

Prayer – A Relational Communication with God

Good morning. My name is John and I'm glad that you're here this morning. If you're joining us today from around the world by live streaming, thank you for joining our church family as we study God's Word.

We're in a sermon series called Prayer – A Relational Communication with God. Two weeks ago, we looked at *Philippians 4:6-7*; ***“Don't worry about anything but pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for what He's done. 7) Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”***

Last week we started the prelude to the Lord's prayer in *Matthew 6:6*, ***“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees you in secret will reward you.”*** We talked about having a room, a place where you get alone with God and pray. We talked about a room, a private room, and a holy room. It's been a pleasure to hear about the different places that you have shared with me where you meet alone with God. Many of you have sent me pictures, videos, and notes describing that place where you meet with God. This past week YAC watched a Christian movie called *The War Room* that showed the life a woman who fought her many battles in a closet, a private room. There she met with God to pray, open her Bible to hear God talk to her, and then watch God fight the most impossible battles of her life.

During the course of this series on prayer, if you have a private room, a war room, where you fight your battles on your knees in prayer, please share that with me. I would love to hear your stories where you meet with God and fight your battles in prayer.

Now let's look at our text in *Matthew 6:8*, "***Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.***" Before we get into the Lord's prayer, let look at this important statement that Jesus tells us. ***Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.***

It is important to know that our Heavenly Father already knows what we're going to talk to Him about. So, it's important to know that prayer is not about an information session to inform God. God already knows. Or we could put it this way. God - "I already know what you want to talk to me about it, I just want to know do you want to talk to me about it." Just because God knows what we need doesn't mean that He will act on that knowledge. He wants us to enter into a relationship with Him so that He can act and show Himself strong to us.

Let's look at the Lord's prayer. It's divided into two parts. The first part is about God. The second part is about us. The first part says: Your name, your kingdom, Your will. The second part says: give us our daily bread. Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from evil. So, the first part is about God and the second part is about us. We call it the Lord's prayer, but it should be better known as the Disciple's prayer. Because in *Luke 11:1*, a parallel passage to Matthew, the disciples ask Jesus, "***Lord, teach us to pray.***" So, let's look at Matthew's focus in the Sermon on the Mount to see what Jesus said.

Matthew 6:9, "Pray then like this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name." He Jesus tells His disciples that you should pray in this matter. You should pray like this. This is not a prayer that should be recited. It doesn't give you magical powers. But this is a model so that you'll understand the all-inclusiveness about communicating with God. It is a guide for praying – "***Pray then like this.***"

The next part of this verse says, "***Our Father.***" The point that Jesus is making is that you are not an only child. It says, "***Our Father.***" It's not – God is your daddy like you're an only child with all that comes with being an only child. But the bible says, "our Father." He has multiple

children. *John 1:12* says, “**But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, he gave the right to become the children of God.**” All who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior become a child of God.

To be called the name of father, you must have children. That’s what makes you a father. God, who is our heavenly father, wants us to approach Him relationally. He doesn’t want us to approach Him as if He’s some distant deity waiting to zap with a bolt of lightning if we say or do something wrong. No, He wants us to approach Him in relational communication with Him as a Father.

Now, there are some of you here today that are having difficulty relating to God as your father because your earthly father failed you in some way. I’ve mentioned to you several times about the story of my dad. My dad was an orphan. He never knew who his biological father was. He was rejected by his family. He was not given his father’s family name. He did not have a sense of belonging because there was nothing stable about his childhood or youth.

Some of you here today have that same struggle. Maybe your father was absent from your home. Or your father was abusive. Maybe you suffered verbal abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse from your father. So when you hear that God is our father, there are negative images that come into your mind trying to relate to God as your father.

Now, let’s look at God as our father, then we’ll see that our earthly fathers never measure up to God the father. First, God is our father by creation, and also by redemption. *Isaiah 64:8*, “**But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.**” He created us. He took the responsibility of Father as an example to Adam. His example to Adam was for Adam to be a Father to his family, to be the leader of his home, to provide for his home, and to protect his home.

Then *Isaiah* says in *63:16*, “*For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us, you, O LORD, you are our Father, our redeemer, from of old is your name.*”

Though Adam failed, like our earthly fathers fail us, God our father loved us and redeemed us so that we can have that relationship with Him restored. He never fails us and through redemption initiates with us that intimate relationship with Him so that we can call Him Father – Daddy.

Romans 8:15, “*For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*”

Galatians 4:6, *Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his son into our hearts crying, “Abba! Father!”*

Now, let’s continue looking at this model prayer. *Matthew 6:9*, “*Our Father in heaven...*” That means that God is not here on earth. He lives in heaven. Here on earth, we are limited by time and space. But let me tell you something, your father lives in heaven. He is not bound by the limitations of time and space. His house, as mentioned in *John 14:2* is in heaven. *Daniel 4:26* says that heaven rules over earth. So, the thing that give us assurance in prayer is that our father, who lives in heaven and whom we do not see, is very much aware of all of the details of our lives and is able to overrule the limitations of time and space. If we compare our earthly fathers to our heavenly father, we’ll always be frustrated and disillusioned. Because our earthly fathers have the same limitations and shortcomings that you and I have. However, when we realize that our heavenly father has no shortcomings and has no limitations, we can have boldness and confidence that our heavenly father will work on our behalf. He will never fail us! He operates out of a whole different realm.

When you look at the life of Jesus, He always related and prayed to God as His father. In all of His prayers recorded in the New Testament, Jesus refers to God as His father. Only one time did Jesus not refer to God as

His father. That was when He was nailed on the cross and cried out, ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”*** In that prayer, he had all of the sin of the world on his shoulders, your sin and my sin. The relationship with God the Father was broken. But then, after He died, was buried and rose again, Jesus gave us these amazing words in ***John 20:17***, ***“...I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”***

He tells the disciples that not only is He going to His father, but he tells them that He’s going to their father. Why is that important? Because Jesus tells them that the same power that my Father gave me here on earth is available to you when I leave here. My Spirit will come and indwell you and you’ll have the same power available to you too!

Another encouraging thing is that the Bible tells us that right now that Jesus is seated on the right side of God the Father. But then the Bible tells us in ***Ephesians 2:6*** that we are seated with him. That means that the same intimacy that God had with Jesus, He wants to have with us if we relate to Him as our father.

Matthew 6:9, ***“Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name.”*** God, who wants to have an intimate relation with you. He lives in heaven. He operates in a different dimension than you and me. When we need a help, we know that we can call to Him as our father who is not limited to the difficulties that we have, therefore He can overrule the problems that we face.

“...hallowed be your name.” Hallowed means consecrated, holy, unique, one of a kind, unique, special. So, we can say, “Father, there is no one like you!” When you and I understand the price that God paid for our salvation, for our redemption, there should not be a problem hallowing His name. He is unique all by Himself. There is nothing or no one that can compare with Him. He is in a category all by Himself.

Now that we focus on the uniqueness of God, the sacredness of God, let's look at hollowing his name. His name.

In the West, we use names different than the way the Bible describes names. We name our children with the names of our parents, grandparents, someone who had an influential part of our lives. In Latin America we name our children with a surname, a second and/or third name, then the father's name, and lastly the mothers family name.

However, in the Bible, names were given to describe the character and nature of the person. Therefore, when God wants to reveal Himself to us, He does so by telling us His names. So, the better we know God's name, the better we are to relate to Him when we pray.

Bible scholars have studied and found that there are about 100 or so names in the Bible. Those names describe His nature and character and reveal Himself to us. We all know the name God which describes that He is deity. But as we study in detail the names that God ascribes to Himself, we will know Him better. And to really know who this person is who is our Heavenly Father, let's look what His names describes to us with His nature and character.

The first name that God reveals to us is the name Elohim. It is found in ***Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning Elohim (God) created the heavens and the earth."*** Usually, when you see in the Bible the word G-O-D, it is usually referring to Elohim. That is the creator God. Elohim is a plural term, (him – plural) (El – strong one). Elohim, the creator God, is His power name. He creates with that name. We need to know that name because we will need power in our lives. We will need for Him to do something in our lives.

To understand that name and meaning, we need to look at what the scriptures say. ***Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what was seen was not made out of things that are visible."*** That is a theological concept

that tells us that God created everything from nothing. God created everything with no raw materials from which to create. He created creation out of nothing. It's hard for us to grasp that because we've all been told that there was this big explosion and all the world just so happened to fall into place. However, to understand and believe that God created out of nothing is a great confidence booster for us. That means that he can answer our prayers which doesn't have any explanation. He can open the Red Sea. He can make a way when there is no way. God is all powerful and He can answer our prayers for which His uniqueness can only do. When we know who our Heavenly Father is, who can pull off the impossible without the limits of time and space, it gives us that confidence to go to him with every need we have. The Bible says, ***Matthew 19:26 "With God, all things are possible!"***

The second name that we want to look at today is the name YHWH (Yahweh or Jehovah). That is the name that God gave Himself. When we read in our English bibles and see the word L-O-R-D, that usually means Yahweh or Jehovah. That is God's relational name, His covenant name. In ***Exodus 3:7***, when Moses asked God, whom shall I tell the people of God sent me, ***"God said to Moses, I Am Who I Am. Tell the people of Israel, I Am has sent me to you."*** YHWH, scholars have had to add vowels so that we could pronounce the word Yahweh. I Am Who I Am. I'm not who you want me to be, but I Am Who I Am. God is a relational God. God, which is why He uses Father, because He is a relational God. So, if we want to see Elohim's power in our lives, we must have a relationship with Yahweh, the relational God. There are a lot of people, God's people want to see the power of Elohim in their lives, but they don't want to spend time in developing the relationship with Yahweh or Jehovah.

In Genesis 1, we see that Elohim created ... In Genesis 2:4, we see that when God created Adam and Eve, the Bible uses the word Elohim Yahweh, or in our English bibles, the LORD God. From the beginning of time, God created us to have a relationship with Him as He shows us His power. And if we want to see Him work in our lives, our prayer

lives, we must spend time in developing that relationship with Him. That is what He desires most. We shouldn't expect to see God's Elohim power, that is His provision, His protection, His guidance in our lives if we keep Him at a distance. He wants to be our Father, someone that is close and intimate in our lives.

The third important name for God that is essential for us to know is the name Adonai. When we read our English bibles, Adonai is spelled: L-o-r-d. Adonai means boss, supervisor, manager, or owner. The one who is responsible for you. Elohim means His power. Yahweh or Jehovah means His relationship and Adonai means that He's responsible for us. He is in charge. Next week we'll talk more about that in the phrase of the Lord's prayer – Your kingdom come. If we don't want to have God tell us what to do, which is found in His Word the Bible, then we won't develop a strong relationship with Him and we won't see His power in our lives. He is the one who is in control. God tells us in His word how we are to live, but we decide to live our own lives, it is as if we tell God, Father or Daddy, you don't know what you're talking about. When we have that attitude, that is now hallowing His name.

Let's look at a few scriptures that tell us how we are to respond to God's name.

Psalms 8:1 & 9, the Bible says, "Oh LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name."

Psalms 111:9, "... Holy and awesome is His name."

Psalms 29:1-2, "... ascribe to the LORD, glory and strength."

Psalms 113:3, "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!"

Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower, the righteous man runs to it and is safe."

We're not just talking about any name. We're talking about a name that is above all names. We're talking about our father, our daddy! The most powerful name in the world is our Heavenly Father! When God does something in your life because you have joined Him in prayer, we are to hallow His name. We're to make something out of it. We need to remember and give Him the glory, even for the little things that He does when answering your prayers.

We don't have time today to go over all the names of God, but I'll mention a few this morning.

Jehovah Jireh – God will provide
Jehovah Nissi – the LORD is my banner or victory
Jehovah Shalom – the God of peace
El Elyon – the Most High God
El Shaddai – God Almighty
El Roi – The God who sees

There are many names of God, and if we really take time to study them and realize that those names represent my Heavenly Father, then I can have confidence that when I pray, when I get close to Him, that He will show His power in my life, whatever the answer will be for me.

Matthew 6:9, "Pray then like this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

Let's pray.