

## Teach -In No. 3 The Gospel of Matthew

In Chapter 6 of Matthew's gospel we will find more challenges and provocations, especially in the whole area of our relationships. This however, will lead to seeing more clearly how we ought to pray. Whatever we do and wherever we do it, we are not supposed to act in order to be noticed; it is not to be a parade of our piety! It is only when we are noticed because of our right living that is acceptable to God.

### **Matthew 5 v 14**

*"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden...*

We are to display Him, not us.

### **John 3 v 30**

*He must increase, but I must decrease.*

We are not to regard the public places as the only place to pray; rather our personal prayers should be done in secret for most of the time.

### **Matthew 6 v 9-15**

*"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 'Give us this day our daily bread. 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. '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.' For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*

The Lord Jesus instructs us on the whole area of prayer. There are many other scriptures to consider. We need to know how to pray, why we should pray what to pray and our attitudes as we pray. Then we need to look at the aspects of fasting.

Preplanned prayers do not seem to be in Jesus mind as He instructs us how to pray. The traditional prayer books may be full of poetic words, well-meaning words and correct approaches; but they can miss out the whole personal relationship aspect of prayer. Can you imagine a child of; say seven or eight asking mum or dad for a new bicycle through a letter written by a friend in another town? This kind of traditional prayer robs us of expressing our hearts in our own unique way; it is more helpful to teach people how to create their own prayer life.

Let's look at Jesus' directions on our prayer life.

### **Matthew 6 v 9**

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

We share the same Father as Jesus, He is our Father. We can only approach Him through the Lord Jesus. He dwells in Heaven and Jesus is at His right hand. He is a Holy God and greatly to be praised.

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### **Matthew 22 v 44**

*'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet"'*.

### **Matthew 6 v 10**

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

This is our first prayer request, to see His Kingdom come, seek it for our lives.

### **Matthew 6 v 33**

*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Everything else that we need depends on our seeking first His Kingdom. What is God's will? That His Kingdom comes, the rule of Jesus the King of this Kingdom is to increase in my life and in the whole world. I shall have to decrease if He is to increase His rule in my life. His will is His Word that is written in the Bible.*

### **Revelation 11 v 15-17**

*Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.*

All kingdoms are to come under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Matthew 6 v 11**

*'Give us this day our daily bread.*

We should spend every day with Jesus in Spirit form, not just a daily quiet time but a daily portion of the Lord Himself.

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The Bread of Life clarifies this in John's gospel.

### **John 6 v 26-35**

*Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.*

Here Jesus declares their motives for seeking Him. Jesus often says *Truly* or *Truly, truly* whenever there is something that we especially need to take notice of, perhaps words of greater priority, although everything He says is for our immediate benefit.

### **Romans 14 v 17**

*...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

See how scripture is in complete harmony with itself? Paul is saying the same the same thing as Jesus. Verses 35, 48, 51 and 53 - 58 of Matthew 6 all relate to this same principal. As we read on into this chapter we will discover that many of His disciples withdrew and stopped walking with Him.

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### **John 6 v 48-58**

*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."*

You may ask *How can I eat of the flesh of Jesus?* It cannot mean eat Him in the literal sense; it is perhaps the hungering for the Word of God, Like Ezekiel.

### **Ezekiel 3 v 1-3**

*Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.*

Ezekiel ate the scroll and it tasted sweet to him, he digested God's word and it became flesh, part of him. The word of God is to become flesh in us.

We have digressed a little, but now let's return to Matthew 6.

### **Matthew 6 v 12**

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

We are to forgive those who owe us anything. Money, honour, recognition, love, favour, or we shall not be forgiven by our Father for our shortcomings.

### **Matthew 6 v 13-15**

*'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.'* For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

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Thinking about being led into temptation, the work of the Holy Spirit after Jesus had been baptised in the Jordan does not necessarily mean that God wants to tempt us to catch us out, but rather that we learn that in any exposure that is self - made, satan made or even God made, that we know that He will not forsake us. We all need to learn how to deal with the devil, knowing the comfort of the Lord.

We cannot please God when we are unforgiving; to forgive is a step towards pleasing Him. To forgive is to see our own requests answered, in these last days we are to take up the words that appear in Hebrews.

### **Hebrews 10 v 23-30**

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. For if we go on sinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

It is a very sobering thought that we have the capacity to insult the Spirit of grace.

### **Matthew 6 v 16-18**

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

Fasting, like prayer should not generally be done in public, that is, not everyone needs to know about it and we certainly shouldn't complain to draw attention to ourselves. However, there are instances when the whole church is called to fast, which we should do in accordance with the scriptures.

Our final consideration in this teach-in is to do with the various aspects of prayer. The Lord's Prayer tells us how and what to pray for. We need to know why we should pray.

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### **Luke 18 v 1**

*Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart...*

### **James 1 v 5**

*But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

We should pray because we need God's wisdom.

### **John 16 v 23-24**

*In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.*

We should pray in order that we receive joy.

### **Jeremiah 33 v 3**

*Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'*

We should pray because we may receive wonderful, undeserved things.

### **1 Samuel 12 v 23**

*Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.*

We should pray because it is a sin not to.

### **James 1 v 1-8**

*James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

Our attitudes for prayer includes knowledge of God's word concerning His promises to us, His children. He promises to answer our prayers, providing we have faith to accompany them.

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### **John 11 v 38-44**

*So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."*

This, one of Jesus' greatest miracles, began with an attitude of thanksgiving.

### **John 4 v 23**

*But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.*

He seeks those that will worship Him in spirit and in truth. We are to love Him, praise Him, relate to Him and expect to hear from Him. This means that we do not have to search for Him. Rather He is waiting to hear from us.

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