead for everyone. For whatever challenges lie ahead, it is not too much for the Lord to help us with.

And so, we pray that we would be those that are pleading with you at the beginning of the day, at the end of the day, for daily bread and all things that we need to keep going as Christians.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, we finish with