

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

40- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 20  
Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy- Part 3

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Church February 12, 2023

## **Matthew 6:1-24**

**1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.**

**2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,**

**4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.**

**8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

**9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.**

**10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.**

**11 'Give us this day our daily bread.**

**12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'**

**14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

**15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

**16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face**

**18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

**20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;**

**21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

**22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.**

**23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

**24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.**

*To the Glory of God the Holy Father; God the Holy Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Prayer is the “*aroma*” of the Church. It is the “*calling card*” of the people of God- the very “*flavor*” of Christianity. And that’s true- because God’s people *pray*. And that’s true- because God *answers* the Prayers of God’s people. As we read about the first thirty years of the early Church in the **Book of the Acts of the Apostles**- we see that those people prayed! O how they prayed! They prayed when God blessed them; and they prayed when He seemed distant. They prayed when they were threatened; and they prayed when all was well. They prayed; and they prayed; and they prayed!

Jesus said that “*Father’s House*” would be a “**House of Prayer**” (**Matthew 21:13**); and Jesus Himself *modeled* Prayer as one of the main things He did while on earth. Jesus prayed in the Morning (**Luke 21:38**) and at Night (**Luke 21:37**). And sometimes- our Lord prayed all night long (**Luke 6:12**).

So, the “*Means of Grace*” called, “*Prayer*” should be one of the *main things* that Believers engage in. Bible Study should be as normal to the Believer as Eating; while Prayer should be as normal to the Believer as Breathing. Prayer is NOT odd or weird or strange. It is *normal* and *natural* for a genuine Believer to

speak to God. It is highly *Unnatural* and is NOT normal when a genuine Believer doesn't call on the Name of the Lord. In fact, "*Prayerlessness*" is a Sign that something is *seriously* Wrong with that individual.

Now a strange Phenomenon has occurred to the Believers here in America that Believers in almost every other Nation of the world don't understand. Here-many of us are so busy; we have so much to do; so many Blessings to tend to; so much Money to make; so many Issues to deal with- that American Christians almost *universally* say things like, "*I don't have time to pray.*"

And the Believers all across of the world look at us when we say things like that- in stunned Silence. "*You don't have Time to cry out to God? You are so busy tending to all that Blessings that God has given you- that you no longer pray? Seriously?*"

You see, *their* Government imprisons; and tortures; and beats; and kills Christians- so, they pray. And they would like to find food to eat- so, they pray. And they would like to find water to drink- so they pray. They want God to show them where a root is- so they can make some soup to feed their children. So, they pray. And they would like for God to cool the 106 degree fever that is ravaging their baby. So, they pray. And they desire to be faithful to the Cause of Jesus Christ. And they correctly think that being faithful to Jesus is impossible- unless they pray.

So, they simply don't understand how American Christians can have so much; how we can live every day in such amazing Prosperity; how we can have so much Opportunity- and yet have no Time to pray? No Time to pray in the *safest* and most *secure* and the most *prosperous* Nation in the History of the world? No Time to pray when we are NOT being threatened with instant Annihilation? No time to pray when we have seven different styles of green beans to choose from on the shelves? No Time to pray when we can go *anywhere* we want to; watch *anything* we choose to; eat *whatever* we want; and say *whatever* we want- without losing our Freedom or our Lives?

500 years ago, God used a German by the name of Martin Luther to ignite the Protestant Reformation. But Luther wasn't merely a theologian, who could argue endlessly about why the Roman teaching of "*Transubstantiation*" was entirely unbiblical. Luther actually practiced what he preached and was also a man of Prayer. And Luther said,

"If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day."

But the great Reformer soon *graduated* from a two-hour “Season of Prayer” each morning- to spending three hours daily in the Presence of God. Because he is quoted to have said,

“I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.”

... and the phrase, “I have so much to do” shows us the workload Luther had to grapple with- as God used him to begin the greatest Revival in human History. And please remember that Luther didn’t have a Computer; or the Internet; or Christian bookstores; and could only travel as fast as his horse could run; and his Life was routinely being threatened.

You see, for Luther, Prayer was not a church Ritual, but a very serious “spiritual Labor”. His heart and whole being was very much attuned to Prayer. And so, he begged God,

“Grant, O Lord, that I may not pray alone with the mouth; help me that I may pray from the depths of my heart.”

And it is in that “Place of Prayer” that he struck an intimate chord with God and he said:

“Prayer is climbing up into the heart of God,”

And that he depended on Prayer to make Progress in his Endeavors is evident from this Statement:

“The less I pray, the harder it gets; the more I pray, the better it goes.”

Now “*Prayer*” is mentioned in the Bible over 520 times- yet it is probably the *least* understood; the most *neglected*; and one of the most *abused* of all the “*Gifts of Grace*” that God gave to His Church. Conversely, “*Preaching*” is only mentioned 144 times in the Bible. Now this is not a slam to Preaching- but from a purely mathematical point of view- we should be praying 3.6 times MORE than we preach! In fact, there should never be a Sermon written or preached that has not been received through very intense Study and bathed in very earnest Prayer.

Now if I were to ask you to define just what Prayer is- I think the most common theme would have something to do with:

## **Human beings speaking to the Lord in Faith and giving Him our Requests**

... and that a pretty good definition.

And I would guess that those Requests would be *many* such as:

- Requests for Good Health
- Requests for Financial Blessings
- Requests for Salvation for Friends and loved ones
- Requests for Strength to endure Temptations and Trials
- Requests for Hope for the Future
- Requests for Revival
- Requests for Jesus to return, etc.

... but I think very *few* would define Prayer as:

### **The Worship of God- in us finding Joy in God's Will being done in the earth rather than our own- as it pertains to our Requests**

... so, MORE than being simply a "*Tool*" that allows us to get from God what we think we *need* or *want*- Prayer is an *ongoing* Search for God's Will. But by definition- Prayer also involves the *ongoing* Struggle to NOT merely recognize that something *is* God's Will- but the Struggle to find *genuine Contentment*; and *real Happiness*; and *truthful Delight* in God's Will being done in the earth- rather than our *own* will.

So, Prayer is NOT about us *using* God to get what we *want*; or even what we think we *need*. Prayer is about us learning Humility; and learning Submission; and learning how to Rejoice- when God's Will is carried out in the earth- even if God's Will *conflicts* with our own- *especially* when God's Will *conflicts* with our own.

Now those of you who have been here awhile know that I have long time stressed these seven "*Pillars*" in your daily Walk with God:

1. Prayer
2. Bible Study
3. Godly Fellowship
4. Fasting
5. The Lord's Table
6. Service to Others
7. Giving

... and these are the “*Ways*” that God has chosen to *strengthen* His people.

So, these seven “Pillars” are actually, “*Conduits*”; or “*Channels*”; or “*Means*” of God’s Grace. In other words, these are the “*Instruments*” by which the Grace of God flows to us. Yet they **MUST** be “*availed of*”- if they are to be Effective. So, for example, you can *believe* all day long; and even *say* all day long that Prayer is very important. But if you don’t actually pray *yourself*- then Prayer is of no use to you at all. Likewise, all of the other Means of Grace- we must *use them*; we must *avail ourselves of them*- or they are completely *useless* to us. And that is *why* many of the Reformers called these Gifts- “*Spiritual Disciplines*”; or “*Disciplines of Grace*”- because they are NOT simply “*THERE*”- you actually have to be disciplined to “*do them*”.

And I believe as strongly in these “Spiritual Disciplines” as I ever have; and want to *re-emphasize* them to you again this morning. If you will avail yourself of these seven “Means of Grace” in an ongoing and disciplined Way- you will not fail in what God has called you to do. But without them- it is only matter of time before you fail and that you fail badly. In short, these seven Avenues of God’s Grace- are the backbone of your Sanctification; and were the Concepts that characterized the early Church.

The Reality is that you are no stronger in God than your time with God’s Word in Study; your time with God in Prayer; your time with God in Fasting; and your time with other believers in Fellowship; and in eating at the Table of the Lord; and in Service to one another; and in your Giving.

And that is why every Ministry in this Church has been designed on purpose to help *facilitate* your Salvation; and your Sanctification- so that in, by, and through Prayer; Bible Study; Fellowship; Fasting; Service; and the taking of the Lord’s Supper- you will know God; and you will learn and grow in your Love for God; and you will learn and grow in your ability to *enjoy* Him forever.

Now over the last several years- I have spent a great deal of time stressing the Need for us to read and study God’s Word; and to learn *what* God has said; to learn what God *means* by what He has said: and to learn how to *apply* God’s Word to our daily lives- all for the Glory of God and the fulfillment of our own Joy. And today, I want to emphasize the Need and the Privilege we have been given- of talking to God; and of fellowshiping with God in the Gift of Prayer.

Now since I was saved back in the early 1970’s - I have heard countless thousands of people in countless thousands of Prayer Meetings tell me that they don’t know **HOW** to pray. But that is where this Section of God’s Word, that was just read to us- comes into play. Because here- Jesus teaches us **HOW** to pray. Let’s read verses 5-15 again together:

**5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.**

**8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

**9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.**

**10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.**

**11 'Give us this day our daily bread.**

**12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'**

**14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

**15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

Now as we read this Passage- we see HOW to pray- but we also see how NOT to pray. For example, Jesus said,

**When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites...**

So, that tells us that there are real, genuine Believers- and there are also Hypocrites- who act like Believers; and who go in the Name of God; who are IN the Church- but who are NOT saved; and who are NOT part of God's Kingdom.

And there is also something called, "*Prayer*"- and there is also something that is called, "*hypocritical Prayer*". And so, we are to be "real" and "genuine" in our daily Lives as Believers- but we are also to be "real" and "genuine" in our Prayers.

But as we cry out to God in Prayer- Jesus warns us to NOT pray like the Hypocrites. Okay, so, HOW do the Hypocrites pray? Well, Jesus said,

**... they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men ...**

Now this Statement by Jesus does NOT condemn ALL public Prayers. There are times when praying in Public is *absolutely* God's Will. But the unsaved people, who were part of the five religious Groups, that dominated Life in Palestine back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century engaged in Prayer for only one Reason:

**... so that they may be seen by men ...**

... and THAT is what Jesus was condemning.

So, praying for no other Reason than to be seen by men so people would think and make "much" of them- is what Jesus was condemning as "Hypocritical".

Now as I told you last time- in context- the "Hypocrites" that Jesus has in mind here- are the "*Scribes*"; the "*Pharisees*"; the "*Sadducees*"; the "*Essenes*"; and the "*Zealots*". Those were the five major religious Groups that were active during the time that Jesus walked the earth. And they could be defined briefly as:

- **The Scribes**- the religious Lawyers or Theologians
- **The Pharisees**- the religious Conservatives- who *accepted* the Supernatural (the Temple and High Priest)
- **The Sadducees**- the more sophisticated religious Liberals- who *rejected* the Supernatural (Sanhedrin Court)
- **The Essenes**- the religious Mystics (the Desert)
- **The Zealots**- the religious Terrorists

... but the practical Application of what Jesus said here is that this Teaching by Jesus could apply to *anyone* in our day- who is doing what the people of those five Groups did.

Now I think it is important that we keep in mind exactly what Jesus was doing in this Sermon that we now call, the "*Sermon on the Mount*". Jesus has been with the Father in Heaven *forever*. And the Apostle John said that Jesus was WITH God and WAS God (**John 1:1**). So, the Word; or God the Son; or the second Person of the Trinity was and is- God Almighty. And at a certain Time that pleased God- the second Person of the Trinity- the Word; or God the Son- took on human Flesh and became Man (**Galatians 4:4**). And at that moment- for the *first* Time in all of Creation- God Almighty *inserted* Himself into His Creation and became a *part* of it.

So, now God is "with" Man- which is what the Prophet was talking about when he said this in **Isaiah 7:14b**,



**... Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel (God with us).**

So, now God the Son- the Word that was WITH God and the Word that WAS God- is in the world. And Jesus is *fully and truly* God and He is *fully and truly* Man. He is God Almighty in human Flesh. And with the virgin Birth of Jesus- the great Mystery of a Being Who is both God and Man began.

But the Reason Jesus is now in the world- is because it is now Time for the *First* or the *Old* Covenant to pass away; and to be fully absorbed into the *New* Covenant- that has been promised since God gave the First one. And that New Covenant will be ushered into the world through the appearing of the long-awaited Messiah.

So, not only has Jesus Himself- as the Messiah- come- but the final, full, and completed Revelation of God to Man has also come. And with that *final* Revelation- God is giving to the world- an infinitely *superior* Covenant; that is based on infinitely *superior* Promises; that was given through an infinitely *superior* Sacrifice; offered by an infinitely *superior* High Priest. And as the New Covenant takes root- EVERYTHING will change for both the Jew and the Gentile.

And as Jesus enters the world and then goes through every Stage of His earthly Ministry: His Birth; His Ministry; His sinless Life; His Death; His Resurrection; and His Ascension – He is literally and eternally *fulfilling* every Tenet; every Promise; every Statute; every Ordinance; every Commandment; every Prophecy; and every single Element of the Old Covenant- either based on WHO He is or based on WHAT He is doing.

And what that means is that now- IN, BY, and THROUGH JESUS CHRIST- ALL that God desires- ALL that God wants; ALL that God blesses; and all that God will honor- is found IN the Person of Jesus Christ and IN His finished Work- ALONE! And as we become IN Jesus Christ- through the Miracle of the New Birth- we will possess a “*Union with Christ*”.

But what that means is that there is now NO aspect of God’s Will or Word that operates *outside* of Jesus. There is NO other Plan of God; No other people; No other Work; NO other Operation other than what God is doing and will do- in, by, and through Jesus Christ!

So, there is no Prophecy; no part of Righteousness; no Way of pleasing God; no area of Divine Truth that is *separate* from the Lord Jesus and all that He alone did. And that is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said this in **Colossians 2:9&10:**

**For in Him [Jesus] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him**

**you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;**

... and what he wrote in **Romans 11:36:**

**For from Him [Jesus] and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.**

Now the phrase, “**fullness of Deity**” in **Colossians 2:9** means that every area of God; every Characteristic; every personal Attribute of God the Father *exists* and *operates* in Jesus Christ- to its *greatest* degree- or its *absolute* Fullness. And when Paul said that Jesus is the “**head over all rule and authority**”- he meant to say that the absolute and complete Supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ rules over every area of the entire Universe and over everything and everyone in it. That is what the New Covenant brings to this earth.

So, for example, since Jesus came; and lived; and died; and rose again- if *anyone* for any *reason* sacrifices an animal- *in complete obedience to the Law of Moses*- that person is not merely wayward- he is now sinning against the Worth and Value of the Death of Jesus on the Cross. If anyone, for any reason, now attempts to separate people based on what they eat- *in complete obedience to the Law of Moses*- they are sinning. If anyone believes or teaches that people are *automatically* saved by reason of their Nationality; or their Ethnicity; or the spiritual Condition of their Parents- *in complete obedience to the Law of Moses*- they are now sinning.

Under the Old Covenant- God told the world to “*come and see*” and behold Israel and her people. So, if the world wanted to see God’s Favor- they had to leave their homes and come to Israel; to Jerusalem; and to the Temple. But in the New Covenant- God tells His people to leave their homes and “*go and tell*” the Nations of the world about God’s Decree of “*Unconditional Surrender and Forgiveness*” in the Lord Jesus. Under the Old Covenant- the Flesh of male foreskin was cut to signify that that man was a “*son of Abraham.*” Under the New Covenant- the hard heart of Flesh is circumcised- and “*sons of Abraham*” are those who rejoice at Jesus; and who obtain spotless Righteousness by Faith alone.

Under the Old Covenant- God gave His people a specific geographic section of real-estate. Under the New Covenant- we shall inherit the whole earth! The Old Covenant was between God and Man. The New Covenant is between the three Persons of the Trinity. The Old Covenant dealt with the Jew and the Nation of Israel- with *special* emphasis on Jerusalem and its Temple. The New Covenant deals with the entire Human Race; the world-wide Church; with *special* emphasis on the City of New Jerusalem- with its Temple in Heaven!

So, in this Sermon- Jesus is telling the Jews who heard Him that day (and us) what the *new* people; who will be part of the *new* Covenant; and who will

dwell in the new Kingdom of Heaven look like. In other words- what Jesus is teaching here are the Characteristics of the *true* “sons of Abraham” and the *true* Jew (**Romans 2:28&29**). And so, as we read what Jesus teaches here- we need to remember what our Lord said in **Matthew 5: 20**:

**For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

... so, **Matthew 5, 6, &7** is what that “*surpassing Righteousness*” looks like. So, here in **Matthew 6:1-24**- Jesus is calling the “*false righteousness*” of the people of those five spiritual Groups- “*Hypocrisy*”.

But in addition to the hypocritical praying that Jesus warned us about- there is also another kind of “Bad” or “False” praying that we need to avoid. Look again at verses 8&9:

**7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.  
8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

Now the word, “*Gentile*” here has to do with those who have no Knowledge of God. You see, under the inferior Old Covenant- God revealed Himself *exclusively* to the Jews. And God gave the Jews their Land; and their Government; and their Culture; and their Language; their Law and their Religion. God sent His Prophets to the Jews and gave them His Word. So, the Jews were *surrounded* by God and the “**Things of the Spirit of God**” (**1Corinthians 2:14**).

But God did NOT deal with the other nations of the world like this. And so, all of the other 194 Countries of the world did NOT have God nor the “Things of the Spirit of God”. And so, the entire world was divided between “Jews” and “Gentiles”. And “Gentiles” represented everyone who didn’t know God or even have access to God.

But by the Time God revealed the infinitely superior New Covenant- the terms, “*Jew*” and “*Gentile*” changed. And now- in Jesus Christ- a “*Jew*” is a “Believer” while a “*Gentile*” is an “Unbeliever”. So, a *real Jew*; a *genuine Jew*; a *spiritual Jew* is a person (a natural Jew or a natural Gentile), who has experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; and has been forgiven and made Righteous by Faith alone and is now a child of Abraham and an heir of God to the whole world (Justification); and a person who has been adopted into the Family of God (Adoption). For example, this is what God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Apostle Paul to *infallibly* write in **Romans 2:28&29**:

**28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.**

**29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.**

And a “*Gentile*” is a now any person (a natural Jew or a natural Gentile)- who is Unsaved; and who rebels against God and His Word; and who is NOT a part of the new Kingdom of Heaven. And that is why, when discussing Church Discipline, Jesus said this in **Matthew 18:17**:

**If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.**

So, when a person, who has publicly professed Faith in Jesus Christ; and has been baptized; and has become a Member of the Church- engages in public; notorious; and continual Sin; and yet refuses to repent; and when that wayward Member ignores the Pleas of his brothers and sisters in Christ to repent; and when he ignores the Pleas of the Church of Jesus to repent- Jesus said that we are to *ex-communicate* (no longer fellowship) that individual and treat him as though he was two things:

1. A Gentile
2. A tax-Collector

The Issue here is NOT his Sin- but his refusal to repent. Why would a genuine Believer NOT repent when confronted with his Sin? Why would a person, who loves God and who loves the Church- NOT repent when confronted?

So, by his repeated *refusal* to repent- that individual is acting like an “Unbeliever” (Gentile); and he is acting like a person, who has betrayed God’s people- the Church (tax-collector).

So, here in verses 8&9- Jesus is saying that the “Gentiles”- those who are Unsaved; those who do NOT know God; those who have NOT been exposed to God’s Word; those who are NOT a part of God’s Kingdom- pray using “*meaningless repetition*”. They repeat words over and over- usually very rapidly. In fact, this is where the term, “*Barbarian*” came from. As the Lost and unsaved Pagans would pray- they would repeat a particular sound, “*Bar-Bar-Bar*” over and over- very rapidly- thinking that their Man-made deity would hear them- if they repeated that sound over and over again.

So, Jesus said that the Pagan were wrong and repeating words over and over again- very rapidly is “*meaningless*”. That is NOT what causes God to answer our Prayers.

And Jesus then told us what these Unbelievers; these Barbarians; these Gentiles were actually thinking as they were praying like this. He said,

**... they suppose that they will be heard for their many words**

And this is the main Issue with God concerning genuine Prayer. Look what Jesus said next,

**... your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

... and THAT is the Reason Jesus said,

**... do not be like them ...**

... because the one, true, and living God is “*Omniscient*”. And “Omniscience” means that God knows EVERYTHING about EVERYTHING!

So, there isn't ANYTHING that exists- that God doesn't already know about- in FULLNESS! Omniscience means that God NEVER learns new things. God never studies. He never reads. God never reads or studies the Bible. God never discovers anything new. God is never amazed at new things. And God is NEVER nervous about the Future- because God not only knows about the Future- but He also CONTROLS the Future! So, the God we worship already knows EVERYTHING about EVERYTHING- including what we Need (and want)!

So, Jesus said that God does NOT need for us to tell Him what we need. But that is NOT because God is NOT interested in us- because God is VERY interested in us. God doesn't need for us to tell Him what we need- because He *already* knows what we need! In fact, God knows us and knows what we need- BETTER than we do!

The insulting and humiliating Truth is that we are NOT Omniscient. And so, there are Things that we need; and Things that we need very badly- that we are not even aware of. And that is because we are NOT perfectly aware of ourselves. We do NOT know ourselves as well as God does. But God does! And so, Jesus teaches here that it is NOT the Believer but the Unbeliever- who asks God about what he *thinks* he needs (and what he wants).

Jesus said a Believer will have Faith that God already knows everything about himself and everything about what he needs; as well as everything that he

needs. And so, Jesus tells us here to NOT pray like pagan barbarian Gentile Unbelievers.

But we are also NOT to think that if we pray a certain Prayer a certain number of times- that God will hear us and answer *better* or *faster*- than if we only pray that Prayer a *few* times. So, for any religious Leader to tell somebody that they should pray a certain Prayer five times- or twenty-five times- and if they do that- God will forgive them- is the very *height* of Paganism.

Jesus is *reassuring* us here that our God is Omniscient. And because God is Omniscient- we can trust that not only does God know all things- but because we are born again; justified; and adopted- God is constantly working on our Behalf. And we need to trust that- because Jesus gave us an unfailing Promise concerning this in verse 6:

**But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

Now again, Jesus is NOT condemning all public Praying. He IS condemning the five religious Groups and the hypocritical Way they prayed. But the Point Jesus is making here is NOT for us to build “*Prayer Closets*” or “*Inner Rooms*” in our homes. What Jesus is teaching here is the Omniscience of God. And the Promise from a God who CANNOT lie is,

**... your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

... so, if we will trust that God already knows what we need- *better* than we could ever tell Him in our Prayers; and if we will *resist* the Temptation to get other people to “make much” of us by praying in public; and if we will NOT use “meaningless repetition” in our Prayer; but if we will simply believe that God knows all things; and that God is Good; and go ahead and pray ONLY about what will bring God alone- the Glory He so deserves- God has promised to reward us!

In other words, God knows what we need (and what we want) infinitely *better* than we could ever express in any kind of Prayer. And so, we do not need to think that praying a Prayer a certain number of times or that repeating certain words over and over again- is going to cause God to move on our behalf.

Now I want to bring in a very important Principle about Prayer. So, please look what the Bible says in **1John 5:14**:

**This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.**

So, what *causes* God to *answer* our Prayers is the very SAME thing that causes God to do everything else:

### **God ONLY does that which is His Will**

You see, God's Will is perfect. There is no way that God's Will could ever be improved. It is entirely perfect and complete. It has no lack or reservation. And by ONLY doing what is His Will- God is *guaranteed* to have or accomplish THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT IN THE UNIVERSE:

### **The Glory of God!**

God is "white-hot" in His Passion that He alone is glorified. And THAT is WHY God does ALL that He does. NOTHING is more important to God than His Glory. And so, God does ALL that He does- so that "*He alone is glorified*"; or "*for His Name's sake*"; or "*so, they will know there is none like Me in all the earth!*" That is WHY God creates a mountain; It is WHY people are born and die; It is WHY you are blessed or healed; and it is WHY every single soul is saved.

And God *moves on*

our Prayers; He *answers* our Prayers- so that He alone will be glorified!

And so, any Prayer that will rob God of *some* or *all* of His Glory- fights against God's Glory. And so, God will NOT answer that Prayer. He ONLY answers the Prayers that are in accord with His Will. And answering Prayers that are in accord with God's Will- will *guarantee* that God alone is glorified!

So, Prayer is actually NOT *ultimately* about us getting things from God. Now we DO get things from God- and we praise God for that. But Prayer is *ultimately* about two things:

1. Us *learning* what is God's Will- and *submitting* to that; and *praying* to that End
2. Us obtaining the fullness of our own Joy- in God's Will being carried out- rather than our own

... and THAT is WHY Jesus told us to pray according to the Things He talked about in verses 9-13. Because that is the ONLY Prayer we can pray that will *guarantee* those two things. And Lord willing, we will get into how this all ties in together next time.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone