

Lesson 5: Chapter 6 “The Lord’s prayer and Do not worry”

Servant’s preparation:

http://www.suscpts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew_06.pdf

Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson in the bible study of St. Matthew, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Matthew? He was one of the twelve disciples; he was a tax-collector before Jesus called him to follow Him.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Jews, it is designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy.
- ✓ What is its theme? Jesus is the King of the Heavenly kingdom, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.

Remember:

Last lesson, we focused on Matthew 5 which is the first part of the sermon on the Mount. It calls us not only to adhere to external commandments but to seek an internal transformation that reflects the love, mercy, and perfection of God. Jesus, through this sermon, encourages His followers to be influential presences in the world, spreading God's love, and working towards righteousness in their daily lives. Today, we will continue the sermon in chapter 6.

Memory verse:

6:6 *“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly”.*

Lesson opener:

“The story is told of a king who was in his throne room, holding a council with his advisers, noblemen, and high ministers of state. Suddenly there was a bang and a clatter at the door of the throne room. All eyes turned as the door burst open and a young boy ran into the room.

One of the king’s royal guardsmen tried to stop the boy. “Hold there, lad!” he shouted. “Don’t you know you’re disturbing the council of the king?”

“He’s your king,” laughed the boy, “but he’s, my Daddy!” And the boy bounced into the open arms of his father, the king.”

Remember that when we pray, we pray to our daddy who is in heaven.

Lesson Goal:

IF WE TRUST GOD MORE, WE WILL WORRY LESS.

Lesson body:

In chapter 6, Jesus warns His disciples against external actions that are not generated from a sincere heart but offered in order to be seen and admired.

He gives three examples of acts that should be offered in secret in the private lives of Christians in order not to divert glory to God into glory to self:

1. Almsgiving (Mt 6:1-4)
2. Prayer (Mt 6:5-15)
3. Fasting (Mt 6:16-18)



Almsgiving (Read 6:1-4)

Our motivation when we are almsgiving should not be to get the attention of people. Jesus calls this “your righteousness.”

Without God, if people even do good deeds, generally the motivation for those good deeds is a selfish motivation. Man’s own righteousness (which is not real righteousness) seeks to get something in return and seeks to attract attention to itself and say “Look how good I am.”

Here are some of the things that we may do in front of others to get recognition.

- Employees may work harder while the boss is in the office.
- We may act differently or more spiritually around our Christian friends than around unbelievers.
- We may brag about various spiritual accomplishments we have done.

Do not mislead yourself about your own motivations. Pray and ask God to reveal your motivations to you and give you sincere motivations. Do not live for popularity or recognition. Do not delight in the praises of people. Instead, live to please God. Ask yourself, would you still do this good deed if you knew that no one else would ever know you did it?

Many times, parks will put the names of donors for monuments on plaques. As Jesus said, they already have their reward. Focus on God’s rewards. God knows your heart. If you do good deeds for Him with the right motivation, He will reward you. If you do it to get attention from others, He won’t.

Prayer (Read 6:5-15)

It is not wrong to pray together with believers. But if you only pray in front of other believers and don't pray on your own then that is a sign you don't have a personal relationship with God. The core of one's prayer time should be alone. This is where the most intimate and deep prayers should take place.

What is the inner room? our inner-most hearts and minds, when we shut out distractions of the world and focus entirely on speaking with God.

Jesus instructs us to have meaningful prayers, not a pointless, heartless, religious speech.



Application:

1. There is no need to make formal and elegant-sounding prayers. Pray from your heart. God knows what you are really thinking anyway. God will not listen to us because of the eloquence of our words. It doesn't matter how nice or spiritual our prayers sound. God already knows what we need. The quantity of words is not important.
2. There is no need to have a special tone of voice. Prayer is like talking to a friend. It is surprising when we read the prayers of Moses, Abraham, David, etc. They were incredibly bold and direct when talking to God. They weren't vague in their prayers. If they were annoyed, they expressed it. If they were surprised by something God was doing, they said so. After all, God knows everything they were thinking anyway, so why not say it?
3. It is rude to lose focus and become distracted when communicating with other people. How much ruder if we lose focus talking with God!

“The Lord’s Prayer” :

<https://tasbeha.org/community/discussion/525/the-lord-s-prayer>

If class time allows, consider doing the skit above illustrating the meanings of the Lord's prayer.

Of the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer the first three are on behalf of the cause of God:

1. The glory of His name
 2. The extension of His kingdom,
 3. and the prevalence of His will
- The other four pertain to our individual needs.

- ❖ Our Father, who is in heaven: We are His children, and He is our loving Father. This concept of God as 'Father' was completely new to the disciples listening to Jesus' words at the time.
- ❖ Hallowed : Holy, sacred, revered.
- ❖ Your kingdom come: The purpose of prayer is to establish God's will, not our own will, on earth.
- ❖ Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven: We pray that God's perfect purpose will be accomplished on earth just as it is in Heaven.
- ❖ Give us this day our daily bread: We are bidden to ask for our bread, not for future years, but for this day. Be content with a simple life where your needs are met. The daily bread could refer to communion too.
- ❖ And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: God is asked to forgive us as we forgive others. Our Lord makes it a condition of our obtaining forgiveness, that we shall have a merciful, forgiving spirit. Being unwilling to forgive others shows how little we really appreciate the forgiveness God has granted us.
- ❖ If we really recognize our own sin before God and understand the degree to which God went to forgive us, we should respond by granting others that same grace and mercy.
- ❖ And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one: God may preserve us from temptations that might lead us astray.
- ❖ For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

St. Augustine says that the Lord's Prayer is so perfect that it sums up in only a few words everything man needs to petition God.

Fasting (Read 6:16-18)

The Pharisees fasted as a spiritual ritual because it was a rule. They approached it legalistically as a way to make themselves good to curry favor with God and man. So, they wanted to make sure others knew they did it in order to get credit and let others know how spiritual they were.

Fasting was a time when they were supposed to focus on God. But by intentionally drawing attention to their fasting time, they were focusing on the opinions of people. Therefore, it was hypocritical. It is also the same problem discussed at the beginning of this chapter about praying or giving to get the attention of people. Therefore, in chapter 5, Jesus said that a person's righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees in order to enter heaven.

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven (Read 6:19-21)

Treasures on earth are temporary – They are insecure and provide a very weak and faulty foundation. Fortunes are lost. People are fired. Homes burn down. Cars break. Electronics grow outdated. Banks fail. But beyond that, even if you make it through life with your money intact and not eaten away by inflation, you can't take it with you. It is temporary. Store up treasures in heaven – This should be our single-minded focus.

The Lamp of the Body (Read 6:22-23)

The eye is a person's perspective, which is defined by their values. If one's eye is diseased, all he sees is wrong. The mind, or conscience, is the light of the soul. If these are darkened, everything you see is darkness; if these see aright, all is light.

What kind of "sight" do you have? Where are your eyes directed? Are you seeing clearly into the eternal? Or are you focused on the worries of this world?

If the light of your life is the darkness of this world, how dark your life will be! Take off the blinders! Focus on Jesus!

You Cannot Serve God and Riches (Read 6:24)

The word Mammon means money or riches.

It is impossible to serve two Masters. Jesus Himself said so. We have to make a choice to serve God or the world. Only one can be in first place. We can use our money to serve God, but we should not excuse worldly materialistic behavior.

According to macrotrends.net, the average lifespan in the world is approximately 73 years. What we do during our short time on earth will determine where we spend eternity.

It comes down to a choice! Do we want to follow the sinful ways of the world or the righteous ways of God? If we follow the crowd, we will perish. If we follow Jesus and the commands of His Father, we will live forever!

Do Not Worry (Read 6:25-34)

For this reason – We should not be worried about money because it is not our focus. It is not our treasure. Our heart is not set on getting more of it.

Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? We eat to live not live to eat. God created us for a purpose. And that is to serve Him.

Do not be worried – This is a command. It is wrong to worry. It displays a lack of faith in God and a lack of trust in His promises.

God takes care of sparrows (and other animals) and we are more valuable, so of course He will take care of us. Sparrows also do "work" for their food. They don't just sit in their nests and wait for it to fall from the sky. At the same time, they do not worry about the future.

Who of you, by being worried, can add a single hour to his life? – The answer is no one. Worry is not productive. It zaps joy. It ruins our sleep. It causes us to be cranky. It takes away our focus from the Lord. It is a lack of faith. It can cause physical sickness.

Example of the flowers' clothing – Flowers do not worry about the future. They are not even conscious of it. But yet they are beautiful. They are not forgotten by God. People are more valuable than flowers. Have you ever gone to bed hungry? Instead of worrying, let's spend more time thanking God. God will take care of our needs not necessarily our wants.

God knows our needs. So, we can rest assured that He will not forget or abandon us. Do your duty, with a full trust in God that He will see that you do not lack for these needs.

Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness – There is some condition to God’s promise to take care of our needs. And it is that we are serving God first. If we are seeking first God’s kingdom, then we will also not be worrying about earthly things. Our mind and heart will be set on the things of God. On our bed at night, we will be meditating on the Lord rather than stressing about our difficulties.

What makes us, as Christians, distinct from the world is the very fact that we KNOW that we can rely on our Father in heaven to care for us.

Do not worry about tomorrow – Take things one step at a time. Do what you can and should do each day. But don’t worry or stress about what is outside of your control. Do not add future potential problems to your list of problems to deal with. Those things may never materialize so don’t worry about them.



Takeaways and lesson delivery ideas:

Reality versus Appearance:

From “Do not worry” section: It is a command: let us think about the seriousness of what Jesus is saying. Three times Jesus says, “Do not worry.” Notice that Jesus does not say to not worry about your job, your retirement, or your house. He says to not worry about something that we would think would be the worthiest worry. Do not worry about what you eat and drink. This is an argument from the greater to the lesser. If you are told not to worry about the most critical things we need to live (food and drink), then we clearly are not to worry about things that are not pertinent to maintaining our lives today.

Then Jesus goes into the logical reasoning as to why we should not worry:

1. You Are Valuable to God (6:26): For however long the earth has been here, God has cared for his creation. God is not done caring for his creation. You do not need to worry about your life because you are valuable to God.

2. Worry Is Ineffective (6:27): Worry does not accomplish anything. Worry does not solve problems. Worry does not provide solutions. Worry does not rescue us from our problems. Worry accomplishes nothing. Worry does not add time to your life. Worry is a waste of time.
3. God Provides (6:28-30): Worry shows a lack of faith. Worry says that we need to take care of ourselves. Worry believes that the reason we are alive is because we are doing what is necessary to keep ourselves alive. But we can easily disregard this idea from our minds. We have no power to wake up. Have you ever thought about this? It is kind of creepy. You go to sleep so that you are no longer aware of what is happening to your body or in your body. Yet you still breath without knowing it. You roll over to prevent body pain without knowing it. You wake up without knowing it. It is not like you can forget to wake up. You just do. How can we possibly think that what keeps us alive is our own power? We cannot control what is happening to us. This is why your body does not do what you think it should do even though you try to have power over it. So, we must be determined to believe that God will provide for us. Worry does not believe that God is providing.
4. God Knows Your Needs (6:31-32): How many times have you not known what you needed, and God gave you what you needed? God knows your needs.
5. Live Today and Let God Take Care of Tomorrow (6:34): Today has enough troubles. Why bring tomorrow's concerns and place them on top of today's concerns? The problems of tomorrow cannot be accurately anticipated. How many times has tomorrow been what you did not think it would be? Sometimes it is better than we thought and sometimes it is worse than we thought. Either way, worry did not help it and often our worry was wrong. Let tomorrow worry about tomorrow. You have God's grace today.