

## Pray Because of God's Grace: "Our Father"

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Mt 6:9-15; Rm 1:16-17; 3:21-26; Gal 4:4-7

Oakbrook Community Church (PCA)

### I. Prayer starts with the Fatherhood of God

- "the fact is that the secret of great praying has nothing to do with human effort or skill" Tim Chester, "You Can Pray", 10.
- Jesus taught us to pray Mt 6:9 by starting with "Our Father"
- But the heart of the Gospel is God has adopted us, He is our Father!

### II. Struggles with Prayer

- Techniques, journals, etc. may be helpful, but if these are what hold prayer together for you then prayer will be a burdensome duty
- Prophet Isaiah 29:13 - God doesn't want technique, but our hearts
- Calvin rightly calls prayer: "the chief exercise of faith"
- If so, then prayerlessness is practical atheism!

### III. Start with the Gospel Truths!

- That is where Jesus started: Mt 6:9
- Idea of calling God our Father is intimidating: even offensive to some
- Remember God's Revelation:
  - Neh 9:17; Dan 9:9; Ex 34:6-7 God is forgiving, Yet Holy
  - Psalmist declares: Ps 130:3-4 note amazement at God
  - Micah declares Micah 7:18-19
- Face the Conundrum of the Old Testament - how can a Holy God be a God to a sinful people? Exodus 6:7
- God is faithful in the face of His people's unfaithfulness! He offers hope: Jer 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-29
  - we ask: 'what will prevail, God's holiness or God's justice?'
  - The NT answers: Rom 1:16-17; Rom 3:21-26
  - So when we are faced with the age old question: "Is the covenant with God conditional because God is just and holy OR unconditional because God is our justifier?" Gospel answer YES!
  - The Gospel, Jesus' work answers the conundrum Gal 3:10-14
  - Our Identity is now in Jesus - God is now our Father Gal 3:26

### IV. Implications for Prayer

- When we pray, "Our Father" we declare the Gospel truths!
  - NO sin can bring us into condemnation Rom 8:1-2
  - We recognize sin as so serious and grievous that Jesus had to die
- When we recognize BOTH aspect of God's grace in the Gospel we talk with God as our Father
  - If we lose grasp of freeness of grace we will wallow in continued shame, guilt and self-loathing
  - if we see God as having to forgive, we think forgiveness is easy, then we won't properly confess our sins and struggle with holiness
- Jesus didn't hesitate to come to His Father in prayer (see Gospels)
  - If you have faith in Jesus then you are a son of God the Father Gal 4:4-7 and have access like Jesus!
  - Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father" so that we might have 'boldness and confidence through our faith in Jesus' Eph 3:12
  - "The Father will no more reject your prayers than He will reject the prayers of His own Son, Jesus!"

Now you have HEARD truths, Live them out, Apply Them:

- Do you have difficulty of praying to God as a toddler might approach their loving father?
- If you do, why do you feel that you are not worthy? Read Eph 3:1-12
- Carefully Read Ephesians chp 1-3 - because of Christ, who are you? Do you have full rights and privileges? Do you pray like it?

A Prayer from Colossians 1:9-14 from Tim Chester, You Can Pray, 25

Father God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, fill us with the knowledge of your will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that we may live a life worthy of you and please you in every way:

bearing fruit in every good work,  
growing in the knowledge of you,  
being strengthened with all power according to your glorious might  
so that we may have great endurance and patience,  
and giving joyful thanks to you, our Father.

For you have qualified us to share in the inheritance of your holy people in the kingdom of light.

You have rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son you love, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Amen.