

The Red-Letter Words of Yeshua ~ Part 31

Sermon on the Mount ~ Part K

We continue our study of the **Sermon in the Mount**, beginning in Mattityahu 6:5.

Praying

⁵ "When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogues and on street corners, so that people can see them. Yes! I tell you; they have their reward already!

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

The problem is not public prayer but motives directed toward other people rather than **God**. It was probably common for pious people to recite their prayers individually in the synagogue; it is not clear that everyone prayed simultaneously in all synagogues as early as **Yeshua's** time. The **room** could have been a storeroom; most people did not have private rooms in their houses, and only that room would have a door on it.

Standing was a typical posture for prayer.

⁷ "And when you pray, don't babble on and on like the pagans, who think God will hear them better if they talk a lot.

Jewish scholars debated the use of fixed prayers in this period; they generally held them to be acceptable if one's intent was genuine. **Greek** prayers piled up as many titles of the deity addressed as possible, hoping to secure their attention. **Pagan** prayers typically reminded the deity of favors done or sacrifices offered, attempting to respond to **god** on contractual grounds.

⁸ Don't be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ You, therefore, pray like this:

Judaism recognized that **God** knew everything; the issue here is thus not **Yeshua's** hearers' doctrine but their hearts. **Jewish** people saw **God** differently than Greeks saw their **Gods** (even though even monotheistic faith was not always what it should have been). In **Judaism**, **God** was a **Father** who delighted in meeting the needs of His people; **Judaism** also recognized that **God** knew all a person's thoughts. **Yeshua** predicates effective prayer on a relationship of intimacy, not a business partnership model, which was closer to the one followed by ancient paganism.¹

'Our Father in heaven!

May your Name be kept holy.

***¹⁰ May your Kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.***

¹¹ Give us the food we need today.

***¹² Forgive us what we have done wrong,
as we, too, have forgiven those who have wronged us.***

When **God** forgives, He no longer credits sin to your account. And as God has forgiven us, so we are to forgive the sins others commit against us. Some people have been seriously sinned against. They have endured horrific cruelty. Nevertheless, the **Bible** teaches that anything that comes a **Believer's** way - the good, the bad, and the ugly - has to come through **God's** fingers. **God** is sovereign, and He permits things for the good of His children - even when we don't understand. Just as in the story of **Joseph**, human beings may intend to do evil against us, but **God** intends even that for good (see Gen 50:20).

¹ Keener, C. S. (1993). The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament

***13 And do not lead us into hard testing,
but keep us safe from the Evil One.***

HaSatan is more innovative than us and has centuries of experience ruining human lives. So, ask **God** to keep you from getting into situations that detour you from the **Kingdom** road. Pray that He would deliver you from temptations that you're not ready to handle.

***[For kingship, power and glory are yours forever.
Amen.]***

Verses 9b - 13 include what is widely known as the **Lord's Prayer** since the Lord Yeshua taught it. All its elements may be found in the **Judaism** of **Yeshua's** day, so in this sense, it is not original with Him; but it is appropriately revered for its beauty and economy.

I prefer to call it the **Talmidim** (Disciples) **Prayer** as it was taught for us, His talmidim, to use as a model for praying to **Abba**. The **Lord's** prayer is located Yochanan 17, where **Yeshua** Himself prays to **Abba**.

Its first words, **Our Father in heaven** (*Avinu sh'baShamayim*), open many Hebrew prayers. The next two lines recall the first portion of the synagogue prayer known as the **Kaddish**, which says, "*Magnified and sanctified (Yitgadal v'yitkadash) be His great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will, and may He establish His Kingdom in your lifetime*" The plural phrasing - "**Give us ... forgive us ... lead us**" - is characteristically **Jewish**, focusing on the group rather than the isolated individual.

The Evil One (HaSatan). The **Greek** may also be translated simply, "evil" in the sense of "bad things that happen."

[For kingship, power and glory are yours forever. Amen.] This doxology echoes 1 Chronicles 29:11. The oldest New Testament manuscripts lack it, hence the brackets. Roman Catholics do not include it when reciting this **Prayer**; Protestants do. On **Amen** here, it signals an expected congregational response. ²

14 For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; 15 but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours. ~ Mattityahu 6:5-15.

In our next post, we continue to explore the **Sermon on the Mount** from **Mattityahu's Gospel**.

² Stern, D.H. (1996) Jewish New Testament Commentary.