

“Lord, Teach us to Pray”

- week 4 -

Matthew 6:9-13

We need to come together, as the body of Christ, and pray - pray for our world - for our nation - for revival and spiritual awakening. Each one of us needs to be a revival looking for a place to happen. We need to be the revival we're praying for, and also be the spiritual awakening that's looking for a place to break out. That is *us* - it's on us. Let's step up to the plate, and in the spirit of Isaiah chapter six, say, *“Here am I Lord, send me. Here we are Lord, send us.”*

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

*“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.”*

We may wonder about the meaning of the strange line in the Lord's Prayer that says, *“And lead us not into temptation...”* Isn't that an odd thing to pray? Jesus said not to ask but to say. This is all about an *imperative* - a proclamation - a statement - a declaration or a decree - where we stand in our God-given identity and authority and say what only takes twenty-one seconds to recite, but that can easily turn into a lot longer, because each of the sections of the Lord's model prayer turns into a platform that then leads into other things to pray.

We're focusing now on making that practical, and understanding what it is we're to do - how to lean into it using this model prayer as a template for praying for all the things that we need. As we're praying for revival and spiritual awakening - learning how Jesus taught us to pray, and how to hear his voice - we also should keep in mind what is “mission central” for us as followers of Jesus. Our vision for the next chapter is written in red in the Bible - what *Jesus* said. Our vision is his *Word*, and it's his vision that matters. We need to get back to what *he* told us to do from the beginning and just do that.

Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV - known as the Great Commission or the Apostolic Mandate

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” Amen.

If all authority has been given to *Jesus* in heaven and on earth, then the devil has none. We need to remind ourselves of that throughout each day. We don't *have* to be afraid of anything. We don't have to live in *fear*, or to live intimidated by the enemy. He cannot win a war because he's *already* been defeated. We fight from the *place of victory* - not for victory. Jesus already won - *tetelestai* - it is finished!

We will see in these last days a lot of things that aren't going to fit into our neat little theological boxes, and we'll need to open our minds that there's a lot more going on around us than we might think. As Jesus is on the move, so is the enemy, but the Good News is that Jesus fought and won the war - and he has de-fanged and de-clawed the enemy, whose only weapons now are deception and lies to wield against us.

The Bible calls him *“a murderer from the beginning, [who] does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”* - John 8:44 NKJV. He comes to us sounding a lot like our own voice in the mirror, telling us *“we're no good and that we're not going to make it - it's not worth it - we might as well quit and just give up - why try - no one even cares.”*

The enemy is here to *destroy* - he seeks *“to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. [but Jesus showed up and says] I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”* Life to the full - that's what *Jesus* is about. Why are we talking about spiritual warfare right now? What does that have to do with the Lord's Prayer?

“And lead us not into temptation” - Matthew 6:13 KJV Why would God lead us into temptation - why is *that* there? That doesn't even make *sense* to us. *“but deliver us from evil [the evil one]”* To deliver literally means *to rescue - to come in on our behalf and rescue*. These are *declarations* based on the authority of God's Word - and are based on us speaking God's Word - and on the authority that Jesus has conferred upon us as his believers and followers.

1] Do not lead us into temptation

This is actually a Hebrew prayer form that we see all throughout the Psalms. It can have a positive and a negative juxtaposed against each other, or a negative and a positive - as in “you do not do this, but you will do this.” - or, “You will do this but you won’t do this.” It’s simply a literary prayer form that they would use.

Psalms 38:21-22 NKJV

“Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.”

Psalms 141:3-4 NKJV

“Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.”

Matthew 6:13 NKJV

“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.”

The way we can render that in prayer, that will help us remember what it means, is to say, “Oh, Father, I am so thankful that You will never lead me into temptation, but You will, and You do deliver me from evil.” Knowing what we know now, it could sound like this: “Our Father in heaven, holy is Your name - like the angels around the Throne say, ‘Holy Holy Holy is the LORD God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!’ Your kingdom COME - Your will BE DONE on Earth - right here - right now - as it is in Heaven.”

We stand in our authority, and when we pray, say... Then we go into the next section: “Give us today our bread for tomorrow.” That literally means that Jesus flipped the script and said, “Look, it’s not just about today, like it was to the Israelites when they were in the wilderness and God said they were only to take enough manna for today” - but now he says, “It’s also your bread for tomorrow,” because he’s the God of More-than-Enough - he’s the God of Abundance.

Jesus came to give us abundant Life - to the full - and he said pray *this* way - “when you pray, say, Give us today our bread for tomorrow.” Then we can thank God for his provision and his abundance because he gives us *more* than enough. We can be a blessing to others, because that’s what it’s all about. It’s not about *me* or *my stuff* - it’s about being a blessing to others.

The next section we come to is about forgiveness: *“Father, forgive my debts as I forgive my debtors - forgive my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me - forgive my sins as I forgive those who sin against me - forgive my iniquities as I forgive those who commit iniquity against me - - forgive my offenses as I forgive those who have offended me. Why? - because I’ve given up my ‘right’ to be offended, and to stay offended!”*

Then, we can pray, *“Father, in the event that I’ve offended anyone, or that anyone offends me - prematurely - I forgive - I let it go.”* When we do that, we can enjoy *not* having any enemies (except the devil) and focus on accomplishing our mission to love everyone, not expecting anything back. Today, lean into this statement, *“God, You do not (blank)... but You do (blank). Father, You’ll never lead me into temptation, but You do deliver me. In fact, I am free indeed, according to Your Word, because ‘whom the Son sets free is free indeed!’ ”*

2] But deliver us from the evil one!

The evil one can also be wickedness or evil as in *evil of the world*. We have to understand that our God is a *Deliverer* - he delivers us from *the evil one* - he *delivers* us from *evil*. If there was ever a time in our lives in history where we need to “armor-up” and be ready to fight the good fight of faith, it’s right now. If we think persecution is not coming to America, we’ve been asleep for the last five years. It’s happening now, and the more we speak up, we will, by nature of Newton’s Third Law, create resistance.

As we move forward to advance the kingdom, it’s like standing up in the back of a pickup going sixty miles an hour - you’re creating resistance. So, don’t be surprised when someone comes against you in your place of work. Don’t be surprised when somebody in your family isn’t as excited about your faith as *you* are, or when you get written up in the local newspaper because they’re not happy with what you’re doing, or what you’re taking a stand for.

1 Timothy 6:12 NKJV

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

It’s a *good fight*! Paul wouldn’t have told Timothy to fight a good fight if there wasn’t one to fight. There *is* a fight to be fought. We know that we fight from the posture and position of *victory* - Jesus *won* the *war* - but there are many skirmishes yet to be fought. The “residue of war” is on our life. The enemy doesn’t go down easy - and in the residue of his authority which he *thinks* he still has - he’s not going out without a fight himself.

Guess where he brings the fight - into you - the *battlefield of your mind* - into your life - your world and sphere of influence - your friends and family - co-workers. He brings the fight to you - because he hates you - you who represents everything God loves. He wants to take you out and to ruin you. He can't kill you, but he certainly wants to *marginalize* you - get you on the sidelines where you're ineffective. It's interesting how a lot of times we start feeling strong with the spirit of revival - living large for Jesus - then, all of a sudden, the warfare seems to start.

Every Sunday morning, as we're getting ready for church, something happens - something weird - and when you get to church, you've been fighting out in the car and then walk in and say, *"God bless you, brother. Hallelujah, give me a hug!"* (never happens at our church). But, just think about the enemy and how strategic he is - the last thing he wants is for you to walk into church and experience community, love and worship in the presence of God.

One of our main values here is to host well the presence of God. That's why we *worship*, and *pray*, and *seek his face*. The enemy's number-one assignment is to breach that relationship we have with our heavenly Father and with each other. Almost every assault from the enemy is an assault on a relationship. If he's going to tear something up, it's going to be *that*. So, Paul tells Timothy to fight the good fight of faith - where we *win*. Why? - because Jesus *already* won! Our Bodyguard went before us. He fought the enemy and won - and now we do this life, and we fight the good fight - *not* the bad fight of faith - which means that we can *stand*, and having done all, to keep standing.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds [literally a fortress as a medieval castle], casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"

If we're unaware that there's a spiritual battle around us right now, we're in trouble already. We should be nervous when things get *really* quiet - when there's not resistance. When things seem to be working perfectly well and everybody *likes* us, we're in *trouble*. That means we've completely backed away from the call on our life to advance the kingdom. There will be opposition as life happens - as the enemy comes against us - as trauma happens - as relationships are breached and broken.

The opportunistic enemy will leverage your failure, pain, and trauma against you like a judo expert - and he will kick you when you're down. He doesn't fight fair. He comes in when he finds a crack or breach and builds a stronghold there, where he then has the ability to rule and rein within a given sphere of influence that we've given over. We can pull down the strongholds of the enemy - anything that comes against our knowing God, we have the ability - the weapons of warfare - so we can literally pull down those strongholds of heresy and blasphemy of the antichrist spirit that's in this world - lies that get inserted into the Church - because we're mighty in God.

Any argument that would keep us from knowing God better, we can cast down with the same weapons that Paul had - bringing (capturing) every thought, and setting it aside, saying, *"I reject that - it will not be a seed in my life that brings forth a bad harvest. I refuse to let it live in me or have influence upon me. I will instead, take it captive, cast it down, and submit it to the obedience of Christ."*

How do we do that? We say out loud, *"In the name of Jesus, I thank You for the mighty weapons I have in God. Thank You that You've given me the authority to cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against me knowing God better, and now I take this thought captive, and I make it obedient to Christ!"* When we submit it to the obedience of Christ, we're literally testing it - putting it before Jesus, to whom we're saying, *"Is that true?"* He'll tell you - you'll know it in your knower if it's a lie. Then we take that seed and drop it to the ground and walk away, refusing to entertain it anymore.

Ephesians 6:10-18 NKJV - Stand up and armor up

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints"

Jesus would not tell us to fight the good fight of faith without equipping us to win the victory. As we move through this season and watch what's going on in the world, this is our time to stand. It's *not* the time to passively sit back and say, "*I hope somebody else will get excited about Jesus. They need to start a revival over there.*" There comes a point where we need to say, "*If it begins, it begins with me. If it's to be, it begins with me. Why not here - why not now - why not me?*"

That's not building ourselves up, but saying we're available to go on the altar to be given as a burnt offering before God. "*Burn me up for Your glory - for Your honor!*" It's not about *us* - it's about the next generation that's coming *behind* us. What kind of spiritual legacy will we leave them? It can't just be habits, principles and practices - it's got to be an expression of the kingdom of God in real-time. They need to see the power of the Gospel, and not just the *word* of the Gospel. They need to see the Gospel that *transforms, delivers and heals*. Who will it start with? Don't look down the road ...*it starts with us*.

Prayer

Father, we honor You. Thank You for Your Word that's living and active - sharper than any two-edged sword. It literally pierces our hearts and our bones down to the marrow, because it is so alive. Father, thank You that there's no condemnation here. There's mercy here. There's no guilt and shame - only grace. God, by Your power - the power of Your grace - meet us in the moment of our need. We give You honor and praise. In Jesus' name.

Amen