

Bible Lessons



**“The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous
man availeth much.”**

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Quarterly Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

BIBLE LESSONS, 4TH QUARTER, 2015

THEME FOR 4TH QUARTER

“THE LORD’S PRAYER”

For some time, my father, Bro. Leslie Busbee, has been growing feebler in body, and during the summer has endured a serious affliction. We discussed the upcoming quarter’s Bible Lessons, and Bro. Leslie related his burden and inspiration had been lifted. He is really not able to carry on his responsibility for these lessons unless God lifts the affliction and gives him new strength.

For several months I had felt the Lord pre-warn me that such a time was coming. Along with the warning, He inspired me with the following series of lessons. An added blessing was that, in answer to prayer, Bro. Leslie felt somewhat of an improvement in his condition and desired to have input into the lessons. He has written three of them in this series.

We begin with the disciples’ plea, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Using the Lord’s Prayer as a pattern, we will explore different elements of prayer. May God bless our understanding and experience of prayer to grow deeper, richer, and more fully develop into that “effectual, fervent prayer” that avails much.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

October 4, 2015

OUR FATHER

Luke 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

John 14:9b . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . .

Luke 15:31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.

Galatians 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

II Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

MEMORY VERSE: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. —Romans 8:15

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus came to bring us into the same personal, intimate relationship with the Heavenly Father that He enjoyed Himself. He revealed, through His life, the character of the Father.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:6, “closet”: An inner chamber, a secret room.

John 1:12, “power”: power to act; authority; right.

Galatians 4:6, “Abba”: the term of tender endearment used by a beloved child in an affectionate, dependent relationship with his father; daddy; papa.

II Corinthians 6:17, “separate”: to mark off by boundaries; set apart. “unclean thing”: not pure, because adulterated with a wrong mix; tainted. “receive”: admit; welcome; receive into one’s favor.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Master, seated on the mountain with his disciples gathered closely about him, began the greatest sermon ever preached. Immediately noticeable were His intimate references to “Your Father in Heaven,” a concept a bit remote from humanity until that moment, for fewer than eight times in the Old Testament, and then in a rather distant way, the name *Father* had been mentioned.

David seemed to grasp the concept in a more personal way (Psalm 68:5; 103:13). Isaiah pointed directly to the coming Messiah as the One Who would bring us into that relationship of Father and children (Isaiah 63:16; 64:8; 9:6). Now Christ Himself begins to lead us directly into the close relationship that He had with His Father.

The remaining verses in today’s lesson give an outline of the *character* of the Father—His unselfishness, His love; and the way by which we become His sons and daughters.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Praying in Secret*: What does this mean?
2. *Vain Repetitions*: What kind of prayers would this include?
3. *Why Pray?*: If the Heavenly Father already knows what we need, why do we need to pray?
4. *The Unselfishness of our Heavenly Father*: Which verses show us this attribute?
5. *Love of our Father Manifested*: How was this demonstrated in order to make us His children?
6. *Personal Action*: What action on my part causes me to become a child of God?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

“Our” is a sharing word. Jesus is saying, “My Father *and* your Father, too.” Jesus is *sharing* that close relationship with us! So now WE can say, “Your Father, Jesus, and MY Father too!”

Taking it a step further, we remember that the blessings we ask for ourselves, we also ask for others, and live in such a way to share the blessing of being God’s child with others. He is not just MY Father, He is YOUR Father, too. We are sisters and brothers.

“Behold, what manner of love!” His is an unselfish, sacrificial love. He laid down His life so we could share in the glory and fellowship He had with His Father and inherit the riches of the Father’s Kingdom. As we say, “Our Father,” let us thank God for the awful cost of Jesus’ shed blood and sacrificial life.

He did not go to such costs so that we might remain in cold, formal, distant religion, but that we might, moment by moment, by His blood and in His Name, commune personally with the Father. We can come to Him for every need—all that He has is ours! We need never to ask in hesitation or unbelief. Ask in faith! It is His good pleasure to give the kingdom—righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!

How do we know our Heavenly Father’s character? By studying the life of Jesus. How did He deal with all kinds of people and situations? Was He affectionate, kind, forgiving, patient, generous? What then might we expect of His dealings with us or His correction?

However distant, limited, absent, forbidding, or abusive the relationship with our earthly father may have been—our relationship with the Father can be, through Christ, warm, endearing, and affectionate. We can look up into His face, expectantly, and say, “Abba.” “Daddy.”

As we lift our hearts in prayer to Him, let this knowledge transform our prayer lives from duty to delight!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

The Lord's prayer is a simple prayer outlining key elements and dispositions that should constitute our prayers today. We should always endeavor to come to the Lord with humility of heart in reverence, recognizing our insufficiencies and littleness and His greatness.

Jesus also gave us the illustration of the publican and Pharisee who came to the temple to pray. The Pharisee enumerated his own goodness, which was a form of pride. I noticed the words preceding these two prayers: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others." May this spirit be far from our hearts and minds. The publican smote his breast and simply said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." The Pharisee "prayed thus with himself." His prayer lacked heartfelt humility.

It is not so much the words as it is the heart and spirit behind it. I don't remember all the details, but I remember an account of a man who didn't know how to pray. In few words his heart cried, "Lord this is Jim." He prayed that way sincerely at different times, "Lord, this is Jim." In other words, "I am here, Lord, waiting before You, wanting and needing to hear Your words down in my heart." Somehow, the Lord answered Jim back: "Jim, this is the Lord." That was all it took to bring peace down into Jim's hurting heart.

Let us not fall into the trap of thinking we will be heard by much speaking. Few, sincere words are best.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

OCTOBER 11, 2015

WHICH ART IN HEAVEN

Exodus 3:14a And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM:

Deuteronomy 4:39 Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.

Isaiah 66:1 Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest?

2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Psalms 11:4 The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

Psalms 113:5 Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high,

6 Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!

Psalms 123:1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

II Chronicles 30:27b . . .and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.

Habakkuk 2:20 But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

MEMORY VERSE: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. —Hebrews 11:6

CENTRAL THOUGHT: When we come to the Father in prayer, we must believe that **He is**—He exists—and that He is high and lifted up, dwelling in the heaven of heavens. We must also believe that He condescends to look upon us, dwell with us, and hear and answer our prayer if we will exalt Him, reverence and live carefully before Him, and look to Him with an humble and contrite heart.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Exodus 3:14, “I AM THAT I AM”: “I am who am”—Vulgate. “I am he who exists”—Septuagint. “The Eternal, who passes not away”—Arabic.

Isaiah 66:2, “poor”: depressed in mind or circumstances; afflicted; humble; lowly; needy. “contrite”: smitten; maimed; dejected. “trembleth at my word”: in awe of and reverence to God’s Word.

Psalms 11:4, “try”: test; investigate; examine; prove.

Psalms 113:6, “humbleth”: to become low; to be abased; stoop.

Habakkuk 2:20, “Keep silence”: Hush! Keep silent!

Ecclesiastes 5:2, “Be not rash”: don’t be disturbed; dismayed; terrified; hasty.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Moses asked God, “What shall I say when the children of Israel ask Your name?” God answered him, “Tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” He was establishing a right relationship with the children of Israel, who had been in Egypt for over 400 years and must have been greatly influenced by the many gods and goddesses there. Those gods were only myths; He *really IS*. This is the first thing God wanted to establish with the Israelites (Ex. 3:13, 14).

David accepted the reality of God without question. He constantly affirmed his belief, trust in, dependence upon, and allegiance, obligation, and reverence to God. He acknowledged God as being on high, yet very mindful and loving to humanity. His writings frequently exclaim of the wonder of the great and holy God condescending to visit and be

attentive to his need.

Moses, David, Solomon, and Isaiah were all very mindful of the majesty, yet condescension, of the presence of God. Face to face, Moses talked with God, saw the pillar of cloud, the fire and the smoke of His presence in the sanctuary, and with the elders saw a vision of God on His throne (Ex. 24; Ex. 40). Solomon saw the indescribable and unapproachable glory of the Lord filling the temple (I Kings 8:10-11). Isaiah saw the vision of the Lord, high and lifted up, while His train of glory filled the temple (Isa. 6:1).

Solomon and Habakkuk remind us of what our response should be to the truth that God is reigning on His heavenly throne: reverence and quietness, with a marked carefulness to words spoken while in His presence.

Now Christ, having laid aside this unapproachable glory to be clothed upon with human flesh, while introducing us to this new relationship with *Abba*, reminds us first of all that God IS, and that He is LORD of heaven and earth, dwelling on high, and beholding, ruling and intervening in the hearts and affairs of mankind.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Divine Revelation:* How did God reveal and prove His identity and reality to the children of Israel? Describe some examples and the particular names He ascribed to Himself through those experiences.

2. *Divine Condescension:* What awareness or emotion does it stir within you as you meditate upon the greatness and highness of God, yet knowing that He stoops to our level, listens to our prayers, and assists us in our needs?

3. *Affirming our Faith:* Is this an area where Satan attempts to plant doubt and unbelief even in Christians as they pray? How do we combat this attack upon our faith?

4. *Our Response to His Presence:* What attitudes and actions should accompany our private worship? Our public worship? Is there a danger that we might become *too* casual and irreverent in our desire to approach the Heavenly Father in a warm and childlike way?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In our last lesson we learned, as we first come to God in prayer, to rejoice in the precious truth that God is our dear Father. Today, we remind ourselves that no matter what our emotions or feelings may be, He IS, and we confirm that belief by diligently seeking Him. It helps, as we begin our prayer, to state this belief, gratefully and worshipfully, before Him. “Lord, I KNOW that YOU ARE. I believe in You. I acknowledge You in all my ways. I put my full confidence and trust in You. I believe that You see, You know, You care, and You are able.”

We also remind ourselves, and the Lord, that He is in control over all; He rules in Heaven and in the kingdoms of men, He sees everything and knows our hearts, our thoughts and our words before we speak. We SLOW DOWN and quiet our raging minds before Him. We rest in the calm belief and acceptance of His love. We also admit our needs, remembering that He condescends only to those who are humble and contrite and reverential to His Word.

Whether singing, praying, preaching, testifying, or exhorting; let us maintain this reverence and quietness of spirit, not being hasty, proud, or pushing our own agendas. Neither should we turn the worship experience into a “free

-for-all” of frivolity, entertainment, carnality, or discord.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

David mentioned many times the lifting up of the eyes: “Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.” “Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.” “But mine eyes are unto thee, O God.” “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.” It is always a pleasure to look up into the physical sky and observe the beautiful clouds drifting across an azure horizon or stand beneath a night sky of velvet hue and watch the stars twinkle above us. But let us observe with our spiritual eyes the heavens that the Lord created and inhabits. Philippians 3:20 reminds us, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. . .” We should always be aware of heaven and the direction of our aim, our goals, our priorities, our thought patterns; even our very conversation.

Immediately after Jesus had ascended up into the heavens, the angels admonished those standing there to look for His coming in the same manner He had ascended. “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). Notice the direction in which we should look: UP.

When the fiery serpents were sent to plague the children of Israel, the Lord commanded Moses to make a brazen serpent to set upon a pole. The people were then to look up to the brazen serpent and they lived. Notice that they had to look UP and away from the evil that was so close at hand and crawling up their legs. We live in a wicked generation where we find that vile spirits are all around us, but if we keep our eyes in a heavenly direction, we will live. Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32).

Our Father, which art in heaven, help us to look up and take courage.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

OCTOBER 18, 2015

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Leviticus 19:12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

Psalms 111:9b Holy and reverend is his name.

Isaiah 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Deuteronomy 28:58b That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;

Psalm 113:3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

Psalm 8:9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Jeremiah 10:6 Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.

Psalm 72:19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

MEMORY VERSE: Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. —Revelations 15:4

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Before we begin to ask God for anything, we should pause and reverence, worship and praise the high and holy name of our Heavenly Father. We should live to honor and magnify that great name in thought, word and action.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:9, "Hallowed" a thing separated from earthly purposes and employments; set apart; consecrated. "The Divine Majesty may be said to be sanctified by us, when we separate Him from, and in our conceptions and desires exalt Him above, earth and all things (Clarke's Commentary)."

Exodus 20:7, "Take the name of the Lord thy God in vain": Take up, or use, to no good purpose, or for emptiness. "Guiltless": unpunished.

Leviticus 19:12, "Profane": defile; pollute; desecrate.

Psalm 111:9b, "Reverend": to inspire reverence, godly fear, and awe.

Psalm 8:9, "Excellent": majestic.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Let us consider "His name" and what it means. The original Hebrew word, *Elohim* (a plural form which implies a plurality of Persons in the Divine nature, giving us the basis of the doctrine of the Trinity) is used over 2,500 times in the Old Testament. The Anglo-Saxon rendering, *God*, signified *the Divine Being*, and being related to the word, *good*, also *the Good Being*.

The English rendering of the Hebrew tetragram YHWH, *Jehovah*, is one of the names of God. Its original pronunciation is unknown, but it is certain that it was in use before the days of Abraham (*Jehovah Elohim*, Gen. 2:4 and *Adonai Jehovah*, Gen. 15:2). Around 300 B. C. the Jews, who took the third commandment very seriously, to keep from speaking it carelessly, decided not to pronounce it at all, but spoke the word *adonai* which means "Lord." *Jehovah* is derived from the verb "to be," which implies that God is eternal, the Absolute, the "Uncaused One". There are ten combinations of the word *Jehovah* in the Old Testament: *Jehovah-Jireh* (*Jehovah will provide*, Gen. 22:14); *Jehovah-*

Ropheka (Jehovah that healeth thee, Ex. 15:26); *Jehovah-Nissi* (Jehovah is my banner, Ex. 17:15); *Jehovah-meqaddeshkem* (Jehovah who sanctifieth you, Ex. 31:13); *Jehovah Shalom* (Jehovah is peace, Judg. 6:24); *Jehovah tsabaoth* (Jehovah of hosts, I Sam. 1:3); *Jehovah Elyon* (Jehovah Most High, Psa. 7:17); *Jehovah-roi* (Jehovah, my Shepherd, Psa. 23:1); *Jehovah-tsidkenu* (Jehovah is our righteousness, Jer. 33:16); and *Jehovah-Shammah* (Jehovah is there, Ez. 48:35).

Adam Clarke, after his study of the Hebrew root, concluded: “God is the sole object of adoration . . . the perfections of His nature are such as must astonish all those who piously contemplate them, and fill with horror all who would dare to give His glory to another, or break His commandments . . . consequently He should be worshipped with reverence and religious fear; and every sincere worshipper may expect from Him help in all his weaknesses, trials, difficulties, temptations, etc.; freedom from the power, guilt, nature, and consequences of sin; and to be supported, defended, and saved to the uttermost.”

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Taking God’s Name in Vain*: Discuss how these may apply: formal, ritualistic prayers, hypocritical profession of salvation, irreverent use of God’s name or attributes in slang or profanity, “praise and worship” done for entertainment or show.

2. *For God Only*: What popular title is prefixed to many ministers’ names, which should be only given to God? Which Scriptural principle does this violate?

3. *Preparing the Heart*: How does bringing the heart and mind into an attitude of reverence and praise to His name prepare us for presenting our requests to God?

4. *Practical Application*: In what ways should we hallow God’s name in our words, thoughts, lives, families, or businesses?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

As we consider what Jesus is teaching here, we become greatly aware of the world’s general slide away from this important principle.

In general worship services, professors of Christianity have either embraced a ritualistic, formal worship, with chanted, read, or repetitious prayers; or become so casual that the whole service is like a party, where sacred things are taken lightly, holiness is ridiculed, and entertainment and motivational speaking take the place of reverence for and attention to the Word of God.

In daily lives, the language of even professed Christians has become very loose, with profanity, swearing, or slang, and using God’s name, attributes of God, or other sacred things in exclamations of anger, horror, surprise or jest.

Beginning every prayer with this solemn consciousness of the sacredness of God’s name will powerfully influence the whole of our lives, keeping us free from the corruption of the world around us.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

“For the LORD will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain” (Exodus 20:7b). While touring a cemetery in a certain village in Russia in October of 2012, I came upon the graves of a young couple whose pictures were on their tombstones. The story that was told to me regarding the circumstances surrounding their death made a deep impression on me. I was told that they were working in a hayfield when a cloud came up and it began to rain, hampering their efforts. One, or perhaps both, became angry and cursed God for sending the rain. A bolt of lightning came out of the cloud and struck and killed them both.

Not all who take God’s name in vain receive such an immediate and dramatic response of His wrath and judgment. But Jesus warned us in Matthew 12:36-37, “That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Psalm 33:8 says, “Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.”

“We fear Thee, Lord, revere Thy Word, And sit in holy awe.”

(By B. E. Warren, “Truth In Song”, 1907.)

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

OCTOBER 25, 2015

THY KINGDOM COME

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Psalm 145: 13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and

every man presseth into it.

Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

I Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

MEMORY VERSE: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. —Romans 14:17, 18

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Kingdom of God is a wonderful blessing that Jesus Christ brought down from heaven and made available for the spiritual welfare and benefit of the souls of mankind. It is a treasure that everyone should welcome and receive in our hearts with joy and great rejoicing, thanksgiving, and praise to the Almighty God!

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:10, “Thy kingdom come”: This expression in earnest prayer is saying to our Heavenly Father that the wonderful, precious, and beneficial power and grace of His authority and rule is truly welcome and earnestly desired.

John 3:3, “born again”: The real definition from the Greek text is “born from above”. *From above* definitely means *from Heaven* and by the work of the Holy Spirit of God! 1 Peter 1:23 expresses, “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever”.

Daniel 2:44 relates the meaning of the king of Babylon’s dream as foretelling the kingdom that God was going to set up that would consume all of the earthly kingdoms and stand forever.

Luke 16:16, “observation”: outward show.

Luke 17:20, 21 “within you”: among you; in the midst of you.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today, from the Saviour’s model prayer, reveals the heartfelt expression we need to have in our prayer and deep, earnest, wholesome desire before God. We can say from the depth of our inner man, “Lord, Thy kingdom is welcome and we want it to have full possession of our hearts and lives!”

We have included several other references spoken by our Lord Jesus concerning this everlasting Kingdom. In

John 3:1-7 Jesus shows that the true entrance into the Kingdom of God is the spiritual birth of the soul. Then consider Christ's words in John 18:36 to Pilate and His declaration in Luke 16:16 that we have to "press into it." This relates to how He expressed it in Matthew 11:12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." This is same meaning. We have to press into the kingdom of Heaven with violent (bold and determined) force, repenting and turning away from sin and ungodliness with unfailing decision.

Daniel 2:44 declares that the kingdom of God would never be destroyed but would stand forever. Let us also take notice of the expression in Psalm 145:13 of it being an everlasting kingdom whose dominion endureth throughout all generations.

All of these scriptures show the truth about this kingdom that we must welcome with all of our hearts and gain eternal entrance to its blessedness.

Oh, how thankful we are for the Kingdom of peace and joy and salvation that Christ has made available for us, so we can have eternal treasure and hope within! May the Holy Spirit enlighten our souls to its worth, which is far more than any thing of this old temporal and vain world around us!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

DISCUSSION:

1. *Kingdom appeal:* What makes the kingdom of God so desirable and attractive?
2. *Kingdom Access:* How may we gain entrance into this wonderful kingdom?
3. *Kingdom Warfare:* Why did Christ's disciples not fight to deliver Him from the Jews?
4. *Kingdom in Us:* Why must we give this personal welcome to the Kingdom of God?
5. *Kingdom Provisions:* What did Christ do and accomplish to make the kingdom available and open to us?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Along with the scriptures we have included in today's lesson, I am reminded of what our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:33 concerning taking thought for one's life; what we eat, drink, or wear for raiment: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." God knows we have need of these earthly, temporal, perishable goods, but He wants us to put first things first. His kingdom of righteousness and holiness of heart and life is the greatest need for which we must seek provision. It is the power and victory of the kingdom of God ruling in our heart that is surely the number one need of a person. Along with reverence and hallowed recognition of Almighty God as our Heavenly Father, we need to give a hearty welcome to His great and wonderful kingdom of love, righteousness, and peace!

The other scriptures in this lesson all join together to magnify and hold high the values and importance of His blessed kingdom! Christ's message to Nicodemus of the requirement of entry to the kingdom of God; Daniel's declaration of its importance; Christ's statement to Pilate concerning His kingdom being not of this present world; His declaration that every man needs to press to enter it; His Word that the Kingdom of God cometh not with outward show, but is "within you"; Paul's sound teaching on the unrighteous not inheriting the Kingdom of God; and our Memory Verse

that states what the Kingdom of God truly is—all of these things show the wonderful truth of this blessed and everlasting Kingdom that we need to seek for above all else!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Earthly Kingdoms: Time travel is a concept which has captured the imaginations of men and women for....well, for a long time. To find a way to transport ourselves back in time--to meet different people, to witness famous historical events, to observe the education of a different era and how it influenced building and home construction, to experience how cooking, cleaning, transportation, and learning were accomplished—it would be enlightening and fascinating at the very least. In some cases we have gained an inkling of understanding about days gone by, but mystery shrouds much of the past when it comes to day-to-day living. Time, natural disasters, abandonment of towns and cities, economic failure, war, and/or death, among other things, have silenced and stopped the voices, activities, and kingdoms of ages past. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE.

Kingdom of God: What an incredible opportunity we have to be a part of the Kingdom of God! It will never disappear, become unsustainable, or be destroyed! No time travel is needed to find it or understand it. Today we, through the preserved Word of God and by the Spirit, can understand perfectly the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; the same kingdom the apostles of the early church preached way back in 33 A.D. It is not just a kingdom of the past, but is also a kingdom of the present and the future!

In Prayer, Thy Kingdom Come: So then, how does this apply to our prayers? When we pray, rather than rushing right into all our prayer requests, one of the first things we should focus on is an acknowledgement, acceptance, and invitation into our lives of all things pertaining to spiritual and eternal attributes of the kingdom into our lives. God knows we are earthly; therefore many of our requests pertain to temporal things subject to change and decay and which will ultimately come to naught -- that is okay. He has given us promises pertaining to such things and furthermore told us to cast ALL our cares on Him. But first. *Thy Kingdom Come.*

—Sis. Julie Elwell

NOVEMBER 1, 2015

THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

John 7:17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of

myself.

Luke 22:41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

I Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

I Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Acts 21:13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

MEMORY VERSE: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.—Psalm 40:8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Praying “Thy will be done in earth” begins first in our hearts as we yield and submit to the Father’s will, as did Jesus, our example. We then pray for God’s will to be done in the church and in all the earth; for souls to be saved, wholly sanctified, and come to a knowledge of the truth.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 12:50 “my brother, sister and mother”: *“Filial subjection to the will of My Father in heaven is the indissoluble bond of union between Me and all its members; and whosoever enters this hallowed circle becomes to Me brother, and sister, and mother!”* —Jameison-Fausset-Brown Commentary

John 7:17 “doctrine”: teaching.

Luke 22:42 “remove this cup from me”: *“One’s lot or experience, whether joyous or adverse, divine appointments, whether favorable or unfavorable, are likened to a cup which God presents one to drink.”* —Thayer’s Greek Lexicon

Romans 12:2 “be not conformed to this world”: do not follow the customs, pattern or mold; do not be fashioned accord to this world. “transformed”: The Greek word is the root of the English term *metamorphosis*, which means “I change the form.”

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus began His lesson on prayer, as we have studied, with an introduction to the new relationship with the Father and an humble affirmation of faith in Him and acknowledgement of His greatness and holiness. The first focus

was that *His Name* would be hallowed. The next focus was on *His Kingdom*. Now we focus on *His Will*.

What was in His mind as He led us to this point in the prayer? No doubt, the very purpose He was sent into the world—to suffer, die, and ransom the souls of lost men and women. He didn't just say or teach these words—He lived and breathed them. David's words in Psalms 40 are a direct prophecy and words of Christ Himself. "I delight to do thy will." "I came not to do mine own will," He said, "but the will of Him that sent me."

He spoke those words again, in agony, in Gethsemane. Three times He subdued His flesh and yielded to the Father, sweating great drops of blood, to allow the supreme will of God to be done—our salvation.

We read farther in the lesson that is it not God's will that any perish, but that all should come to repentance. And not only to repentance, but to a knowledge of His truth and doctrine, to a life of holiness, praise and thanksgiving, and to a life of close relationship to Him; truly being His brother, His sister—identifying with Him in suffering and self-denial.

Paul, facing his long days of imprisonment and certain death, gently withstood the human reasoning of his dear friends, who begged him to spare himself. Finally, they acquiesced to God's will.

Even if this would be our final end, we also yield ourselves fully to the will of God being done in and through our lives. We yield ourselves so the ultimate Will of God will be done—the salvation of precious souls.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Responsibility/Reward*: With what three things (mentioned in today's lesson) will we be blessed, if we allow His will to be done in our lives?

2. *Not My Will*: What did Christ accomplish by surrendering His Will to the Father? Could it have been done any other way?

3. *But Thine Be Done*: Name what all He has willed for mankind.

4. *Praying God's Will*: Name specific requests and burdens that will be in our prayers when we begin to pray for God's will to be done in the earth. How important is it that these needs come before our own?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Thy Name. Thy Kingdom. Thy Will. See how Christ's pattern leads us to put Him first? What is a father's heart response to a child who always comes to him with a genuine interest in obeying him, seeing that his wishes are done and his plans are carried out? Would he not be moved with compassion then to answer the personal requests and needs of that child? What will God's response to us be when we approach Him with, "I come to do Thy will, O God. Here am I, Lord, send me" ?

The Scriptures lead us to know that the needs of the Kingdom—His church in the earth, His people; and His Will and Purpose—the salvation of souls; are what we should put first and foremost in our lives. From this prayer comes direction: where I should go; the words I should say to this one and that one; the letter I should write. And if I must suffer to accomplish these things? If I never get to "do what I want"? What of that? It is not important.

Could we see the importance of our prayers in this world; the impact we have on world rulers, events, political conflicts, governments, as we pray, “Thy will be done in earth”—we would avail ourselves more and more of this incredible influence and power with God.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

We are earthen vessels whom the Lord desires to work through. When I think of an earthen vessel, I don't usually think of stainless steel, copper, brass—I think of something much weaker and humbler. The Lord desires to work His will in the earth and He uses earthen vessels to pour His love out to lost humanity. Earthen vessels are fragile, so like us in our humanity. You drop one—it breaks. Yet God has chosen earthen vessels, clay pots, to carry on His work. It is important for us to be willing.

Sometimes when we get our eyes on the need, we fail to recognize the sufficiency of God and draw back. The disciples, when seeing the multitude, thought, “What are these few loaves and fishes among so many?” Yes, we are insufficient within ourselves; but let us not forget that God is able to fill the clay pots.

It is not so much the big things that matter most. It is the little every day things that matter to God. We can carry a little cool, refreshing water to those that are dry and thirsting in a desert place. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." It is not the vessel, it is the treasure that God puts in an earthen vessel that blesses. God has chosen the foolish, weak, base and things despised. . . that no flesh should glory in His presence.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

“Help me gladly submit and not murmur, ever saying ‘Amen’ to Thy Will.”

NOVEMBER 8, 2015

AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands:

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

MEMORY VERSE: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. —Hebrews 1:1,2

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Almighty God created and rules the heavens and the earth and the heavenly hosts of angels, who are sent to minister to mankind. He sent forth His Son to be our Saviour, to Whom His angels give worship and honor.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Hebrews 1:1, "sundry times and in divers manners": Many various and different ways.

Ver. 2, "made the worlds": Set in order the ages of time.

Ver. 3, "brightness of his glory": Beauty of His holiness and power.

Ver. 4, "so much better than the angels": Stronger and nobler in power and glory, because He was the *only begotten Son*.

Ver. 9, "above thy fellows": Superior in strength and power.

Ver. 14, “ministering spirits”: Beneficial beings to help humanity.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we want to continue our study of the Lord’s Prayer, and give some thought to the expression “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” I was inspired with some of the statements brought out in Hebrews chapter 1 about Jesus being made so much better than the angels, because He was the only begotten Son, and being God born in the flesh, sent to be our Savior, obtained a more excellent name than the angels and was worshiped by them.

In the Old Testament we read of several places where God worked through angels to help His people and those in need. Psalm 34:7 states: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” Then in Psalm 91:11, 12 it states, “For He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

Thus we see the wonderful goodness of God in the ministry of angels He has sent for help and protection. However, even though God sends help through the angels, we know that Jesus has much more power than the angels—the power of salvation from sin.

So when we pray for God’s will to be done in earth, as it is in heaven, we can know that God works in the behalf of those who trust in Him, who hallow His name, and make His kingdom welcome in their hearts and lives. It is a wonderful blessing to know that God still has angels that He can send to help in the lives of His children. Even Jesus experienced the help of the angel while He was in the garden at the mount of Olives in great distress and need, as it says in Luke 22:43, “There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.”

So the Heavenly Father hears the prayers of His own, and works His will in our behalf here on earth, in and through the ministry of the heavenly hosts of angels above us!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

DISCUSSION:

1. *Heavenly Help*: Think of various times when an angel helped those in need. May we also expect the LORD of Heaven to send us help from angels?
2. *The Only Begotten*: In what way was Jesus manifested to be superior to the angels in strength, honor and power? To Whom do we look for salvation from sin? Whom do we worship?
3. *God’s Will in Us*: Seeing how God works His will in the heavenly realm, what should be our aim and desire for His will in our lives?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When we think of the will of God being done in Heaven we can also consider the wonders of His blessed will as portrayed in the *visible* heavens. I have been greatly inspired and blessed in my soul with the words of David found in Psalm 19. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth

speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Day after day a message is preached to all the earth. Night after night, knowledge and wise counsel is broadcast to humanity. Their "line" or their *doctrine* goes out through all the earth. Paul quotes from this in Romans 10:17, 18: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily [beyond a doubt], their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

Here is the gospel preached every day and every night. But who among the sons of earth is aware or open minded to this glorious gospel? Oh, how we need to awaken to righteousness and cease from sin and disobedience! The gospel is preached, but poor, blinded and foolish mankind does not recognize or receive it!

Thus we see in today's lesson how God rules in the visible heavens, commissions and commands His angels to minister to mankind, and sent forth His Son, Who did His Father's will to save and ransom souls—heaven is *heaven* because the will of God is always done there.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

I have heard the story of a man musing on how possible would it be to live peaceably with one another in heaven since there are so many differences here on earth: differences of personalities, differences of opinions, differences of ideas in general. He thought perhaps there needed to be a room where each soul would be readied and changed before entering heaven. The Lord answered and said, "There is such a room-it's called *life*."

". . .and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). A holy and righteous life on earth will simply be transitioned into that heavenly home. By looking into the word of God we find that there is to be no sin in our lives while here on earth, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). And in Revelations 21:27 it states, "And there shall in no wise enter into it [heaven] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life". The laws of holiness and righteousness are to be embraced in our lives while here on earth, just as it will be in heaven.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

NOVEMBER 15, 2015

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

Luke 12:29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

Matthew 6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have

need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Deuteronomy 33:25b. . . And as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

Psalms 145:15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

34:10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Romans 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

MEMORY VERSE: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger. . . —John 6:35

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The first of the four requests for “us”, this prayer shows our trust in God for even our daily food. We ask God for what is sufficient for us and our family. But even beyond physical and temporal needs, we recognize He supplies our daily spiritual and emotional needs. Freedom from anxious care and worry are implied by this request.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:11, “daily”: what is necessary and sufficient for the day. “bread”: literally, *a loaf*, but used as meaning *food of any kind*. “By ‘bread’ is meant all the necessaries of life. . . it is called ‘ours’; not that we have a right unto it, much less deserve it, but to distinguish it from that of beasts; and because it is what we need, and cannot do without; what is appointed for us by providence, is ours by gift, and possessed by labor. It is said to be ‘daily’ bread, and to be asked for ‘day by day’; which suggests the uncertainty of life; strikes at all anxious and immoderate cares for the morrow; is designed to restrain from covetousness, and to keep up the duty of prayer, and constant dependence on God; whom we must every day ask to ‘give’ us our daily bread: for he is the sole author of all our mercies; which are all his free gifts; we deserve nothing at his hands: wherefore we ought to be thankful for what we have, without murmuring at his providences, or envying at what he bestows on others. All kind of food, everything that is eatable, is with the Jews called ‘bread’ .” —Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible

Luke 12:29, “doubtful mind”: to be in suspense; anxious.

Matthew 6:34, “take therefore no thought”: do not worry or be anxious. “sufficient”: enough. “evil”: trouble.

Philippians 4:6, “be careful for nothing”: Don’t be worried or anxious about anything.

Psalms 145:15, “in due season”: at the proper time.

Psalm 34:9, 10, “want”: to lack, suffer a need; poverty.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Jews had a long history of God’s provision for them. In the wilderness, time after time, God had given them water and food; the ultimate example being the manna that He supplied every morning (except the Sabbath). The principles associated with the gathering of the manna seem to be alluded to here in Christ’s lesson. He goes on to teach the folly of distracting, anxious care for our physical needs, and to remind us that when we seek Him and His kingdom first, He, Who knows just what we need, will supply without fail.

David observes the way God supplies for all His creatures; but chiefly those who put their trust in God, he promises, will not want, or lack, anything.

The principle of *daily* is often expressed in Scripture. There are daily trials, which Christ promised would be just enough for one day. There is daily strength and grace promised for those daily trials. There is a cross we must bear daily. There is also a spiritual renewing that is *day by day*, and a daily bearing of our burdens.

A great wealth of promises and examples assures us that God is the true source of all that we need, and while we must do our part to diligently work (they had to *gather* the manna!) for our daily needs, we can, and must, trust in Him without worry or anxiety.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Trust vs. labor*: Explain the balance.
2. *Needs vs. wants*: Does God promise to supply all our *wants*? How does this portion of the prayer curb covetousness?
3. *Us vs. Me*: Explain how Christ is teaching the need for parents to bring the family together in prayer for the needs of the home. How are *community* and *brotherhood* taught as well?
4. *Trust vs. Worry*: Why do we seem prone to worry, and even to *justify* worry, when the Scriptures clearly teach a calm trust in God? What are practical ways we can overcome anxiety?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Having focused, first and foremost, on *His Name, His Kingdom, and His Will*, we can now turn our attention to *our* needs, with the unquestioning confidence that He is our Father; He truly exists; He hears from Heaven and condescends to answer our prayer; that as we have put Him and His concerns first, He *will supply* all our needs. What a statement of positive faith this is! It is not just a “gimme” mentality, but an affirmation that our Father will give what is sufficient for us. There is contentment here, and gratitude, and confidence.

That confidence is balanced by a diligent work ethic also taught by Scripture. Consider: “Prudent care is never forbidden by our Lord, but only that *anxious, distracting* solicitude, which, by *dividing* the mind, and *drawing it different ways*, renders it utterly incapable of attending to any solemn or important concern. To be anxiously careful concerning the means of subsistence is to lose all satisfaction and comfort in the things which God gives, and to act as a mere infidel. On the other hand, to rely so much upon Providence as not to use the very powers and faculties with which the Divine Being has endowed us, is to tempt God. If we labor without placing our confidence in our labor, but expect all from the blessing of God, we obey His will, co-operate with His providence, set the springs of it a-going on our behalf, and thus imitate Christ and His followers by a *sedate care* and an *industrious confidence*.” —Adam Clarke.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

David said, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Psalm 37:25). In verse 40 of this same chapter he says, “And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.”

What a privilege to trust in the Lord for all our needs! We can be sure the Lord is faithful. “Hath a mortal yet been found Who hath trusted Him in vain? Search the whole broad space of earth around, And search it once again.” (*Evening Light Songs, # 334*)

1 Kings 17:1-16 gives the inspiring accounts of how the Lord commanded the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith, then afterward, miraculously provided his daily bread through a widow woman who trusted and obeyed the Word of the Lord. The widow’s faith was tested when she, having “but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse,” was requested by Elijah to “make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth” (verses 13-14). The outcome of believing the Word of the Lord and honoring His prophet’s request, notwithstanding the need of herself and her son, was: “She, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah” (verses 15-16).

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed” (Psalm 37:3).

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

NOVEMBER 22, 2015

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Luke 11:4a And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us

Psalm 130:3 If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

MEMORY VERSE: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. —Ephesians 1:7

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus is teaching us to have a recognition of the great, unpayable debt we owe to God; that if it were not for His grace—*unmerited favor*—we would be hopelessly lost. Rather than teaching us to *continue* in sin, these Scriptures instruct us to keep a contrite and humble heart about our constant need for God's help to keep us *from* sin, thereby preventing us from prideful self-righteousness. If we do fall into sin, we are offered HOPE of returning to God for pardon and cleansing.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:12 “debts”: That which is just or legally due; offense; sin. The *result* of having a debt, focusing on the after-effect of an obligation.

Luke 11:4 “sin”: Missing the mark; failure; forfeiture because of missing the mark. “forgive”: to send away; release; discharge.

Psalm 130:3 “mark”: Keep; preserve.

Verse 4 “forgiveness”: *Abundant* forgiveness; pardon

1 John 2:1 “Advocate”: a legal advocate who makes the right judgment call because he is close to the situation; advisor; helper; *Paraclete* (Greek—to call + close beside).

Verse 2 “propitiation”: atoning sacrifice; especially Christ’s blood that appeases God’s wrath on all confessed sin.

Luke 18:13 “Publican”: a public tax collector, gathering taxes from the Jews for the Romans.

Luke 18:14 “justified”: approved; declared righteous.

Matthew 5:3 “poor in spirit”: destitute; spiritually helpless.

Matthew 5:4 “mourn”: lament; grieve. “comforted”: to call to or for; invite; encourage; to call close beside.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The backdrop for this teaching, and other teachings by Jesus on forgiveness, is the legalistic, austere, forbidding atmosphere permeating the Pharisees’ religious system. Jesus is judging this attitude. In the parables “The Unmerciful Servant” (Matthew 18:21-35); “The Two Debtors” (Luke 7:40-43); “The Prodigal Son” (Luke 15:11-32); and “The Pharisee and the Publican” (Luke 18:9-14); Jesus clearly shows the humble, contrite attitude of heart which is pleasing to God, vs. the haughty, self-righteous, unrepentant, unmerciful disposition, which is a stench to God.

In the Old Testament, David recognized the requirement of a humble assessment of one’s need for God’s forgiveness and a hope in His mercy.

The apostle Paul, in his writings, constantly reaffirmed his unworthiness, his renunciation of his former self-righteous ways (he referred to them, essentially, as *garbage*), and his gratitude for God’s forgiveness.

John the Apostle offers great hope for those who will be honest and repentant of their sins.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Recognizing the problem:* What are some of the dangers of Pharisee spirit and doctrine?
2. *Revealing a solution:* Discuss the balance of keeping a humble attitude about one’s self, a compassionate view toward those who fail, and a vigilant watchfulness against sin.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

At first glance, we might think that our Lord is teaching a daily repentance for daily sin. Looking more closely and applying the balance of Scriptural teaching, I believe we will find that it is an *attitude of godly sorrow* that He is portraying. This is the way we live close to the cross—constantly sensing and mourning our unworthiness, helplessness, human weakness and limited vision and judgment. Our total inability to meet God’s demands or pay the debt we owe for His free gift of life, salvation, and heaven. How would we appropriate God’s grace, if we felt we were capable; we had “arrived”; or were no longer needing God’s grace and mercy, but were now living with God’s approval and blessings (because our obedience “deserved” them)?

This is one of the greatest dangers to “holiness” people! I’ve actually heard people talk like this. It’s true that

many people today are scornful of right living and make light of God's promise of special blessings for obedience—that's a slippery slide down the opposite side, and we're not going there. But self-righteousness is ugly. All humans are prone to it, and especially religious people.

Maintaining a sober estimate of ourselves and our needs will also give us a compassionate heart toward others. We will then be tender and broken enough to pray the remainder of this prayer from the heart, "As we forgive. . ."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

I would like to share a comment on Matthew 6:12, by Adam Clarke, that is very thought provoking:

"Sin is represented here under the notion of a debt, and as our sins are many, they are called debts. Man has nothing to pay: if his debts are not forgiven, they must stand charged against him forever, as he is absolutely insolvent. Forgiveness, therefore, must come from the free mercy of God in Christ! And how strange is it we cannot have the old debt cancelled, without (by that very means) contracting a new one, as great as the old! But the credit is transferred from Justice to Mercy. While sinners, we are in debt to infinite Justice; when pardoned, in debt to endless Mercy: and as a continuance in a state of grace necessarily implies a continual communication of mercy, so the debt goes on ad infinitum. Strange economy in the Divine procedure, which by rendering a man an infinite debtor, keeps him eternally dependent on his creator! How good is God! And what does this state of dependence imply? A union with, and participation of, the fountain of eternal goodness and felicity!"

In closing, I'm reminded of part of a song that says, "I owed a debt I could not pay; He paid a debt He did not owe."

Thank God for sending His dear Son to die for us.

—Bro. James Bell

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 6:36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

James 2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Psalms 18:25a With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful;

Matthew 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. (See also verses 23-35)

Mark 11:25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Luke 23:34a Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Acts 7:60 And he [Stephen] kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Colossians 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

MEMORY VERSE: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. —Ephesians 4:32

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Just as God's forgiveness of our sins is the Divine standard by which we must forgive, so our measure of judgment against others is the standard by which God will judge us in the end. Therefore, we ought to keep a compassionate and a merciful attitude toward all—to those whose failures weren't meant personally against us at all, and to those who hate us and mean to hurt us.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:12 "debtor": one who owes; someone under obligation to pay back a debt; one who has sinned against another.

Luke 6:37 "judge": to separate or distinguish; come to a decision. "Condemn" to pronounce guilty; to pass sentence upon. "Forgive": set free: release.

James 2:13 "rejoices": boasts itself superior to; triumphs over.

Mark 11:25 "aught against any": anything against anyone.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Throughout the Scriptures it was revealed to those who walked with God and sought His favor, that they must show mercy as it had been shown them. Several principles were established in the Law that Jesus later enlarged upon:

“Avenge not yourselves; I will repay, saith the Lord”, “Don’t bear grudges”, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” The long history of the Israelites who continually sinned against God, cried unto Him for forgiveness and came back to Him, and then slid back again into wickedness, over and over, bore witness to the longsuffering of God toward man, and man’s obligation to be merciful as well.

The scene of Joseph with his brothers after their reunion in Egypt is so touching. Joseph tells them, “You meant this for evil, but God meant it for good.” He displayed that merciful attitude when he gave his sons names which meant, “God has made me to forget,” and “God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction” (Genesis 41:51, 52).

David also learned mercy toward those who did him wrong, as when he refused to serve vengeance toward King Saul, and when Shimei, a relative of Saul, cursed him. David acknowledged two very important things: nothing could happen to him unless God allowed it, and God would return him good for this man’s cursing. This confidence in God developed in him a compassion for the erring (II Samuel 16:5-14).

This background of forgiveness and mercy was fulfilled in an even greater way by the life, ministry and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, shown especially in His dying words. His disciples, Stephen for example, portrayed the same humble attitude of forgiveness.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Compare and Contrast:* Are any of the trespasses or sins done against us as great as ours have been toward God? Against the revelation of the depth of God’s forgiveness, how do we measure up?

2. *Commit:* How does *praying a daily commitment to forgiveness* help us follow commands such as: do not let the sun go down upon our wrath; be long suffering and kind; do not be soon angry, nor let anger rest in you, nor bear any grudge?

3. *Consider:* What is the final result of bitterness and unforgiveness?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The tender love, gratitude, reverence, submission, trust and humble recognition of God’s mercy expressed thus far in our prayer has laid groundwork for the need and obligation we have to forgive others. By the time we come to this, God has so worked in our hearts that we are melted with compassion for the erring. We recognize their weaknesses are equal to our own. We see God’s gentleness toward us; we see the horrible end coming to those who are lost and unforgiven, and we join in intercession with Jesus, Who says to the Father, “Forgive them.” We pray, “They may not realize what they have done, but if they do, they are in serious danger. Don’t let them suffer eternity without You. I release them, and I beg You to.”

Here are questions to consider: Cannot God, Whose tides wash clean the shore of every ocean twice each day, help us to do the same toward those who hurt us? If our situations were reversed, wouldn’t we want the person we had wronged to pardon us and show us mercy? Would we be willing for God to judge us at the judgment exactly the way we have been judging others?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

The Lord gave us a beautiful illustration of a man who had been forgiven a great debt that he could not pay. His wife and children were to be sold. This man pled for mercy, earnestly, and the one who held his debt was moved with compassion. He was touched, and he forgave that man his great debt. But this one who had been forgiven had one of *his* debtors thrown into prison for a much smaller debt than what his was that had been forgiven.

We all need to remember where we came from. We have been forgiven the great debt of sin that was way beyond our ability to pay. Adultery, fornication, murder, covetousness, hatred, lies—the list could go on. The Lord simply forgave us and wiped the slate clean.

Now let us be that way with our fellow man, brother, sister, mother, father. Jesus said that offences would come. Let it go. It is not worth holding on to. It will steal our joy and peace and will bring us into bondage. There is a wonderful blessing and release that comes when we from the heart—let it go! Mercy and forgiveness are wonderful attitudes to have in our lives.

The father of the prodigal son was looking down the road longing for his son, and when he saw him, he ran to him and threw his arms around him. The son had lived wickedly and wasted what his father had given him; yet, when he came home, he was welcomed with open arms. Psalm 103:8 says, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." I am thankful to have such a wonderful heavenly Father.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

DECEMBER 6, 2015

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Matthew 6:13a And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

I Chronicles 4:10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Psalm 19:13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Psalm 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Psalm 37:31 The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

Proverbs 4:14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not unto the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

I Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Hebrews 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

II Peter 2:9a The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations. . . .

MEMORY VERSE: Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation. . . .—Revelation 3:10a

CENTRAL THOUGHT: *If* we daily trust fully in God’s strength and not our own, and seek Him earnestly in prayer to keep us from all sin; *if* we hide His Word in our hearts, and do our part to avoid compromising situations; we can be assured of His promises to shield and avert us from temptations that would overthrow us, and to keep us strong amid unavoidable temptations, making a way for us to escape and bear them.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:13a and John 17:15 “from evil”: some translations say “from the evil one”; *Evil* here is derived from a word meaning *pain*; or *laborious trouble*; also, in an ethical sense: (adjective form) *wicked, bad, malicious*.

I Chronicles 4:10 “from evil”: from the evil of affliction, and especially the from the evil of sin, and from the evil one, Satan; from all evil men and evil company. (Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible).

Psalms 19:13 “presumptuous sins”: arrogant, haughty, insolent (same word as in Proverbs 21:24—“proud and haughty scorner”); willful, intentional, deliberate sins. “The great transgression”: much, or abundant transgression; *the* is missing in the original.

Psalms 119:11 “hid”: stored; treasured up.

Psalms 37:31 “slide”: to slip, totter, shake.

Proverbs 4:26 “ponder”: weigh; make level or balanced. “Established”: firm. The Septuagint renders this verse, “Make straight paths for your feet”, which is repeated in Hebrews 12:13.

Hebrews 2:18 “succor”: to come to the aid of; to run and meet an urgent distress call; to supply immediate help.

Revelations 3:10a “word of my patience” Christ’s command to patiently endure and be steadfast.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After Jesus has led us in prayer to a humble and sobering assessment of ourselves and our weaknesses, and a corresponding compassionate and forgiving attitude toward others, He now directs us to take hold of the promises in Scripture that He will keep us, and to earnestly pray for His divine deliverance from temptations.

Such a prayer was prayed by Jabez of old, and it was very pleasing to God. An interesting story about Jabez was told in ancient writings. It seems that Jabez wasn't praying a selfish prayer when he asked for enlarged borders. His prayer was deeper. He had an interest in drawing others to the worship of the true God. So he established schools for youth. His students were known by three names. One name meant that in their prayers and songs, their voices were like trumpets. Another name showed that they lifted up their faces and hearkened to God's Word, and another meant that the spirit of prophecy—prayer, supplication and preaching—rested upon them. Now we see why Jabez was called "more honourable" than his brethren. He wasn't of any nobility or special birth; rather, his birth was with pain and sorrow. Was he handicapped, perhaps, or afflicted with pain? However it was, *he prayed*, and God gave him a fruitful life that triumphed gloriously over it all.

David, perhaps overwhelmed by his failures and weaknesses, wanted to experience victory and dominion over sin. (His prayer is answered victoriously for us in Romans 6:14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you.") He also identified an important secret for keeping from sin—treasuring up God's Word in our hearts.

David's words to his son Solomon in Proverbs 4 need to be memorized by every young Christian who seeks to live a holy life. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it."

Today's other references let us know that Christ Himself prayed for our preservation from evil. And the other promises—that He will aid us, deliver us, and make a way to escape for us—should fill us with fresh courage as we realize the power over sin which He has promised us through the Holy Spirit.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

Before temptation: What should we recognize about ourselves that brings us to our knees, asking God to lead our steps? What steps should we deliberately take to avoid temptation?

During temptation: Of what encouraging promises can we remind ourselves that will strengthen us? Explain the process of hiding God's Word in our hearts and how it keeps us from sin.

Lead US: Discuss how we also remember others in this prayer: spouses, children, teenagers, ministers, etc.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Jesus let Peter know that Satan desired to have him and "sift" him as wheat. But He promised to pray for him, and we have that assurance that He intercedes for us too. Peter later admonishes us that Satan seeks to devour us, and we must be vigilant and sober. Earnest prayer is how we employ that vigilance. When we join with Christ's prayers for us—and certainly we know it is His will to keep us—we can know that this prayer will surely be answered.

We couple our prayers with caution and obedience. A story is told in Proverbs 7 about a young man who yielded to the strange woman. What gives us a clue that he was headed for trouble? He *went the way to her house*. There are ways into temptation, from which we will walk away—flee— *if* we will obey the leadings of God’s Spirit. By God’s commandments, David said, we are “warned.”

Come to God for a complete cleansing of inward attractions to sin. Ask Him to give you a *hatred* for sin. Be prepared! God has some rather intense ways of teaching us hatred for sin. But He will. And your weakest point, through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, will become a strong area in your life.

Our lesson speaks about making a balanced, even path for our feet. It’s important to realize that where we are unbalanced in our lives, Satan will plant temptations. We will be miserable in our experience and easily discouraged.

Remember: God is our Heavenly Father. He will come to our urgent cry for help. He sees, He knows, He cares, and HE IS ABLE TO DELIVER.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hath not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord" (Job 1:8-12). It has been said that there has never been another mortal who faced such trauma as Job. And yet, we find Job cursed not God nor charged him foolishly. In taking a closer look at these scriptures, it does seem that the Lord gave permission for Satan to buffet his servant Job. Regarding this particular passage, Clark's Commentary states that "*Satan cannot deprive a man even a sheep or a pig, but by especial permission of God. His power and malice are ever bounded, and under control.*"

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. . ." (I Peter 5:8). This indicates that there are allowances made for the enemy to tempt us only to a certain point. If we continue reading in the same passage we find, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you".

The Lord never intended that we live isolated in this life from the snares of the enemy and the temptations that surround us. But He did promise that He "will with the temptation also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13). Isn't it a consolation to know that the Lord will be with us every step of the way? "For we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Thank the Lord for His overcoming grace; enabling us to be strong in Him despite our great weaknesses!

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

DECEMBER 13, 2015

**FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER,
AND THE GLORY, FOREVER**

Matthew 6:13b For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.

I Chronicles 29:11 Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

12 Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Psalms 62:11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Jude 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

I Corinthians 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Revelation 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

MEMORY VERSE: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen. —Revelation 7:12

CENTRAL THOUGHT: As we began our prayer with worship and glory to the Father's Name, we end our petition with acknowledgement and praise. We lift Him up as the source of our life, all power, salvation, wisdom, and blessing. For all that is felt, done, or accomplished in prayer, it is through Him and to Him and all to His glory.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 6:13b "glory": splendor; the kingly majesty which belongs to God as supreme ruler.

I Chronicles 29:11 "power": strength and might. "glory": beauty. "victory": eminence, enduring, everlastingness, perpetuity. "majesty": splendor, vigor.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This part of the Lord's prayer is originally missing in most ancient manuscripts, and was not a part of Luke's rendering (Luke 11:4), but was most likely a doxology which was used in many Jewish prayers. The principle of it we may still value, however, because to ascribe all glory and honor to God as we pray is very important.

The backdrop for David's doxology was the dedication of all the offerings that had been given for the building of the temple. David, having given out of his own store gold and silver and other items for the house of God, stood and blessed the Lord, as the people, who had so willingly offered their treasures to God, rejoiced with him. Although David was not the one who actually built the temple, he rejoiced in the dream of it. He ascribed to God all the power and ability to acquire wealth, recognizing that we can only give God what He Himself has given us.

Both Paul and Jude included similar doxologies at the end of their epistles.

The apostles Paul and John wrote of the glorious scene when Christ, having received the everlasting kingdom—souls of men and women who have been redeemed of all ages and nations—then triumphantly delivers it to His Father. In the original text of the prayer, Christ may or may not have said these actual words, but as we read of this majestic scene, we realize that Jesus truly did glorify and honor His Father, did His Father's Will, offered up Himself and suffered and died to bring mankind to the bosom of the Father.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

Giving Glory to God: Explain how Jesus was the supreme example of humility and meekness. Cite other instances where He gave the honor to His Father.

Following His Example: How important is it that we, instead of quickly ending our requests and heading on to the duties of life, spend time in blessing, honoring and praising the Father?

Looking Ahead: In Jesus's prayer to His Father (John 17:24), He desires that the glory He shared with His Father would be shared also with us. What descriptions are given in Scripture of the splendor and glory of that eternal world?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We began our prayer with recognition and deep gratitude for our Father. We learned to draw close to Him by praising and honoring His Name, welcoming, concerning ourselves with and desiring His Kingdom, and yearning for His Will to be completely done in and around us. We recognized in deep faith and trust His control and care over our daily needs. We lamented our inability to fulfill our debts to Him and learned compassion for those who, in such small ways compared to our great debt to Him, owed us. We realized that we needed His ever-guiding Spirit to lead us and deliver us from the temptations of the evil one.

Now we are led back to the overwhelming knowledge of His greatness, His power and might, and His majesty. We realize that He RULES. Nothing can come into our lives without His notice and control. Praise and adoration fills us as we seek to glorify Him and point souls to Him. This takes the haste and rush out of our spirits as we rest in a holy

awe. What a wonderful way to begin, live, and end a day!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

In meditating on Eph. 3:20-21, I can but stand in awe of the great plan of salvation conceived in the mind of God – a plan whereby He is willing to share the power and glory of His everlasting kingdom with fallen man! Rom. 14:17 tells us “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

By turning away from sin and coming to Christ we are “born of the Spirit” (John 3:3-8). Thereby we enter God’s kingdom and become partakers of all His kingdom benefits, even “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). This primary entrance into the kingdom is the grace of regeneration. But this is not the only benefit! If we “go on unto perfection” (Heb. 6:1), and present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:1), we will receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. In this sanctifying grace, the kingdom comes into us with power (Mark 9:1). Paul says, “... God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ “(2 Thes. 2:13-14). It is through the Holy Spirit that Christ now shares with the church a measure of the power and glory of God’s eternal kingdom. The Spirit is the “earnest of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:13-14). Therefore the more we live and walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), the more kingdom benefits we will experience here and now. We will experience them “according to the power that worketh in us” through the Spirit. However, the best is yet to come!

In Rom. 8:18, Paul says, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Read also how the Spirit helps our present infirmities, verses 19-27.) As we continue to be led by the Holy Spirit (verse 14), we can sing with glorious anticipation: “What a pleasure in life it is bringing! What assurance and hope ever bright! Oh, what rapture and bliss are awaiting, When our faith shall be lost in the sight!” —*Evening Light Songs #32*.

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

DECEMBER 20, 2015

AMEN

Psalm 41:13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Psalm 72:18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

Matthew 6:13 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.

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?

35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

II Corinthians 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

II Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.

Revelation 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him: and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen. Revelation 1:7

CENTRAL THOUGHT: What Almighty God purposed and prophesied to be in His Son, Jesus Christ, and what Christ accomplished and brought to pass has proven to be firm, faithful, true, permanent, certain, sure, trustworthy, and verily without fail: SO BE IT!

WORD DEFINITIONS

“Amen”: Sure, unfailing faithfulness and truth.

Psalm 41:13, “Blessed”: Worthy of honor, reverence, and trust.

Romans 16:20, “bruise”: Crush and shatter completely.

II Corinthians 1:19, “yea”: Strong, surely, and without fail the truth.

Ephesians 3:21, “world without end”: For eternity.

Revelations 1:18, “keys of hell and death”: Full control and power and authority over those who will be sentenced to eternal damnation.

Revelation 21:20, “Even so: come, Lord Jesus”: It is true, Lord Jesus, You will come!

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we are surveying a very important and solemn thought. It is a word used quite extensively in the Scriptures, and it has a serious truth upon which it is so vital for us mortals to take hold. Take a look at the definition of the word “Amen.” It is *sure, unfailing faithfulness and truth*. It is an expression that one must utter from the deep of his heart. It is expressed, spoken, and declared concerning the WORD, Counsel, Promises, and all other standard truths of the Almighty God, the Creator of the Heavens and earth. God spoke it, declared it, promised it, and He wants us human beings to believe it, count it unfailing and true, and live our lives in accord with it and in subjection to it. When God speaks, He wants a response of faith, open-hearted reception, and sincere devotion and trust. We have a scene portrayed in Deuteronomy 27:14-26 where the Levites were to speak the word of curses upon all the men of Israel and for each curse all the people were to say “Amen”. This shows that God Almighty wants definite faith and acceptance in the heart of man concerning His holy laws and commandments.

So we follow this through the scriptures clear unto the last scripture of the Holy Bible. It means much and is so vital for us human beings to accept fully, sincerely, and soberly what the Almighty God declares and speaks to us. It shows this in our Lord’s Prayer that we have been studying about. When we say, “Amen,” we are accepting without doubt or failure what the Almighty speaks to us in His precious word and promises.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

DISCUSSION:

1. *Heart response:* What kind of response does God want us to have to His Word, and what do we show when we refuse to accept the Word of God?
2. *Expression:* How can we express our faith and acceptance of His Word?
3. *Implications:* How serious is this matter and why should we take it so to heart?
5. *Consequences:* What will the end be of all who refuse to believe and accept His Word?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

When we say “Amen” in response to the wonderful, inspiring, enlightening, and encouraging promises, commandments, statutes, judgments, and are faithful to obey and follow without fail their holy standard of life, we put ourselves in line to receive all the blessings and benefits that God wants us to have and enjoy.

We need to say “Amen” to the holy Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. We need to express our earnest acceptance and willingness to obey and put in practice all that God commands.

When we read and accept the prophecies that God gave to His prophets concerning His great salvation that He was to make available through His Son, Jesus Christ, we need to say from our hearts a big and earnest "Amen"!

When we accept and fully believe and count as faithful and true all the precious promises in the Holy Bible, we need to say earnestly and sincerely from our hearts a joyous and definite "Amen!"

When we read in the New Testament what Christ accomplished and taught for us to follow and obey, we need to say earnestly and sincerely a whole-hearted "Amen!" We must not be slack or careless or light-hearted about it. Our "Amen" will be accepted of Him and He will bless us with His great salvation and will lead us to that eternal home in that blessed world to come!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Saying yes or amen to the will of God is not the easiest of things to do. I think of Mary when the angel appeared to her and told her, "You are highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28). Mary's reply was in verse 38, "Behold the handmaid of the lord." Those six "amen" words cost her a reputation, much persecution, and almost death by stoning. But she was a woman of character and the Angel's visit and his promising words were enough to convince her it was a great privilege to give her body to be used for God's glory. In the weeks and months that followed, the bitter-sweet promise she made to the angel would test every part of her life.

I think of my dear former pastor, Bro. Richard Madden, who told one of his family members after he was diagnosed with cancer, "I've taught you how to live and now I'm going to teach you how to die." His saying, "amen" to the will of God in his life has blessed many of us who have watched him as he stayed true to God till the end.

When we hear a truth that rings in our hearts as a message goes forth, let us not be silent, but say a hearty "Amen".

When God calls for us to consecrate our lives to Him, let us be willing to say, "Amen! Yes Lord, I'll do your will."

—Bro James Bell

DECEMBER 27, 2015

THE EFFECTUAL, FERVENT PRAYER

Revelation 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Philippians 1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

MEMORY VERSE: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. —Hebrews 4:16

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Learning to pray after the manner Jesus laid down for us will give us the confidence to pray the effectual, fervent prayer that avails much. We can be assured that His ears are open to the prayers of His saints who seek Him with faith and perseverance.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Revelation 5:8 “four beasts and four and twenty elders”: a symbolic expression representing all the redeemed. “golden vials full of odours”: bowls of incense. An expression of the worth and value of the prayers of holy people.

I John 5:15 “petitions”: requests.

Luke 18:1 “faint”: utterly spiritless; weary; exhausted.

Ephesians 6:18 “supplication”: Heart-felt petition rising out of deep, personal need.

Philippians 1:19 “salvation”: deliverance.

James 5:16 “effectual”: active; energetic; efficient. The Greek word, *energeo*, translates to our word *energy*, which is defined as *the ability to do work*. “fervent”: zealous; heated; arduous. “availeth”: “properly, embodied strength that ‘gets into the fray’ (action), i.e. engaging the resistance. For the believer, [it] refers to the Lord strengthening them with combative, confrontive force to achieve all He gives faith for. That is, facing necessary resistance that brings what the Lord defines is success.” —*HELPS Word Studies*

LESSON BACKGROUND

This lesson ends our study on the Lord’s Prayer. Hopefully, for each of us, it is only the beginning of a life-long quest for more deeply satisfying, energetic, fervent prayer and communion with the Father.

Today’s references point us to the purpose, the worth, and the effects of prayer. In studying the life of Jesus,

we can see that it was his *communion* with the Father; His *living by* the Father, that brought success. He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” The life of Jesus now, in the heart of the believer, is the life of intercession and prayer—the only way to *our* success.

The picture in Revelation of the redeemed holding their harps (representing praise) and vials full of fragrant prayers lets us know that even though they seem insignificant, like molecules of fragrant incense, they are precious to God, and He keeps them and treasures them up.

The apostle Paul concluded, at the end of his discourse on the full armor of God, that all was accomplished by “praying always” in the Spirit. In *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Christian was shown the arsenal, and there with the shield and sword was the weapon of “All Prayer” mentioned here by Paul. In his captivity, Paul depended upon the prayers of the saints for his deliverance and for the spread of the gospel.

James writes of anointing and prayer for the sick. In a history of the early Christians, I read that they refused to go to the hospitals of that time, because the hospitals were dedicated to the pagan healing god, Aesculapius. Their reliance on prayer in times of sickness was a serious thing to them. Confession of faults and sins—clearing of oneself to earnestly seek God—there was no cost too great.

DISCUSSION:

1. *The worth of prayer:* Which verse gives a picture of the value God has placed on the prayers of His saints?
2. *The importance of perseverance:* What did Jesus’s teachings encourage us NOT to do? With what do we accompany earnest prayer?
3. *The specifics of prayer:* Name the different requirements of the prayer that avails much.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The manner in which Jesus instructed us to pray holds a great secret for us as we seek to pray the prayer that avails.

Recognition and faith: “Our Father—what love brought us to be Your own! We praise You and acknowledge You and trust in You. We know YOU ARE and You see us and hear us. You are in control and always do what is best. You are mighty and powerful in our behalf. Your Name is Wonderful, Holy, Mighty. May we honor and glorify You as we bear Your Name and come in Your Name.”

Humility and submission: “Father, may Your kingdom come into my heart and into the hearts of men and women. Be King over us; spread Your gospel to the world in us and through us! We intercede for the lost; for those who have never heard! Bless the translators and the missionaries; the pastors and teachers and parents who share Your Word. We pray for Your will to be done in us! Have Your way! In my life, in my family, in the Church, in our nation, in the world. Let us be as obedient to You as are the heavenly hosts. Direct and send them and us to do Your bidding throughout the earth and in the spiritual realm.”

Childlike trust, godly sorrow and tender compassion: “You know what we need today, Father! We place our business concerns, our family’s daily food, the trials and adversities of this day, in Your hands. Feed us, Lord, with what

is sufficient for us. And we could never repay You, Father for what we owe You. For life, for forgiveness, for what You paid for our sins. We are so unworthy, but we ask for Your continued mercies. We realize that what You have forgiven us is so much greater than the hurts others have inflicted on us, but our load seems so great, Lord. It hurts, Lord! But we must forgive. Fill us with Your forgiveness. Erase our hearts, Lord, as you do the sandy coasts. Forgive those who are in trouble with You, Lord. I release them to You.”

Release, rest, and praise: “It’s up to You, now, Father. You have the power. It’s Your kingdom. Your church. Everything is to Your glory and honor. Everything You do is right. Praise You for WHO You are. You are worthy. Amen, Lord; let it be done; I believe, I believe. Amen and Amen!”

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

What happens to the words we speak – to the prayers we pray? Where do they go? Are they only so much “space debris?” No! We have a beautiful picture of what God does with our prayers and how important they are to Him! He doesn’t just store them in some utilitarian, bare-but-functional warehouse on an out-of-the-way street, or casually listen to our petitions with one ear. Revelation depicts our prayers as being stored in golden vials!

A most precious manifestation of this truth was given in the account of a loved one upon whom, when the time was right, God poured out of the golden vials all the prayers that had been prayed for this soul in a beautifully cascading waterfall, which this dear one actually visualized. The prayers of the saints covered this person from the crown of their head to the sole of their feet and made a difference unto redemption! Let us never grow weary in prayer. God is taking note of our prayers and storing them up, no matter how brazen the sky may feel to us.

Surely we live in a world today where effectual prayer is desperately needed. There is loneliness, heartbreak, turmoil, and pain on every side. We don’t have to look very far to find it; maybe you or someone close to you needs prayer? Our country needs prayer. Souls need to be saved and bodies healed. Let us not just “know how to pray” intellectually—let us, in these very last days, have a burden for prayer. Let us not just casually throw a prayer heavenward; let us pray The Lord’s Prayer. Let us pray effectually and fervently. We have a great Father who not only loves us and is faithful, but He hears when we pray and prayer does make a difference.

—Sis. Julie Elwell

“Then let us ever watch and pray; Seek oft in tears the Savior’s lovely face.

Come boldly with thy needs for every day; Blest mercy’s waiting at the throne of grace.”