

Sermon Study Notes – Key Points, Questions & Application

Sermon – Actually Pray to God: Ask Him for His Kingdom.

Sermon 7 in the Series – “**Grow Hungry for Jesus: His Habits for the Heart**”

Pastor Martin Lifer, Eastminster Church | February 22, 2026

Key Scripture References

- **Matthew 6:7-10** – “When you pray, do not babble on in vain repetitions like the pagans... Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, your Name be upheld as holy. Your Kingdom come, your will be done – as in heaven, so also on earth.”
 - **John 17:11** – Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer: “Holy Father, keep [guard] them in your Name... that they may be one as We are one.”
 - **Luke 11:2, 13** – “Father, your Name be hallowed, your Kingdom come... how much more will the Father Who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those asking Him.”
 - **Daniel 7:13-14** – The everlasting kingdom given to the Son of Man.
 - **Revelation 11:15** – “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.”
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Big Idea

Actually pray to God: Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus, and ask Him for His Kingdom. Christian prayer is not a speech, a performance, or a technique; it is our most intimate expression of our relationship with God.

Christian Year Context for Worship & Spiritual Formation

Lenten Season – We are now in the season of repentance, renewal, and focused spiritual formation. This is a call to actually pray – not as religious performance, but as intimate communion with our Father.

Last Week’s Sermon Review

Three takeaways:

1. Silence the noise – Admit your need, Ask for guidance, Answer with changed heart and habits.
2. Pray “I believe – help my unbelief” daily.
3. This kind (of spiritual battle) comes out only by prayer.

Key question carried forward: Are you actually praying to God – or to men, to yourself, or to the crowd?

What Christian Prayer Is NOT

*Jesus warns us – do not babble on in vain repetitions. **Prayer is not:***

- **A speech to a foreign dignitary**
- **A presentation to an ombudsman**

- **A political performance to impress others**
- **A technique to master and trust in**
- **Value signaling to post on social media**

“Not one prayer in a hundred that fills our churches is actually made to Almighty God.” – James Boice

What Christian Prayer IS

Prayer is our most intimate expression of our intimate communion with God.

- It is loving loyalty to the true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - The depth and consistency of your prayer life **IS** the measure of your intimacy with God.
 - True for individuals, couples, and families alike.
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The Gospel Hidden in Plain Sight: “Our Father”

The Lord’s Prayer is not merely a prayer technique – it is the gospel itself.

- **The Gospel:** When we believe in Jesus and are born anew in His Holy Spirit, the Father of Jesus Christ becomes OUR Father. We are invited into the throne room of the Holy God.
 - **John 17:26:** Jesus made known the Father’s name so that “the love with which you love me may be in them and I in them.”
 - **Matthew 11:27:** “No one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”
 - **Proverbs 18:10:** “The Lord’s Name is a strong tower; the righteous one runs into it and is safe.”
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The Three Key Petitions of the Lord’s Prayer

All other prayer flows from these three. These are what we should actually be praying:

1. “Your Name Be Upheld as Holy”

- God guards and protects us **in His Name** (John 17:11).
- To pray this is to ask that God’s holy character be exalted in all things – in your life, your home, the world.

2. “Your Kingdom Come” (the central petition)

- **Definition of God’s Kingdom:** The King’s power, for and in the King’s people, redeeming and reigning at home in his Kingdom.
- The Kingdom comes **surprisingly in small ways** – like a mustard seed – and will one day explode into eternity.
- The Kingdom comes **not to spectators**, but to the engaged, worshiping, discipling, witnessing church.
- **Daniel 7:13-14 and Revelation 11:15** – The everlasting kingdom of Christ cannot be destroyed. We pray for what is already certain.
- **Maranatha** – “Come, Lord (*Jesus!*)” This was the prayer of the early church, and it is ours.

3. “Your Will Be Done, as in Heaven, so also on Earth”

- **Matthew 12:** Whoever does the will of the Father is Jesus’ brother, sister, and mother.
- **John 14:** “If anyone loves Me, he will keep my Word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our home with him.”
- **Romans 8:** We live out God’s will by His Spirit alive in us, by Whom we cry out, “Abba! Father!”
- **Gethsemane:** Jesus models it perfectly – “Abba Father... yet not what I will, but what you will.” This IS the Lord’s Prayer lived out.
- **Ephesians 3:20:** He is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or think. Don’t limit your prayers to what you’re imagining – pray for His will.

Personal Application: Habits of the Heart for Spiritual Growth

The Takeaway This Week:

Actually pray to God. Ask Him for His kingdom.

- **Daily Lenten Practice:** Pray the Lord’s Prayer meaningfully, not as vain repetition, but as your most intimate conversation with your Father.
- **Lenten Daily App:** Use the daily devotional app the church has launched. Engage with it each day to stay grounded in the faith throughout the season.
- **Wednesday Nights:** Come be re-grounded in the faith together as a community.
- **Watch & Pray:** Combine the two things Jesus always combines. Be led by the Spirit all through the day.
- **Pray for the Kingdom** – not just for your needs, but for the mustard seed kingdom to grow: through your family, your church, your city, and to the ends of the earth.

Discussion Questions

1. **Examine your prayers:** Are you actually praying to God, or to an audience, to yourself, or out of rote habit? What would it look like to shift to truly intimate prayer with the Father?
2. **What does your prayer life say about your relationship with God?** If your prayer life is shallow or infrequent, what is that revealing? What is one step you can take this week to go deeper?
3. **Do you believe you actually have access to the Father through Jesus?** How does it change the way you pray to sit with the truth that the Holy Father of Christ is YOUR Father?
4. **Which of the three petitions is hardest for you to pray sincerely?** “Hallowed be your Name” – “Your Kingdom come” – “Your will be done.” Why?
5. **What would it mean for you to pray for God’s Kingdom this week** – not just your personal needs, but for His mustard seed kingdom to grow in your family, your church, and the world?